

ORALPHA European Project

National Report

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-Probens

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Section 1

Introduction

Literacy and numeracy are some of the most important skills one can hold in the live. Unfortunately, many people in the world still do not have the opportunity to attend the school and learn the basic skills in the childhood. On the other hand, people who migrate to another country usually need to learn at least one foreign language, the language of the host society context. Oralpha project aims at developing literacy and second language teaching and learning methods as well as sharing good practices in order to improve and disseminate these practices. This report National Report is the result of the collaboration between the organizations that make part of the Oralpha project. These organizations are specialized in the fields of migrations research and adult education, specifically host language and literacy.

In this report, you will find a structured summary of the experiences and practices on teaching literacy and host language for migrated adult people in some adult school centers and other providers from different European countries. These organizations are from Spain (Probens and Acefir, and collaborators), from Germany (Verksttat Unna) and from Italy (Tempo Libero and collaborators), and all of them provide educational services, literacy and host language courses to migrant and refugee adult people.

The aim of this report is to offer a general overview of the situation all these organizations face when providing literacy and host language courses. Throughout the report, good practices regarding methodology, didactics and organization of learning will be found. There is also a description of the main features of the education systems in every Country, and a description of the main local and regional devices and providers. Among other contents, the reader will also find the challenges each of the participant organizations face in their daily work, the weaknesses they identify and some improvement proposals to carry on with the difficult but exciting task of providing literacy and host language to adult migrant and refugee.

This report contains three sections; an introduction and a glossary of terms, the reports' section and the conclusion. In the second and main section, there are four chapters and each of them correspond to each organizations' report.

The information contained in the four reports is based on the data gathered through focus groups and the questionnaires responded by literacy teachers and volunteers who collaborates with the four organizations that sign the report. After the gathering process, all the qualitative data were analyzed and summarized following a general structure. This structure have been designed in coherence with the objectives and main thematic points of the questionnaires and the focus group interview sample, and includes the following five topics:

A brief introduction of the provider organization and the participants in the research process (the surveyed professionals and the focus group participants).

Participant's profiles (in literacy groups) and adaptation to the teaching/learning process to them.

Teacher profiles and ability to face the participant's profile diversity.

Main methodologies and activities applied and successful approaches identified.

Perceived difficulties, challenges and proposals.

Each of these main topics have been developed in three dimensions:

Similarities and differences in perceptions between groups of participants (e.g. ethnicity, social class, previous level education, work status, linguistic repertoire ...)

Context-specific factors (e.g. related to school, labor market characteristics, ...)

Change over time (e.g. changes in aspirations, challenges, ...)

All the reports articulate the perceptions of the literacy and host language teachers themselves and do not represent any particular official position of the organizations where those teachers are affiliated. The reports do not intend to describe accurately any country or regional policy, but to provide a general overview from the point of view of the surveyed participants in the focus groups.

Glossary of terms

Residency status: the status of a person's residence permit.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Residence_permit)

Residence permit: temporary residency, or permanent residency. One has to apply for a residence permit to be allowed to reside in the host country.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Residence_permit)

Family reunification: is a criterion to be accepted as a resident in a foreign Country. This condition allows some family members to be accepted to be residents in a foreign Country when other family members reside yet in the host Country. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_reunification)

The migration project: the set of motives and objectives that, on the one side constitute the causes of the migration and, on the other side, shape the ideals of the future life in the host society. This project changes over time.

Second language: the L2 or second language is the name for the non-native language of a speaker. In the educational field, it usually refers to the 'foreign language' spoken in the host country, this means in a context of immersion.

Foreign language: the foreign language is the name for the non-native language of a speaker. In the educational field, it usually refers to the language that is learned in a country where this language is not official or dominant, this means in a non-immersion context.

Host language: the host language is the official or dominant language in the national context of migration.

Dominant language: the language that is most commonly used in a particular place or community of speakers.

Section 2. Reports

Country Report 01. Tempo Libero

Theoretically, how do you do it?

[2018-11-09]

Responsible institution: COOPERATIVA TEMPO LIBERO	
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Introduction

In this Country Report we will focus on the principles and methodologies employed by each of the participants in the focus group that took place on the 13th April 2018 in Brescia, in Tempo Libero's office. The focus group was composed by 6 participants. All of them are teachers, specialized in teaching Italian as a second language to immigrants and asylum seekers. All the participants were women, aged between 30 and 40 years old. They all possess a university degree in the human science field and a Certification of Competence for Teaching Italian to Foreigners (CEDILS or DITALS). Their professional profiles have a lot in common, but they have some differences as well, as one can see in the annex n.2 below. All of them have pluriannual experience in teaching Italian to foreigners: some to immigrants (adults and/or children, both men and women), some to refugees or asylum seekers, some to European Erasmus students, some to each one of the above-mentioned categories. In their working experience, they had the chance to teach to a wide range of students' type, including illiterate ones.

All the information that appears in this report is based on the analysis of the data obtained in the above-mentioned focus groups.

The information and data gathered through this focus group refers to the education System in Italy and the educational context of the regions (Lombardia, Veneto) and organizations where each participant is working or had worked. This report aims at contribute to draw an overall picture of the literacy and host language, local and regional services through the description of the most common situations experienced by the participants. Similarly, the didactic and methodologic proposals and the practices described in this report are a sample of those developed by the participants in this focus group and do not aim at represent the totality of the educational practices and methodologies in any region or even in a particular school or educational setting.

Annex: descriptions of the system and the respondents

In this section we give an overview of the specific context in terms of literacy and language learning devices (access for newcomers, etc.). This information will support the partner responsible for contextualizing the cross-case analysis report.

Also, for each focus group discussion, we ask each partner to include a short description of the respondents, based on the short questionnaire they completed previously of their participation in the focus group discussion.

GENERAL NOTE: All the information in this report is related to the Italian teachers' experiences in their classes and integrated with the data obtained during the focus group. The description of the different classes, the methodology used and the organization of the Institutions can't be separated by a subjective perspective of the teachers.

1) **Participant's profiles (in literacy groups) and adaptation to the teaching/learning process to them**

Italian classes of the trainers that took part in the focus group are composed of students coming from different countries mainly Asian Countries, north and sub-Saharan African countries. The main languages known by students are their mother tongues and, in some cases, other languages like English and French, though the majority of these people know those languages only orally. This range of nationalities and languages means also a cultural diversity, different religions and values that create different perspectives on the world in the class. Students have also different language's knowledge (both oral and written) and various levels of education. The levels of education are extremely heterogeneous because some students are illiterate also in their mother tongue, some of them are learners with limited literacy (learners who cannot write and read in an autonomous way, learners who can write and read just some letters, but not a sentence, learners who can read and write short sentences in the classroom but not a real text...). Some of them, they have attended the primary school for some years or even the high school. Some of them have attended the University in their home country. The participants are mostly: asylum seekers, refugees, unaccompanied minors; however, there are also women and families.

“In my classes there are always students with different cultural habits (regarding: time, care of themselves...) that affect my job.” Participant 02 FDG1

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

There are some courses for children, unaccompanied minors, men or women of different ages. They can be part of different projects as CAS (temporary accommodation structures), SPRAR (The Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) or special specific projects according to their condition. Some of them attend classes voluntarily, on the contrary sometimes classes are compulsory for the projects CAS and SPRAR.

“Some days my students don’t feel comfortable to attend Italian classes because of the strict rules of the projects.” Participant 04 FDG1

They arrive in the host country in different ways and for different purposes for instance, to find better life conditions, to reach other European countries or for family reunification. The reasons of participation are heterogeneous too, as we can read in the quote below:

“All students participate in the Italian classes for different reasons. For example: to integrate themselves in the new society, to get to a better knowledge of Italian for the job; to be able to address the daily needs or to understand the social reality where their families live.” Participant 01 FDG1

Context-specific factors

All the groups are heterogeneous, the students have different learning needs, backgrounds and learning styles. Nonetheless adult migrant learners have also common characteristics that influence their approach to learning the host language and, therefore, our teaching strategies. Some examples:

In most of the cases language courses aren’t voluntarily chosen by learners.

Learners are concerned with many other things beside attending the courses (work, family, socialization...) and thus, they have not so much time to do the homework or to consistently follow the lessons.

Life circumstances can influence the learning process also for what concerns cognitive functions and processes (e.g. traumas’ consequences on memory).

Adult learners are very practical oriented- in most cases they want to learn the language in order to be able to communicate in the host society, to find a job and, in many cases, to obtain a permit of stay or other necessary documents.

Adult learners have their life experience, background and knowledge; this expertise affects the approach to school and learning.

Learners have different cultural backgrounds that can influence the class and learning dynamics.

“Life circumstances clearly affected the learning process: it is really difficult to learn the language if you are focused on more important personal issues...” Participant 04 FDG1

Change over time

The complexity and heterogeneity of the groups concerning nationalities, mother tongues, general backgrounds, levels of education and causes of participation inevitably generates changes over time.

Some of these facts affect the teaching/learning process in a negative way:

Increasing trend of students not attending schools (missing lessons lead to a fragmented and unsatisfactory learning process)

A negative residence permit resolution or a long term for the application to be processed can lead to a lack of motivation.

Teachers can be disoriented with the kind of contents they have to prepare for each lesson as the students are not always the same and the group is changing so much over time.

“When students don’t come to school for a long time and they suddenly come back to class it’s really difficult to prepare a lesson and involve them” Participant 06 FDG1

“It’s too difficult to prepare a lesson if I don’t know who will be in class tomorrow...” Participant 03 FDG1

On the other hand, this heterogeneity produces positive results as some students get to know and help each other; they get to work in a mutual respect, despite of their different level of education and language's knowledge, creating a cooperative environment. In fact, a lot of students improve their level of language and they are "promoted" to a higher-level class.

"When I think about my first day in this class and I see how much they have changed and they have improved their level of language, it's really encouraging." Participant 03 FDG1

Specific improvement proposals

In compulsory courses students' interest can be lower, while when the attendance is not compulsory, students' involvement is higher and more consistent. In addition, it is stated that the drop of the motivation can be related to the feeling of uncertainty about the migration project.

In this context, it is important to prepare several activities for each group in order to adapt the materials to the various necessities of the students and thus, encourage the them to learn. In order to reach this objective, some actions are necessary, the essential steps are several. The first action is to start with an oral presentation of the lessons' subject using different materials, such as images, audios... The second set of actions is to organize different activities. During the class time, students can work alone, with the support of the teacher or in small groups, this encourages the cooperative learning and enables the integration of knowledges. It is fundamental to focus the teaching acts on the students who have less writing and reading skills; furthermore, it is important to recognize the students' capacities and to offer them strong learning alternatives with differentiated classes. For instance:

To explain their teaching choices to their students and make them feel accompanied
to not use a repetitive and static way of teaching

To employ different teaching materials: these materials should be as authentic as possible or should be simplified by the teachers (audiovisual documents, group activities, activities that involve movement, games, storytelling, communicative activities, reading and writing exercises, role-play)

“Sometimes illiterate students can speak a lot of languages that they have learnt working or travelling [...] they are not used to learn in schools; for this reason, it’s important to plan activities as concrete and authentic as possible” Participant 05 FDG1

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

Other ideas suggested by empirical data are:

Start the lesson from a concrete, real life communicative situation or from something that is relevant and interesting for the student;

Use audiovisual documents, group activities, activities that involve movement, games, storytelling, communicative activities, reading and writing exercises, role-play...;

More efficient selection of the students according to their language level;

The possibility to rely on volunteer teachers to help the professional teachers to manage the groups with heterogeneous levels;

Emphasize the importance of the attendance and punctuality at school;

Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties and the need for mutual respect;

Provide a dynamic and vivid forum that enables to express and share the cultural backgrounds of the participants;

2) **Teacher profiles and ability to face the participant's profile diversity**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

All of the teachers that have participated in the Focus Groups have many years of experience in teaching Italian as a second language, in different contexts and situations. They also have a specific training, thanks to university studies or training courses. The teachers are employed in different local cooperatives, interested in teaching Italian to people that have migrated from their country of origin. They have from 3 to 13 years of experience and specific degrees or certifications in Italian as second language or host language.

These teachers chose to do this job and they are highly motivated to transfer and improve knowledge and also communication and social skills:

"...we love our job mostly because it allows us to constantly relate with different cultures and, in the meantime, to discover different ways of learning, thinking and seeing reality, undermining ways which are usually taken for granted..." Participant 01 FDG1

Context-specific factors

In Italy the system does not require a specific training to teach Italian as L2. There are some certifications that provide teaching instruments and skills.

Some teachers show the need to explain their teaching choices to their students to make them feel supported. In order to answer the specific needs and difficulties of each student, the teachers use different methodologies and approaches. They also have various learning materials, in order to manage the different levels and proficiencies of the students. These materials are not usually taken from books but prepared by the teachers themselves based on the students' necessities and abilities.

"[...] when I prepare the lessons for my class, generally I use different books, online material but, above all, I create a lesson starting from a specific topic, building the material (exercises, dialogues, role play...) on my own." Participant 04 FDG1

The students have to attend the Italian classes every day, usually for a long period so it's very important to diversify the lessons and motivate them along the time.

Specifically, in order to motivate the students, the teachers decided to organize school trips to visit other cities and theatres, museums and other representative places in the town. All

of these experiences are also helpful for the students because they have the chance to discover the history and the culture of our country and feel integrated.

Change over time

Over time teachers became aware that it's really important to do their job not in a repetitive and static way. They prefer using their own creativity in new and challenging ways. Their job also gives them the feeling they're doing something useful and worthy, from a future perspective, regarding the creation of a multicultural society. It's important to have a specific degree to face the needs of the students. It's also essential for the teachers to keep up and participate in training courses so they can have or produce new material and know new methodologies appropriate to the students' profiles.

"[...] I feel satisfied by my job and I think that is very useful because it helps people not just learning a language but also the culture and the habits of our society" Participant 01 FDG1

"[...] have a specific degree and experience it's important to understand the students' profiles and manage the different needs and language levels in the same class..." Participant 05 FDG1

Specific improvement proposals

It should be useful to have a continuous, specific and funded training in teaching Italian as a second or host language, in different contexts and situations.

Another important aspect is the possibility to have a team of teachers that can meet at least once a week to share the main problems about students and discuss about different points of view about teaching methodology and experience. It is also helpful to have different materials in the school to consult, not just for the teachers but for the students too.

"...too many people or institutions that work in different ways and are not able to coordinate among them..." Participant 06 FDG1

Some teachers also suggest that it would be important to have a psychological support in order to manage the difficulties concerning the most fragile students.

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

One of the ideas suggested by empirical data regards the teachers' training:

"... one of the difficulties is the impossibility to attend training courses paid by the institutions the teachers work for...". [Participant 02 FDG1](#)

Another idea regards the material available in the school and sometimes the place of teaching itself:

"...difficulties are: lack of billable time to plan the lessons; lack of adequate places and available teaching material." [Participant 01 FDG1](#)

3) **Main methodologies and activities applied and successful approaches identified**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

Italian teachers use different kinds of methodologies to manage their classes, in order to give their students more opportunities to learn:

"when we deal with adult migrant learners, it is very hard indeed to find a common definition or profile." [Participant 04 FDG1](#)

"when I look at my students during the language class, I realize that each one of them has such a peculiar way to deal with learning" [Participant 03 FDG1](#)

"The cultural diversity of my classes creates an imperative not to make assumptions about religion, culture and values" [Participant 05 FDG1](#)

Each student has a different learning style, according to their background, level of literacy, knowledge of the host language and motivation to learn.

That is why it is necessary to draw on different approaches and techniques, developing "tailor-made" curricula for each learner.

"In particular, through the empirical observation of our adult illiterate learners, we realize that their learning style is very practical oriented and their strategies are situational". [Participant 02 FDG1](#)

“Illiterate students seem sometimes to have a lack of abstraction....at least...they seem to follow different paths of thinking...” Participant 01 FDG1

Traditional methodologies:

The Direct Method: the teaching is done entirely in the target language. The learners are invited not to use their mother tongues. Grammar rules are avoided.

Suggestopedia: The theory underlying this method is that a language can be acquired only when the learner is receptive and has no mental blocks. Through various methods, it is suggested to the student that the language is easy - and in this way the mental blocks to learning are removed.

Total Physical Response (TPR): TPR works by having the learner respond to simple commands. The method stresses the importance of listening comprehension.

Communicative language teaching (CLT): The focus of this method is to enable the learner to communicate effectively and appropriately in the various situations he would be likely to find himself in. The content of CLT courses are communicative functions such as inviting, suggesting, complaining or notions such as the expression of time, quantity, location.

The Silent Way: the aim of the teacher is to say as little as possible in order that the learner can be in control of what he wants to say. No use of the mother tongue is made.

Community Language Learning: the aim is to build strong personal links between teacher and students, so that there are no blocks to learning. There is much talk in the mother tongue which is translated by the teacher.

Task-based language learning: The focus of the teaching is on the completion of a task which is interesting to the learners. Learners use the language they already have, to complete the task and there is little correction of errors.

The Natural Approach: This approach, propounded by Professor S. Krashen, stresses the similarities between learning the first and a second language. There is no correction of mistakes. Learning happens through the exposure to the target language, that is comprehensible or made comprehensible to them.

The Lexical Syllabus: This approach is based on a computer analysis of language which identifies the most common (and hence most useful) words in the language and their

different uses. The syllabus includes these words according to the order of their frequency, and great emphasis is placed on the use of authentic materials.

Glottodrama, Process drama, art-based approaches.

Some principles of non-formal education have also been highlighted:

The class program builds up and gets adapted to learning needs of participants; topics should be relevant to the everyday experience; knowledge, skills and attitudes that we are working during the classes should have a very practical usage and have a visible value for the learners;

Non-formal education promotes interactive group dynamics;

It improves an active participation of the learners, through a “learning by doing” approach;

Learning is built up on the previous experience and knowledge of the students;

Teachers use activities to improve positive emotions, since the best learning happens when we remember it emotionally;

Non-formal approaches promote reflection (experiencing - analyzing - generalizing - applying). After each class’ experience, we can support students in analyzing of what they have learned, how it connects to their life experience and how they can apply this new experience, knowledge and skill to their everyday life.

Context-specific factors

The possibility to implement non-formal strategies of learning, largely depends on the teaching context, not only for what concerns the school (space of the classrooms, technologies, educational material...), but also with regard to the host society: an effective language learning implies relating with the community and exploring the environment (services and facilities, but also historic and artistic heritage).

Change over time

In order to keep students’ motivation high, the didactic offer should be based on real needs; it means that the class program builds up and gets adapted according to the changing of participants’ requests over time.

“Illiterate students have a practical way of dealing with things...if they don't have an immediate feedback, they think that all the things they are learning...well...it's just a waste of time...” Participant 06 FDG1

In order to achieve this aim, teachers should draw up plans and tools for monitoring the learning process at different times of the course (expectations, feedback) in order for the students to be aware of how much they are learning.

“Sometimes I realize that what I think about my lessons is really far from the students' perception...maybe I should try to monitor the trend of the class...” Participant 04 FDG1

Main successful strategies developed

A lesson should always start from a concrete, real life communicative situation or from something that is relevant and interesting for the student.

“For illiterate students, it is absolutely difficult to stay in the class for two hours or more...they aren't used to that...I think I should try to start from something more concrete and relevant for them...” Participant 01 FDG1

The teacher's role has to change to facilitator of learning, so that learners would become the center of the learning process and get actively involved, changing from passive to active participants of the process. Main part of the classes should consist of practical tasks, where the role of facilitator is to give a task and then only guide, support and correct the students.

“Adult learners don't like to be considered as children...they have their expertise...they want to discover and understand on their own...” Participant 06 FDG1

It is important to use the expertise of the group as a source of learning, since the teacher is not the only reference of information: adult learners are competent and already have a background knowledge and experience of life.

This perspective requires to improve each learning style and different strategies (some students learn by experimenting, some others need to connect new information to previous knowledge, some prefer to learn in groups and some others individually).

For this reason, the teaching materials should be authentic and as various as possible, involving all types of senses (listening, visuals, reading), in order to improve a holistic approach to learning.

“Adult learners already have their “encyclopedia”...I mean...their own knowledges and their own strategies to organize them...we should try to improve every specific learning style...”

Participant 05 FDG1

Activities should be varied during the class as well: they should include group activities, activities involving movement, games, storytelling, communicative activities, reading and writing exercises, role-plays; these kinds of activities, need to be adjusted from time to time, according to the students' improvements.

Specific improvement proposals

In order to respond to these variety of needs, teachers should have the possibility to keep on their training. This kind of training should be funded by the schools/organizations.

“It is sometimes very hard to set up a lesson plan, according to all these different needs...there's not enough time...and I know I need a lot of training...but I think that it's my school that should provide for this...” *Participant 01 FDG1*

Having at disposal a variety of materials and technologies is essential to exploit the numerous teaching methods and strategies, according to the peculiar learning styles of the students: video, pc, projector, but also artistic supplies.

“...in my school I haven't even got a blackboard...you know?...I write on paper sheets that I buy on my own expenses...and if I want to show pictures or listen to some audio-files, I must bring my own PC...” *Participant 02 FDG1*

Teaching should not only focus on communicative abilities, but it should also consider the development of transversal competences and soft skills (such as responsibility, problem solving, creative thinking, social and work ethics, cooperation); that is why it is important to bring the school out of the classroom, to know and interact with the host society.

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

Students prefer doing practical activities and workshops

It's necessary to create outdoor situations in which students could experience and face concrete, communicative challenges.

In order to motivate and involve illiterate students it's important to have multisensorial material at disposal.

4) **Perceived difficulties, challenges and proposals**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

All Italian classes are organized in different ways according to the different institutions that provides the courses, but it is possible to find some common difficulties and challenges, for example:

Low resources for materials available for the teachers;

Not billable time to plan lessons and school trips;

Few occasions of training for teachers;

Incoherence of institutional coordination;

Short duration of the projects;

Different local policies in each Italian region;

“...sometimes it is very difficult to plan the activities for each participant because we don't have enough resources...” [Participant 06 FDG1](#)

Moreover, another important aspect which influences the coordination of the Italian classes are the different linguistic levels and targets of the participants. Even if, in most cases, teachers can respond to the students' needs, this particular situation could be stressful and might require a large amount of time and resources, which are not always available.

“...last week a new student arrived and I had suddenly to reorganize my lesson. I felt very stressed out...” [Participant 05 FDG1](#)

Context-specific factors

As mentioned earlier, Italian classes are characterized by the specific organization of each institution and they are influenced by the project budget and the local laws.

With regards to the Italian classes, they are influenced by the heterogeneity of participants (gender, age, level of education, participation reasons); another important aspect concerning the classes is the physical and psychological conditions of the students (especially in projects like SPRAR or CAS as mentioned before)

“there is a big difference in teaching Italian L2 to foreign citizens or to immigrants, hosted in the SPRAR or CAS projects. Some days we have to spend part of the lesson listening to their feelings and emotions” [Participant 02 FDG1](#)

Actually, the Italian system does not require a specific training to teach Italian as L2. For this reason, it is possible to find teachers with different qualifications (employees, volunteers, retired teachers, precarious teachers without any qualification to teach Italian as L2, ...).

“I found very useful to attend a specific course concerning Italian L2 teaching because I improved my knowledge” [Participant 05 FDG1](#)

Change over time

The organization of the Italian courses could be modified over time for the purpose of improving the learning opportunities of the students, in particular for the students who are in a more vulnerable life situation, whom have specific needs. All Italian teachers believe that the difficulties previously quoted could be overcome by implementing some changes in the organization of the Italian courses (lack of billable time to plan the lessons, lack of adequate places and available teaching material, ...) and/or the management of the Italian course projects. However, these changes are not always possible because the Municipality's projects and the Italian L2 system don't provide enough solutions to adapt the action plan of the Italian classes to the needs of the students and the teachers.

“...during the my last Italian L2 course, I had a lot of ideas but in the end, I wasn't able to implement them because the Municipality changed the project budget...” [Participant 01 FDG1](#)

Moreover, in Italy many Italian L2 teacher and/ or institutions work in different ways and are not able to coordinate. This happens because the Italian L2 system is not well developed and there isn't a single institution to manage all the providers. There are some common laws

which give some references but each institution can organize the Italian courses according to their needs. Another important change over time is the possibility for the teachers to attend training courses financed by some institutions (University, Cooperative, Municipality, ...). However, until today teachers have to provide the professional training by themselves to improve their competencies in Italian L2 didactics and methodologies in a migration context.

“...There are a lot of specific qualifications or courses to learn how to teach Italian as a second language but I can't afford the cost of all courses...” [Participant 04 FDG1](#)

Weaknesses/strengths

In most of cases, the changes over time that were previously highlighted could be considered both weaknesses and strengths. All Italian teachers agree on the idea that the structure of the migrant reception system, such as SPRAR and CAS, represents the real weakness and strength of each project because it can influence both the organization of the courses, the Italian teaching and the Italian learning.

“...sometimes I feel that it could be better to have a coordination between needs of the courses, the Italian teaching end the Italian learning...” [Participant 02 FDG1](#)

An adequate offer of courses organized with a specific aim and duly financed could offer the possibility to foreign citizens with specific needs to participate in Italian courses and increase their opportunities to learn Italian language, to integrate themselves in the new society, to get to a better Italian knowledge for job insertion purposes, to be able to address the daily needs or to understand the social reality where their families live.

“...one of my students told me that he was very happy because now he is able to go to the offices by himself, thanks to the Italian class...” [Participant 04 FDG1](#)

However, these projects are always subjected to a budget so that they can't respond to every need of the participants. Another weakness perceived by Italian L2 teachers and students are the projects' precariousness because the its duration is often limited and not repeatable. Furthermore, the management of the institutions could be another weakness, because each entity can offer different type of Italian L2 courses and plan several levels, according to their budget or the political direction.

“...often the budget is a precarious aspect in the Italian L2 project...” Participant 05 FDG1

The last weakness related to the Italian L2 teachers is the impossibility to attend training courses payed by the institutions.

Specific improvement proposals

Institutions and Italian L2 teachers believe that some specific measures could improve the Italian courses organization, the Italian teaching quality and the learning experience of the students.

Focusing on these aims, Italian L2 teachers suggest the following changes to pursue the goals to improve the courses:

- more billable time to plan lessons and the activities adapting them to each student necessities;
- the possibility to rely on volunteer workers to help managing classes with heterogeneous levels;
- more efficient distribution of the classes, according to language level;
- more opportunities to keep on founded training (not on their own expenses) for the Italian L2 teachers.

To enhance the quality of the language services, Italian L2 teachers recommend:

- more coordination between the Italian L2 teachers to achieve a similar teaching methodology;
- more coordination between local associations, cooperatives and local municipality to manage the Italian classes.

“...It is necessary more coordination between associations, cooperatives and local municipality to improve the Italian courses organization...”. Participant 06 FDG1

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

All teachers agree on the previously quoted improvements because they said that the most difficulties are:

"... lack of billable time to plan the lessons; lack of adequate places and available teaching material; too many people or institutions that work in different ways and are not able to coordinate between them...". Participant 01 FDG1

Each teacher manages a different Italian class in a specific project but these problems are in common to each teaching experience.

Conclusion

As one can infer by the above observations, teaching Italian as a second language to immigrants, asylum seekers or refugees is a constant challenge. Especially if students are illiterate.

The teachers can keep on researching new ways, methods and strategies to motivate the students, despite their personal situations and problems. We can also work on different approaches to help integrating the people who are illiterate and struggle to keep up with the other students. We already try to be as adaptive as possible in relation to our work environment, which sometimes forces us to teach in all but optimal conditions (classrooms, heterogeneous groups, lack of coordination, teaching material, technologies and further/specific training...).

We hope that, as the necessity of learning Italian as L2 is becoming more and more important for many different people, institutions will find a way to coordinate efforts and resources to make our job more effective. It would be desirable to clarify the situation of the Italian L2 system as well: the need of a better organization is compelling, now more than ever.

In conclusion, we think that keeping on improving our job is of the utmost importance.

For us, because it compels us to become better teachers. For our students, because learning Italian as a second language in a more effective way, for most of them, means to finally feel at home: safe and at ease. For our society, because a well-oiled system of integrating new citizens through language learning is the first step for a better cohabitation.

Annex

1. Description of the country language learning/ literacy system (devices and access)

In Italy, the first courses for adults were offered in 1947 with the creation of the "social schools", with the purpose of promoting basic literacy and numeracy skills. After many social and economic changes, during the 1970s, the "150 hours" courses were introduced, as opportunities for workers to enhance their educational skills.

In the last decades the fostering literacy provision for Adult education in general is developed diversifying courses for foreign adults, refugees, asylum seekers, MSNA and foreign children.

From 2010 till today the literacy system has been modified by several ministerial decrees: Ministerial Decree of 4 June 2010 Art. 1 paragraph 3 letter b; Circular no. 8539 of the Ministry of the Interior 7/12/2010; Circular 1204 Ministry of the Interior 21/02/2012; Decree 263 of 2012. It is important to underline that the adoption of these rules was also due to the influence of the European Institutions and policies. The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) of 2006 played an active role in this field in Italy.

The major education and training opportunities for adults are available through secondary schools or through adult education centers (CTPs - "Centri territoriali permanenti per l'istruzione e la formazione in età adulta"). The CTPs operate at the local level as operational arms of Municipalities delegated by Regions to administer Employment Services. Nowadays, CTPs changed their name in CPIAs and all Italian and/or foreign citizens in possession of a valid residence permit over 16 years of age can enroll. Especially for foreign people, they can attend language and social integration courses (Italian L2) and after passing a final test, the CPIAs issues an Italian language competence certificate (L2).

In addition to these courses, several local associations and cooperatives organize specific Italian classes for refugees and asylum seekers, women and illiterate people to give them the opportunities to have access to a language and cultural education.

Italian L2 courses in CPIAs have a registration fee but in many centers, it is possible to have reductions. Local associations and cooperatives provide free Italian L2 courses related to the local policies or the specific projects (SPRAR and/or CAS).

Teaching Italian as L2 requires knowledge, ability and specialized competence, which can be acquired thanks to a specific training and professional practice in the field. In many universities there is the possibility of getting a master's degree in Teaching Italian as a Second Language. Sometimes, in particular in the sector of associations, Italian teachers don't have a particular teaching qualification because they are volunteers or retired teachers for kids. Until today the Italian L2 teaching system in Italy is not well developed.

The Italian L2 language system refers to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language CEFR which provides a common basis all over Europe for developing programs, tests, textbooks for learning modern languages. The CEFR has 6 levels that seem to adequately cover any language learning:

- A1, Break-Through
- A2, Waystage
- B1, Threshold
- B2, Vantage
- C1, Effective Operational Proficiency
- C2, Mastery

Moreover, in Italy the CEFR has been adapted to the specific characteristics of the current migrations and it has been necessary to add a new level called A0. This level has been created to be able to meet the needs of the "vulnerable student", or rather, people who are illiterate also in their mother tongue or they have a low level of education.

Moreover, the regional governments are therefore very important for the development of adult literacy education policies, as they also manage the European Social Fund resources through which labor policy services are financed. With regards the educational system secondary school and CPIAs have to follow the guide line of MIUR where it is explained that the linguistic ability is one of the most essential knowledge for the personal growth and the access to the cultural environment.

Furthermore, having an official certificate that indicates the knowledge level for Italian is helpful both for work and study, and may be helpful for completing the training which one began in one's own country and finding a better job.

Until now, the major debates concerning education system in the country is about the law to obtain the permit of stay and the requirements to obtain it. This Italian I2 level A2 certificate is required by Local Centers for Stay Permit points or for CEE Long Stay Permits (former residence card). Foreign people have to attend this exam to start the request of their document; however, this decision doesn't take account of the specific need of illiterate people. Often it is an obstacle to integration and creates discriminations as well.

2. Description of focus group participants

Participant 01 FDG1: Female; Employee as Italian L2 teacher; lives in Brescia; Qualification: Bachelor's Degree at the University of Foreign Languages and Master's Degree in teaching and promoting Italian language and culture; Italian L2 teaching experiences: Three years' experience in teaching Italian to the immigrants and foreign students. Currently literacy experience: Italian L2 teacher for adult immigrants.

Participant 02 FDG1: Female; Employee as Italian L2 teacher; lives in Brescia; Qualification: DITALS Certification of Competence for Teaching Italian to Foreigners and Specialization courses for teaching to illiterate people at Fondazione ISMU-Milan, Cooperative Rah-Bergamo, Cooperative Orizzonti-Padua, University of Venice; Italian L2 teaching experiences: Teacher of Italian as second language for asylum seekers and refugees since 2015; Currently literacy experience: Italian L2 teacher for asylum seekers and refugees.

Participant 03 FDG1: Female; Employee as Italian L2 teacher; lives in Brescia; Qualification: Master degree in Languages cultures and international communication and CEDILS; Italian L2 teaching experiences: over 12 years' experience in teaching Italian to non-Italian-speaking students, non-Italian-speaking children, women, immigrants and asylum seekers; teaching Italian to Chinese speaking people; Currently literacy experience: Italian L2 teacher for immigrant children.

Participant 04 FDG1: Female; Employee as Italian L2 teacher; lives in Brescia; Qualification: Master Degree in Language and Cultural for foreign people; Italian L2 teaching experiences: more than 6 years as teacher to young people coming from a migratory context, to immigrants for language test for Eu long term residence permit, to asylum seekers and

immigrant women; Currently literacy experience: Italian L2 teacher for asylum seekers and refugees.

Participant 05 FDG1: Female; Employee as Italian L2 teacher; lives in Brescia; Qualification: Bachelor's Degree at the University of Foreign Languages and DITALS and Certification of Competence for Teaching Italian to Foreigners; Italian L2 teaching experiences: seven years' experience in teaching Italian to foreign people: children, women, asylum seekers, refugees and foreign students; Currently literacy experience: Italian L2 teacher for asylum seekers and refugees.

Participant 06 FDG1: Female; Employee as Italian L2 coordinator; lives in Brescia; Qualification: Degree at University in Educational Sciences and CEDILS; Italian L2 teaching experiences: three years' experience in teaching Italian to foreign people; Currently literacy experience: Italian L2 coordinator for asylum seekers and refugees.

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Country Report 02. Werkstatt Unna

Theoretically, how do you do it?

[2018-11-04]

Responsible institution:	Werkstatt-Berufskolleg Unna/Germany
Authors:	Dieter Schulze

Introduction

In this country report we will focus on the methodologies employed by the partners for host language teaching and its literacy, as well as the main country specific debates related on this issue.

All the information is based on the analysis of data obtained by the focus groups conducted in each context.

This country report will be primarily based upon the perceptions of the teachers or facilitators themselves. For each broad theme discussed in the focus groups, and analysed in the template distributed (excel file), we ask to provide a summary of the findings. Specifically, we will discuss the following themes:

Participant's profiles (in literacy groups) and adaptation to the teaching/learning process to them.

Teacher profiles and ability to face the participant's profile diversity.

Main methodologies and activities applied and successful approaches identified.

Perceived difficulties, challenges and proposals.

For each of these themes, the following subsections will be discussed in ½ to 1 pages (excluding the quotes):

Similarities and differences in perceptions between groups of participants (e.g. ethnicity, social class, previous level education, work status, linguistic repertoire ...)

Context-specific factors (e.g. related to school, labour market characteristics, ...)

Change over time (e.g. changes in aspirations, challenges, ...)

The information in this country report derives from the respondents' discourses. When writing this country report, please try to bear in mind that also things that are missing, not changing, lacking, are interesting to consider. For instance, if respondents mention a lack of institutional/financial support, this is interesting to note as well. We recommend speaking

through the voices of the different actors involved as much as possible by including many relevant quotes throughout your report. An overview of the requested field description information is outlined in next section.

Annex: descriptions of the system and the respondents

In this section we give an overview of the specific context in terms of literacy and language learning devices (access for newcomers, etc.). This information will support the partner responsible for contextualising the cross-case analysis report.

Also, for each focus group discussion, we ask each partner to include a short description of the respondents, based on the short questionnaire they completed previously of their participation in the focus group discussion. Interview + Erfahrungen

Theoretically, how do you do it?

- 1) **Participant's profiles (in literacy groups) and adaptation to the teaching/learning process to them.**

The school were the participants in the focus group workcare for about 160 migrant people with focus on teaching German in the 1st year. Of these 160, 20 are illiterate ("Primary Illiteracy"¹) who only speak their mother tongue but have not learned to write or read before. About 30 other migrants are so-called "functional illiterates" who are unable to use everyday writing as it is taken for granted in the social context. They recognize / know letters and are quite capable of writing their names and a few words that either do not understand the meaning of a slightly longer text or do not understand it quickly and effortlessly enough to have practical use of it. A fixed boundary between "understanding" and "not understanding" does not exist. This description or categorization refers to their mother tongue. From this starting point they have to learn a new language. In particular, the "functional illiterates" are therefore also classified as "primary illiterates" when assigned to classes and courses.

Participant 03: "The migrants who come to us sometimes have been assessed by other organizations, where they have sometimes been misclassified and we have to reassess first WHAT their language skills actually are and WHERE they have an acute need for support."

The migrants and refugees are between 16 and 35 years old. 30 are unaccompanied minor refugees, 8 are older adolescents without adequate spelling skills in their mother tongue. 12 of the target group are married and some are divorced, widowed or separated adults. No migrant or refugee has a school degree. The certificates they have are not recognized due to their non-comparability in Germany. The school statistics or the inquiries at the admission

¹ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analphabetismus>

to the school and the entrance examinations for the assignment into the different stages leads to this result².

About 20% of the target group that attend to the school were the focus group participants work arrive because of word of mouth, 20% are sent to school by other organizations and the remaining 60% are assigned by the "Municipal Integration Centre".³

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

The participants in the focus group expressed that in the school where they work there are two different groups among the 50 illiterate students that they teach:

The group of those who speak reasonably well and show moderate good orality. They will be trained through the year with focus on literacy.

Participant 06 (FGD1): "Due to the oral skills, we are able to focus on a fast progress of their literacy. They have to learn to write letters relatively quickly and also to read sentences. After one year they can read and write usually at the level of a primary school child in the 2nd to 3rd school year."

The group that only with much effort recognizes and writes letters. Here, the teachers in particular train the vocabulary and phrases.

Participant 01 (FGD1): "Their orality level is pretty low, and they have to learn oral communication simultaneously. They can compose and write words after one school year while learning to speak German at the same time."

Within these two groups, there is also a need to differentiate (through didactical and methodological teaching differentiation) between migrants who come from the Arabic-speaking world and those who come from Africa with Latin characters. Even if both groups are illiterate, i.e. they don't know any alphabet, they were confronted with signs in their home

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https://www.kreis-unna.de/nocache/hauptnavigation/kreis_region/leben_im_kreis/auslaender_und_integrationszentrum/kommunales_integrationszentrum.html

countries. They kind of developed a functional illiteracy. This fact has to be kept in mind for didactical reasons, while teaching this group.

Participant 01 (FGD1): “Learning to write is twice as difficult for migrants from Arabic-speaking countries because they not only have to learn to write letters or words, but also to use a different appearance of signs. You have to learn twice as much.”

The aim of vocational school students is to obtain various qualifications in the German education system and then to start vocational training. All students have fled to Germany without any documents and diplomas. All of them have to start into this education system from the beginning. And without German knowledge, there is no access. Therefore, they learn to read and write in special classes for refugees and migrants, at the latest after the 2nd year they achieve level A2 or B1.

Participant 07 (FGD1): “Without a degree, nothing works in Germany!”

Context-specific factors

As it was said by the participants during the focus group, there are different kinds of educational background. Some of the students were unable to attend primary school and some of them, attended only for a few period of time..

Participant 02 (FGD1): “Most of them have more or less some knowledge about the Arabic letters, but no experience how to use them exactly. They communicate with their relatives in Turkey and Lebanon only orally via Smartphone.”

Participant 01 (FGD1): “They have to “draw” the letters first with the help of templates before they begin to “write”. It's like in elementary school!”

There is a remarkable difference between male and female migrants learning behavior. The female migrants are more introvert and withdrawn about their traumatic experiences. Nevertheless, they show a high ambition in learning and practicing language and putting much effort in studying. They show capability and the necessary patience in the learning process.

Participant 01 (FGD1): “They [female migrants] have a great ambition to learn everything very fast! Even if they are often to shy to take an active part within the class, they work at home and in class diligently.”

In the case of male adolescents very often become adolescent in group behavior and have difficulty concentrating. They hide their traumatic experiences through male impersonation. The loss of parents and the social environment, escape and onset of puberty are particularly unfavorable for male adolescents.

Participant 08: "Some of my young refugees come from Eritrea, they have been only 2 years in school then taken away from school by the military for services for the soldiers. After 4 or 5 years he fled military service and had a 3-year escape through Libya; They were there in slavery and fled again and came in 2015 via refugee-boat via Italy to Germany. They have no education, no literacy in their mother tongue. They want to get educated as fast as possible, but they have to follow a strong: First literacy, then examinations and then vocational training and then work and earning money."

Their will for education is subverted by their impatience and their need to take part in male impersonation processes. On the other hand is their demand for learning first of all motivated by status-promotion-needs.

Participant 08 (FGD1): "The boys have nothing left, no status, no degree. What else should they show how great they are? But they often underestimate the effort they have to make for a job qualification in Germany."

Talking about motivation, the trainers expressed that a lot of male refugees came to Germany only to earn money. They didn't imagine that first they have to learn the language and then to start educational and vocational training.

Change over time

While the teachers that participated in the focus group(s) were more likely to access national standard tests⁴ at the beginning of teaching and training activities, over the years they has

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<http://www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/Integrationskurse/Abschlusspruefung/SkalierteSprachpruefung/skaliertesprachpruefung-node.html> and <https://www.goethe.de/en/spr/kup/prf/prf.html> and <http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=de&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de%2Fdeutsch-sprachzertifikate.php>

The method of instruction in the German language certificates e.g. The Goethe-Institut is based on the principles of subject didactics of the selected subject in the national subject-specific curriculum.

Some of the most important principles:

- * Content and technical interpretation are taught on the basis of the subject,
- * the necessary communication methods for the communication in the subject (definition, classification, description, comparison, etc.) are taught,

modified and specified more and more with regard on the needs of the refugees and migrants from 40 nations and their diverse origins and ethnic groups. The rise of diversity within the students is due to increasement of refugees in the last years from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and African Countries. It's foremost a problem of cultural diversity within the classes, that causes the necessity of heterogenic solutions.

Participant 01 (FGD1): "The standard tests were designed at German young people and not at foreign ones. These tests considered the pictorial understanding of adolescents who grew up in a German social context. They did not consider the traumatic (war) experiences or the other culturally influenced images and their understanding. What's more, African teenagers have other images and symbols in their heads than Arab teenagers."

Specific improvement proposals

Students can learn to read and write with classical methods. Music, art and theater not only stimulate the language center, but also other brain centers and improve learning outcomes. This is one of our findings and experiences from the last 2 years. On all excursions, the migrants and refugees are accompanied by a school social worker.

Participant 08 (FGD1): "We're not going on a trip without Kevin (= School Social Worker <editorial note>)."

Writing and reading e.g. in an art exhibition or a science exhibition serve as supportive measures in the literacy process. The social worker is a confidant, because he also helps illiterate refugees with their private and social worries, because he goes to the authorities with them and because they can tell him everything that is not possible in the classroom. He has special office hours for them.

Participant 06 (FGD1): The fact that we go regularly to theatrical or cinema performances, that we visit art exhibitions, go to the neighboring International Light Art Museum, make music together and also go to the natural science exhibitions in Oberhausen or the Work Safety Exhibition in Dortmund, helps the language acquisition immensely. "

* the reading strategies as a basis for working with texts in subject teaching are taught,

* the language production competence is taught, which is required for oral communication in the classroom situation as well as for the handling of written tasks and examination tasks,

* Mehtods of technical communication are taught in order to use diagrams, illustrations, graphics etc. and to include them in the communication.

Participant 01 (FGD1): “The feel-good climate in our classes and the intensive care provided by the class teacher and school social workers help most learners to feel safe and comfortable. In this atmosphere you can learn more successfully.”

The (illiterate) refugees have larger and smaller traumas with terrible images and ideas in their heads. On the one hand they need the protective and social framework of the school and the social worker, on the other hand they have a very strong educational hunger, which is expressed by the fact that they like to play theater, visit exhibitions and want to see "beautiful things". Teachers always associate this with lesson content and thus use every opportunity for a meaningful excursion.

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

Language learning and literacy, both is inevitable intermingled, requires holistic learning with all their senses due to their learning socialization and their (traumatic) experiences.

Participant 01 (FGD1): “Whenever I combined learning with quiet atmosphere, theater or music, good light conditions and other well-being moments, the students learned much faster.”

The environment, disturbances, lighting conditions and other factors significantly and also sports and movement influence the learning of a language. If traumatic experiences of war supervene, it will be particularly difficult for learners to learn to read and write a new language.⁵

Participant 08 (FGD1): “Sometimes I have to pay more attention to the environment than to my lesson worksheets.”

Environment and influencing factors means much more, because this includes not only psychological accompaniment and art or theater, but also the interdependent cooperation of sport, work by hand, youth language, behavior in public, etc. It is only in this mixture that language learning and literacy begin to become sustainable.

There is a huge amount of didactic materials in Germany for learning German or reading and writing for elementary school children. In the last 6 years, several methods of reading

⁵ Bischofberger, Josef & Schmidt-Hieber, Christoph: Adulte Neurogenese im Hippokampus. Perspektiven der Hirnforschung. In: Neuroforum 3/2006 , S. 212-221, 2006.
Grein, Marion: Neurodidaktik: Grundlagen für Sprachlehrende. Reihe: Qualifiziert unterrichten. Hueber Verlag, 2013.

and writing have been scientifically tested in the pre-school field. The Werkstatt-Berufskolleg team has taken these as a basis for the transfer and implementation in the adult area and developed appropriate examples for the learners (Lebensweltbezug! - Learning contents and methods related to the real lives of our students). This includes the following topics the Werkstatt-Berufskolleg included into the curricula as follows⁶:

German language and Social Media.

German language and practical training in cooking and householding.

Sports (like football), teambuilding and German language

German language training at the workbench

Music and theatre (improvisation theatre, theatre performances, choir and singing, karaoke)

German youth language

Go's and No-Go's in the German public (training, role games, etc.)

Every teacher has the flexibility to set own priorities in teaching practice

Participant 08 (FGD1): "I always ask my students what topic they want to discuss in the next lesson."

2) **Teacher profiles and ability to face the participant's profile diversity.**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

The people that participated in the focus group 4 female and 4 male teachers⁷ between 23 and 52 years old participated in the focus group (5 in the first round and 3 more in the next round 3 months later) in the Werkstatt-Berufskolleg. They are university-trained teachers

⁶ <https://www.goethe.de/de/spr/unt/kum/jug.html>

⁷ 5 teachers were member of the first interview. 2 months later another 3 teachers joined the team and also got interviewed.

(for the secondary II level, youth and adults). All of them have acquired one of the following additional qualifications and are therefore allowed to direct literacy groups:

German as second language

German as a foreign language

German didactics for the care of migrants

2 colleagues have the additional qualification or have many years of experience in reading and writing learning for the illiterate⁸.

Context-specific factors

An important focus in the education of the teachers that participated during the focus group is the ability to use tests (standardized questionnaires adapted to the specific needs of the target group in the school) to assess relatively accurately the level of knowledge and ability of the students.

Participant 07 (FGD1): “I use the classification tests of the BAMF⁹ on the one hand, but with my colleague I have developed additional materials and maps with which I can visualize the questions so that the images can stimulate all the senses of the migrants and help them answer the questions better.”

As mentioned in the above explanations, it is very important that students learn with all their senses. If they become literate while learning a new language, they need this form of support. They learn faster and a little easier.

Participant 02 (FDG1): “I get the best worksheets¹⁰ or Apps¹¹ from the many offers of the various educational institutions that can be found on the Internet.”

Because teachers can only rely on an insufficient number of really good learning materials, they are also looking for good materials in the German-speaking Internet, which have been

⁸ See Annex

⁹ <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Startseite/startseite-node.html>

¹⁰ E.g. <http://www.germanforrefugees.com/> or <https://www.goethe.de/de/spr/ueb/dt1.html>

¹¹ <http://ankommenapp.de/APP/EN/Startseite/startseite-node.html>

developed since autumn 2015 after the coming of refugees to Germany. The apps and worksheets have been developed in several teacher communities.

The 5 classes with refugees and migrants (including the class for illiterate students) have been set up at Werkstatt-Berufskolleg as a separate “course of study” (Bildungsgang) and thus have their own line and a team of co-teachers of the same purpose: Language and literacy, so that after 1-2 years the access to the vocational education can be started successfully. The team of teachers in the other subjects (mathematics, English, politics, biology, etc) supports the specialist teachers for German. The general and content-related topics in German are also the basis for the work in the other school subjects. They are part of a common learning field and students always talk about the same topics in all school subjects at the same time. The vocational School in Germany is orientated on learning fields, i.e. the different subjects are thematically interconnected to comply with the holistic approach. On the other hand, there is a language-sensitive teaching in every subject. In the focus group everything is in line with language-skill-improvement, i.e. the topical changes are means to broaden the language approach on the students.

Change over time

This was a new and "growing" course of study. When the refugees came to Germany in 2015, there were no curricula and no working materials for younger and older refugees who are illiterate. All materials for literacy existed exclusively for German adults who went to the adult education center (Volkshochschule). There was nothing. The system for the care of refugees at vocational school was set up by the Ministry at the end of the 2015/2016 school year. And also these curricula and syllabi did not take into account the illiterate students. In upper secondary level, there were basically no special classes for literacy or learning German as a second language. Therefore, there is no "development", but only a "developing" from the beginning.

Participant 08 (FDG1): “We actually started from scratch, just colleague S.S. had many years of experience. We learned a lot from her, but the amount of new challenges was immense. For many months we searched for good materials, asked colleagues in other schools and institutions and learned a lot. Meanwhile, you can find many materials on the Internet.”

Not all teachers feel well trained for this specific task to teach illiterate. This is a common feeling when the teacher go to meetings with teachers of other social organizations.

Participant 06 /FGD1): “We have a highly specific and long-standing education as a teacher. And actually we would have to start another study for these illiterates! But there is no such training. It is difficult to gather all knowledge together.”

The training of German teachers in Germany (primary school, lower and upper secondary level, etc.) currently does not include literacy training in general, let alone adult literacy. The study program DaZ (German as a Second Language) or DaF (German as a Foreign Language)¹²

Specific improvement proposals

A literacy teacher must WANT to work with illiterates. Working with illiterates has not been the job of vocational school teachers so far. They are not trained for that. So far, it has been up to their own interest, whether they were privately further educated or not. It was up to now in their own interest and at present, no vocational school teacher for German language is prepared and obliged to teach illiterates. The challenge is to develop curricula and try it out in spite of non-existent curricula. Another challenge is to influence the development of curricula for literacy on the level of the Ministry of Education.

Participant 08 /FGD1): “Sometimes we all have to do it all at once: We have to empathize with the illiterate and their social burdens, we have learned “German as a second language”, but not literacy. And then there is the fact that the students of these classes also learn a foreign language at the same time! ”.

A literacy teacher must be capable of great empathy. The challenge for literacy teachers goes beyond just teaching one's own language as a foreign language. "Normal" students

¹² In Germany, apart from elementary school, literacy is a task of social organizations or adult education centers. Until the 70s, this topic was a taboo. There were no curricula for general use. Since 2008, literacy beyond elementary school has been a topic for the second grade. Currently, the Länder-Ministries of Education in Germany are developing the first curricula on a scientific scale at the secondary level II level. Their completion is expected in 2-4 years. For this reason, the teachers at the Workshop Vocational College gradually develop a preliminary curriculum, which is integrated into the cross-curricular curricula of the curriculum for training preparation and the International Refugee Class.

This process is not yet finalized and is subject to ongoing internal and process-oriented evaluation.

have a "representative of their own language" in their heads. All new words and symbols have a counterpart in their mother tongue.

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

Teaching German (as the 2nd language) is fundamentally different from literacy.

Teaching literacy in secondary education at vocational school is fundamentally new to the education system of Germany.

Literacy and simultaneously German as a foreign language multiplies the curricular and methodological difficulties of teaching exponentially.

And these challenges were also the trigger, once beyond the very "thin" curricular aids to seek support on the Internet, in various social integration associations and other schools.

For this reason, different methods from (pre-) primary and extra-curricular areas, developed materials from other organizations and also well-developed apps for refugees must be combined with recommendations from the university and then be evaluated in process-accompanying evaluation. These must be compared with the existing learning field curricula from other subjects and be enriched with positive and successful experiences from everyday teaching.¹³

This is currently recognizable and reflected in the next chapter.

¹³ The study (Working Paper 72) forms the conclusion of the research project "explanatory approaches for differences in second language acquisition" and presents relevant factors influencing second language acquisition, which are put to the test in a secondary data analysis of the BAMF integration panel. :Schnell und erfolgreich Deutsch lernen – wie geht das? 24.01.2017 - Bestellnummer: FFWP72,BAMF

3) **Main methodologies and activities applied and successful approaches identified.**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

The teachers that participated in the focus group use different methods of literacy according to concepts of the BAMF¹⁴ (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), because only these methods for the recognition of the language level can be officially recognized by the Employment Agency. But the way to this objective can be different. Each teacher has different students in his classes. Therefore, each teacher also uses different methods in different mix. At present, no uniform procedure can be described.

One example is the “alphamar”¹⁵ method published by the Klett-Verlag and the BAMF.

Participant 07 (FDG1): “But I also have good experiences with the LAMP method.”¹⁶

Alphamar is guided by the content and overall goals of the concept for a nationwide literacy course run by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). This method is aimed at teachers in literacy courses for adult learners of German who wish to tailor their lessons to the individual learning difficulties within their study group. An extensive pool on the online platform with worksheets and downloadable images allows easy and quick creation of your own materials for internal differentiation. The methods presented in the handbook were adapted to scientific findings at the University of Marburg for use in literacy courses and have all been tried and tested in practice.

Participant 01 (FDG1): “I think that mostly the Alphamar is too difficult for our learners.”

The fierce discussion in the focus group ultimately revealed that Alphamar does not work in the illiterate class, and that even in classes with limited reading and writing skills, the claims of this method are not trivially enough to keep the students busy. The German language skills are required, which are not available for the (illiterate) refugees.

¹⁴ <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Startseite/startseite-node.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.klett-sprachen.de/alphamar/r-1/10#reiter=titel&niveau=EinstiegA1> and <https://international.klett-sprachen.de/en/klett-international/c-578>

¹⁶ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/LAMP-Methode> or <http://lingualearn.blogspot.com/2011/02/lamp-language-acquisition-made.html>

Participant 08 (FDG1): “There is never only ONE method which works. Every school year I have to look for needs of our students (refugees) and I must decide, which mix of methods I will use.”

Participant 02 (FDG1): “There is not the right method, the right worksheet, the right access to the student. Everything has to be felt, tested, step by step.”

Some of the focus group participants support the use of this method and supplement it by methods for reading and writing in primary education, adapted to adult topics and concepts. Alphamar is not the only one method, the team of the vocational school uses. It’s everyday mixed with methods from elementary school and others.

The success is evaluated through regular written and verbal examinations. There is no requirement of the Education Ministry to write examinations. The ministry has determined for refugee classes that they can prove (no matter what type of review) and successfully learn German, as well as the necessary major subjects that will be required later to take the first final exam at the Hauptschulabschluss level. For this purpose, up to 3 years of preparation are granted. However, this way the refugees find as far too long, because they want to achieve degrees and earn money. That is why they repeatedly require teachers to take written or oral examinations in order to be able to perceive themselves and their progress in learning perceptibly.

Participant 05 (FDG1): “They must feel that they are treated the same as every German student.”

Context-specific factors

The study groups may not exceed a size of a maximum of 9-10 students.¹⁷

¹⁷ This is a variable the team of Werkstatt-Berufskolleg has identified in many discussions and teacher conferences that we have gained over the last 5 years.

Likewise, students must have plenty of time to talk to the school social worker and their teachers about their personal problems. We call that "creating mental health" in a safe social environment.

Participant 05 (FDG1): "They need more time to arrive in class than others, a certain amount of time to settle down in the learning process. They have the feeling that their teacher is like a parent who understands them."

The "right" teachers are a key to success: High affinity, empathy, and consistent behavior and challenge must be paired with a "warm" personality.

Participant 05 (FDG1): "Some (illiterate) refugees need pictures, some need reading-related speaking exercises, some work best with memory cards from the alphabet. I need as many methods as I have students."

Teaching therefore requires a high degree of differentiation in the methods. This is very difficult even in small groups of 7-10 pupils.

The teacher needs high methodological skills that teachers do not adequately receive in their education with a focus on literacy.

Change over time

Participant 07 (FDG1): At the beginning, I felt like I was teaching a completely new subject. The reality was that I had to teach literacy AND German as a second language at the same time. This combination multiplied the problems. Each student sat there with desperate and hopeful eyes and they thought that I just had to "flip" with my fingers so they could read and write right away and speak German.

Since the team started such courses for the first time in 2015, today the team of the Werkstatt-Berufskolleg can say that in addition to the literacy method and the staffing as well as the good student-teacher relationship, the social and psychological conditions play a central role in the success of the work. We needed up to 3 years to build a common strategy to help the illiterates successfully.

Participant 04 (FGD1): "I use several newer books at the same time and take out the content and methods that have proved suitable. In girls, I use more symbolic terms, images

and also those that affect the family, in boys, I work a lot with maps and pictures from the sport.”

One of the mechanisms developed by the teachers that took part in the focus groups is the use of a variety of new books and the development of teaching methods¹⁸ like introducing flashcards, digitally based teaching methods and apps, as well as theater or singing as part of a complex learning environment.

Participant 07 (FGD1): “After starting to sing German Christmas songs together with the music teacher penultimate Christmas, they asked again last Christmas because singing in German helped them a lot. It was trial and error what we did at the very beginning. But this trial-and-error-procedure helped us to find solutions how to teach successfully”

The focus group participants noted that singing in German lessons helps by connecting the different senses: Feeling (handwriting), seeing (eyes) and hearing (singing) strengthen the various learning centers in the brain and thus increase the learning success.

The use of different learning materials, different books, apps¹⁹ and different methods in a differentiated teaching with topics from the life reality of the students accelerates the learning of the language.

Main successful strategies developed

Participant 01 (FGD1): “When we first searched for methods, we found that there are many. They had to be tried. And then we realized that it was not the methods alone that brought success, but rather the cross-curricular organization of the lessons.”

Due to the many attempts and joint team meetings, the teachers were able to pick up and test some methods, pass them on to the team and integrate them into the didactic planning in mutual exchange:

Reading by writing: The focus of the written language acquisition are the structure of the writing through the sound analysis, the sound discrimination and the sound decomposition.

¹⁸ https://www.daf.tu-darmstadt.de/media/daf/dateien/pdfs/studienarbeiten/Schroeder_Alphabetisierung_2011.pdf

¹⁹ Described in the chapters before

The most important aid here is an initial sound table with various pictorial loudspeakers, which is used until the learner no longer needs them. Participants first learn to break down the phonetic language in order to write individual words. The individual phonemes are assigned to the corresponding graphemes.

Syllable method: This method is used in the Alphamar project and is a combination of the primary-pedagogical syllable method and the Paulo Freire keyword method. At the heart of the synthetic-phonological method is the syllable structure. This is learned by clapping while speaking or stepping in syllables until the learners have internalized the speech rhythm.

Phonetic methods: Graphematics and phonetics are in the foreground, phoneme-grapheme correspondences are being set up. The aim of the method is first that learners can put together sounds into words or determine individual sounds in words. This method can be used by students who have a good feeling for sounds.

Playful learning: Through the playful mediation or consolidation of teaching content, positive effects on the emotional level can be achieved for the participant. For the learner, this method of mediation focuses on the goal of the game (not the learning objective). The language is no longer learned in the language learning situation, but becomes a necessary means of communication in order to communicate about the game. The spoken language is in literacy lessons but only a means that leads to the game goal. The didactic goals are hidden in the teaching content of the game and in the training of elementary abilities. This can be, for example, the consolidation of the letter knowledge or a better distinction of these.

In the second step, the teaching team was able to improve the learning outcomes by organizing the teaching field across all fields. These included:

Literacy haptically and visually with examples from the current lives of our students. Including different worlds of life, music, art, theater and aesthetics in the learning processes.

Inclusion of exercise and sport in the learning processes.

Specific improvement proposals

A school does not have to "integrate" the very special work with illiterates on the margins of school life but integrate it into their "portfolio as a school" and incorporate it as an integral part of their school program so that it becomes part of the school identity.

Participant 05 (FDG1): “This is our school, we will find a solution for everyone. And if we can not do it alone, then as a team!”

Under the direction of the Didactic Leadership, the school's German teachers meet every two months to discuss their methods used in one afternoon, compare them and make a plan for further changes in the teaching of (illiterate) refugees.

Colleagues attended further education courses in 2018 and passed on their acquired knowledge of German lessons and literacy of refugees to the team.

The developed material, copied lesson examples, books, videos and films were purchased and made available in the teacher's library.

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

The focus group participants noted that there is currently no data on the success of the different literacy methods for refugees and migrants. There are currently no universally valid curricula for literacy in secondary education.

You can summarize them as follows:

Refugees who need to be literate need an entire toolbox around them that facilitates learning and encourages intrinsic motivation.

This includes:

Traditional learning with standard teaching materials

Haptic, olfactory and audiovisual learning

Learning through exercise (sports)

Learning in an emotionally safe environment

Learning in emotionally stimulating peer groups

4) **Perceived difficulties, challenges and proposals.**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

Currently, the entire team of teachers (55 staff) of the "Werkstatt Berufskolleg" (only 5 years old!) is preparing a so-called school program, in which the guidelines, mission and vision are developed. The focus is on the inclusion of the disadvantaged with the corresponding spatial, personnel and content requirements. Literacy is an integral part of this concept.

Participant 01 (FDG1): "We [the teachers] are not enough. It's more successful to work with very little groups of 5-7 max and not 10-12 students."

Participant 06 (FDG1): "We need more training and knowledge."

There are not enough financial resources for teachers and not enough qualified trainings or further education for teachers.

Only when the school has finalized the school program, applications for more teachers to the district government can be made who help us to work and learn in a more differentiated way and in smaller groups with the illiterate.

Context-specific factors

Participant 01 (FDG1): "We (the teachers <editorial note>) are not enough. It's more successful to work with very little groups of 5-7 max and not 10-12 students."

In Germany there are special parameters for assigning teacher positions to the school that must be met. NO school, not even the public schools, are currently fulfilling these conditions so that more teacher positions can be assigned. The hurdles to approve more teachers are currently so high that only schools that specialize in individual target groups will do so. This means that the Werkstatt-Berufskolleg has to speed up its school program so that more teachers' positions are approved. Then the team can specialize even more on illiterates.

Change over time

Participant 08 (FDG1): "Where are common good curricula? The ministries of the Länder don't help us fast enough."

In the current discussion, there is no systemic change in the German discussion in the sense that the curricula for combating illiteracy have been permanently changed. The migration movement by the refugees in 2015 to Germany has meant that many small good approaches and individual methodological recommendations have been published better in Germany

and are now more well-known in the expert public. The ministries of the Länder are working on new recommendations for upper secondary education. This development is not yet completed.

Weaknesses/strengths

The weaknesses are the different curricula developed from different non-comparable situations. For adult education, there are curricula developed by social organizations and, in particular, Volkshochschulen (adult education centre). But these curricula are not transferable to the situation of refugees because they were developed for adult Germans and not for refugees who are unable to read or write their own language (see quotes from above!).

Participant 08 (FDG1): “I love the interdisciplinary collaboration.”

However, this transitional phase also has its advantages. The workshop team of the vocational training college develops new ideas for the training of illiterates on the basis of daily requirements. This has resulted in a large variety of individual lessons, which every single one of the team of teachers can fall back on when needed. In addition, the teachers of music, mathematics, art & theater as well as other departments work together. This broad spectrum of cooperation increases the quality of literacy work.

The specific suggestions for improvement and ideas emerge from the previous chapters and description.

Conclusion

During the focus group the participants noted that one of the biggest problems in Germany is the high number of refugees who came into the German education system very quickly and relatively uncoordinated and now have to be integrated. The German education system is federally organized and each "Land" uses other resources, curricula, access systems and regulations regarding the education of refugees. This happened after worldwar II when the allies organized the political system of the "new Germany".

The school were the focus group participant work also pointed that there are no curricula for these students. They currently need to be developed and evaluated before they are made mandatory in vocational school curricula. This entails a number of challenges for the teaching staff of the Werkstatt Berufskolleg.

During the focus group, the teachers also expressed the necessity that lessons have to be designed specifically to meet the needs of young refugees who are illiterate. Curricula of adult education centers are adapted to German illiterates, but not made for young refugees who only speak their mother tongue but do not read or write insufficiently. These curricula of adult education centers are also not made for people with traumas, war experiences and other burdens.

Last but not least, the educational system is financially and structurally insufficiently prepared for the challenge of "illiteracy". There is a lack of trained teachers; there is a lack of technical equipment and a lack of spatial resources and nationwide offers. The schools, which now take care of many refugees and migrants, have to help themselves in this need and find solutions.

Not only in the vocational training college but nationwide, secondary school teachers make a "virtue of necessity": Formal and informal networks have been established in which best practice is shared. In addition, the dedicated teachers in particular are developing new teaching units and in the Werkstatt-Berufskolleg various other subjects (music, art, theater, mathematics, sports) will be included in this development across disciplines. This strengthens the quality of the lesson units for illiterate people and thus their success.

At the moment, new methods, approaches and lessons are being developed "on the ground". Currently, new curricula are being worked on at the ministry level. But there is still a lack of intensive collaboration in Germany between social organizations, public and private

schools, integration authorities, school ministries etc. The existing networks are horizontal networks with partners doing similar things, but no vertical networks between the actors at the grassroots and administrative levels of the school ministries.

The curriculum development work of the schools is promising and auspicious, but always tailored to the specific needs of their respective students. They require generalization, which can only be achieved through testing and evaluation. This is currently being done by the school ministries, but it still takes time.

Annex

1. Description of the country language learning/ literacy system (devices and access)

The German language learning/literacy system is a very complicated system because of the federal education independence of the school system in the 20 Länder (federal states) of Germany. All federal states independently decide on the respective method of reading and writing learning. This is an ongoing process and the last reform in the state of Northrhine-Westphalia dates from 2017.

School education is free, only in some private schools parents have to pay fees.

Due to the independence of the federal educational system, the curricular requirements for language learning are only uniform in the respective federal state. In addition, the curricula in adult education differ from those in the school (lower and upper secondary level). Trained teachers with DaF (German as a Foreign Language) and DaZ (German as a Second Language) are not allowed to teach at school automatically. They often have no university education. Teachers in the school have a special Germanistik teacher training and may also not automatically perform in adult education DaZ or DaF or even literacy, but also need for this special training and certificates.

The many existing curricula are partly incompatible and are not interchangeable. A comprehensive survey of which methods or which textbooks currently used in the classrooms is currently not available.²⁰

The teachers in the schools are currently working with the inclusion of refugees and migrants. It is up to the individual teachers how to use differentiated instruction to ensure that all illiterate students, both German and foreign, receive equal opportunities. This is currently a sisyphos work. In vocational schools additional teachers can be recruited. But there are currently about 40,000 teachers missing.

Outside of the school, social and integration organizations also receive money for language courses. Adult education centres (Volkshochschule) have always been extracurricular institutions worthy of further education for adults. All institutions work with different curricular approaches. There is no central control of language courses, only the BAMF coordinates

²⁰ <http://www.lesen-in-deutschland.de/html/content.php?object=journal&lid=1349>

the training of teachers for "German as a Second Language" (DaZ) for refugees and migrants.

The fact that education is being decided by the state and not centrally does not allow enough people in Germany to discuss the quality of the education system.

2. Description of focus group participants

Participant 01 (FGD1)

Male, 26 years old, University Degree Master in German and Philosophy, lives in Unna, teacher with 2nd states examination, working in vocational school (WBK), teaches German, Philosophy, literacy all the school year, with boys from 10 countries (African and Arabian countries)

Participant 02 (FGD1)

Female, 52 years old, University degree 2nd states examination as teacher for German and economical sciences, lives in Dortmund, working in vocational school (WBK), teaches German, literacy economics all the school year, with girls and boys from 8 countries (African and Arabian countries). She works with this target group since 17 years (in her former school with migrants from special schools). Special training for literacy 4 years ago.

Participant 03 (FGD1)

Female, 28 years old, University Degree Master in English, lives in Unna, learning as teacher, working in vocational school, working in vocational school (WBK) and teaches English and literacy all the school year, with girls and boys from 10 countries (African and Arabian countries)

Participant 04 (FGD1)

Female, 48 years old, University degree 2nd states examination as teacher for German and politics, lives in Dortmund, working in vocational school (WBK), teaches German and literacy all the school year, with girls and boys from 10 countries (African and Arabian countries). She works with this target group since 10 years (in her former school with migrants from special schools). Special training for literacy 10 years ago.

Participant 05 (FGD2)

Mail, 31 years old, University degree, Master in German and Psychology, teacher with 2nd states examination for German, Psychology and literacy, teaches all 3 subjects all the year in the vocational school (WBK), literacy with boys and girls from Africa.

Participant 06 (FGD2)

Mail, 36 years old, University degree Master in German, teacher with 2nd states examination for German, teaches literacy to boys from Arabic countries. Special training for literacy 3 years ago.

Participant 07 (FGD2)

Female, 49 years old, University degree, 2nd states examination as teacher for German and economy sciences. Teaches all subjects all the year in the vocational school (WBK) Literacy with girls from African and Arabic countries

Participant 08 (FGD2)

Mail, 35 years old, University degree, 2nd states examination as teacher for German and politics, teaches all subjects all the year in the vocational school (WBK), literacy with boys and girls from Africa and Arabic countries

Country Report 03. Probens

Theoretically, how do you do it?

[2018-11-9]

Responsible institution: PROBENS Coordinator: Guiomar Gude	
Authors:	

Introduction

In this Country Report we will focus on the principles and methodologies employed by each of the participants in the two Focus Group that were run on the 18th February 2018 in the city of Barcelona, led by Probens.

The first Focus Group was integrated by six participants, all of them currently teaching literacy in the host language. Four of them were professionals in the field of adult education or had previous experience in the field, and two of them were not. There were four females and two males and the ages ranged from 20 to 80 years old. The professional profiles were also diverse; two of the participants have worked as a literacy teacher for more than 20 years in an Adult public school. The other two participants with experience in adult learning have worked from 1 to 3 years as literacy teachers in non-profit organizations.

The second Focus Group was integrated by seven participants, all of them currently teaching literacy in the host language. Four of them were professionals in the field of social education and teaching Catalan/Spanish as a second language. Three of them are retired teachers that are collaborating as volunteers in different organizations. There were five females and two males and the ages ranged from 20 to 70 years old. The professional profiles were also diverse; two of the participants have worked as a literacy teacher for more than 10 years in an Adult public school. The other participants with experience in adult learning have worked from 1 to 6 years as literacy teachers in non-profit organizations.

All the information that appears in this report is based on the analysis of the data obtained in the abovementioned focus groups. While the only source to write the body of this report and the quotes is the actual information and quotes stated by the participants, the studies, resources and other materials that are mentioned in this report were gathered a posteriori.

The information and data gathered through this Focus Group refers to the education System in Catalonia and the educational context of the regions and organizations where each participant is working or collaborating as a volunteer. Furthermore, this report does not describe accurately the Spanish educational system, nor the Catalan one or other regional services. On one side because in Spain the politics on adult education are transferred to the Autonomous Communities (this means Catalonia in this case), so that the National Legislation does not concretize as much as to be informative. Consequently, this report aims at contribute to draw an overall picture of the literacy and host language local

and regional services through the description of the most common situations experienced by the participants. Similarly, the didactic and methodologic proposals and practices described in this report are a sample of those developed by the participants in this Focus Group and do not aim at represent the totality of the educational practices and methodologies in any region or even in a particular school or educational setting.

The quotes are directly translated from the original language (catalan and spanish).

The exact meanings of some of the technical lexicon used in this report can be found in the brief lexicon in section 1 of this **Report (títol del material acabat)**.

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Theoretically, how do you do it?

Please provide per institution a report of 1/2 to 1 page for each subsection (if relevant) on the analytical part of the fieldwork. Please support your analysis with as many quotes as possible (not included in the ½ to 1 page).

1) **Participant's profiles (in literacy groups) and adaptation to the teaching/learning process to them.**

According with the focus group and quest results, it is worthy to say that the main characteristic in participant's profile is diversity. The students of the centers that took part in the focus group, generally are men and women. The age is mainly between 18 and 50 years old and the most representative countries are: Morocco, Pakistan and Senegal. According to the trainers responses, the legal status of the students in literacy lessons is variable but at least, half of them have a regular situation. The average of years living in the country is 5 years. The youngest people presents a minor time of residence (from 4 to 12 months) in contrast to older people have lived in the country for more than 4 years. They also present a diverse family situation. One of the most remarkable results is related to the labor situation. The results show that is variable with a high prevalence of job insecurity and risk of social exclusion.

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

In terms of motivation, we find out that there is a huge diversity. According to the trainers, the main reasons for the student's participation in literacy lessons are: work, regularization, social benefits and personal motivation. The percentage of people who attend to improve or continue their education is very low.

Participant 03 FGD1: *“The place where I am (teaching) I could say that 80% of the students come because of the “rooted certificate”²¹ that they need and, maybe it is true that there is a small group of women that (...) they have met people, they feel very good (...)and they come there for awhile, just to learn”.*

Participant 03 FGD2: *“I believe that there are different reasons. There is not only one. There are lot of people very motivated to learn how to read and write because they know that it is a thing that...that they want, isn't it? they want to do it because they miss it, they miss not being able to ...write and read. But for sure there are other (students) that (come) just for the documents...”*

Even if the motivation for attending to the literacy lessons is very different among the students, what the trainers showed during the focus group was that most of the students present a common interests to learn daily life content:

Participant 06 FG2: *“What I see is that some women want to understand their (children's) school notes, speak, understand a meeting, well, the language. (...) (they want to understand) the school notes and not have to ask always to their husband...”.*

Related to their linguistic repertoire all the informants agreed that is very rich, with a predominant presence of Moroccan Arabic and Amazigh. Urdu and African dialects as Wolof are also very representative. There is also an important presence of colonial languages (French and English) as a second language. In general, there is a quite good knowledge of oral Spanish.

²¹ Rooted certificate (Informe d'arrelament social in Catalan) is a mandatory report to prove social integration in the process of obtaining a temporary residence permit for social roots after 3 years of irregular residence in the country. Among the required documentation, "documentation is required accrediting the efforts of integration through the monitoring of social and labor insertion programs (knowledge of Catalan society), with sufficient knowledge of the Catalan and / or Spanish language or of collaboration in social networks ". <http://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/ca/tramits/tramits-temes/Informe-darrelament-social-a-Catalunya?moda=1>

Participant 06 FGD2: *yes, Arabic, Amazigh...in Senegal maybe a little bit of French."*

Participant 03 FGD2: *"Yes, different levels".*

Participant 04 FGD2: *there are some of them that are illiterate but they have been here for a long time (10, 15, 12, 5 or 6 [years]) and they speak well (Spanish) or quite well (...) but they don't know how to write even a letter."*

Most of the participants are illiterate in their mother tongue. Some of them present few notions of writing in their mother tongue or in the colonial language. People who have been living in the country for more than 4 years know oral Spanish quite well but, young people with less than one year of residence have very low oral Spanish skills. Concerning their educational background, the majority of the participants have never attended the school and very few of them have the primary school.

Participant 01 FGD1: *"It's like this, in language (oral) yes but those who are illiterate, those who have never been in the school and are not literate in their mother tongue, it's very difficult for them to start. It is very difficult for them to understand the relation (between the sound and the letter).*

Participant 01 FGD1: *"in terms of speaking, well, some of them more (...) it means some of them has not been alphabetized and well, some of the young have not finished primary school and they are able to write something..."*

Context-specific factors

Many of the people who attend to literacy lessons are living in a social exclusion risk situation. Their instability in terms of work and their problems affect directly in their learning process. Sometimes because the problems don't allow them to concentrate and, sometimes because they can't attend regularly to the lessons.

Participant 1 FGD1: *"One of the main problems is that they stop attending the lessons."*

The majority of the trainers don't use a pivot language with the participants. This generates a distance in the relationship between the trainer and the students that can generate non desired situations in the classroom.

Many times, the schools and educational centres have to face not only heterogeneous groups but also specific student's necessities. For example, the centres that have women who are mother as students may have resources for children care as specific spaces and staff.

Participant 02 FGD2: *“With this oral language heterogeneity we have...maybe 15 students in the classroom and we must have between 6 or 7 trainers depending on the group. It is true that maybe it's possible to manage the heterogeneity doing common things but (...) this, all the time, is not possible because it is very very complicated.”*

Change over time

Over the years, the student's profile has changed. Since 90s decade until now, the student's profile in literacy lessons has changed in Catalonia. At the beginning, most of the literacy students were people with catalan or spanish as a mother tongue. It starts changing in the 90s until now, when we find that most of the people who attend to literacy lessons are not catalan/spanish native speakers.

Specific improvement proposals

Taking into account the realities exposed by the trainers, two principal kinds of difficulties have been detected. The first one is related to the personal situation. Frequently the students are in a situation of social exclusion and suffering job insecurity which affects directly to their learning process. The second one is related to the specific learning process necessities expressed by the trainers. Regarding this, one of the main concerns detected is how to manage heterogeneity.

The social exclusion risk is a factor that may be taken into account because it affects directly to the emotional state of the students and, consequently, to their learning process. Another factor that directly affects to the lessons is the life instability. This, in turn, generates an unstable attendance, which is an added difficulty to the learning process, an added difficulty to the learning process. During the focus group some of the trainers proposed learning

communities and the inclusion of social intervention in the literacy programs as a possible solution.

Taking their experience as an example, some of the trainers proposed to adapt the lessons to different levels and also, the necessity of including oral skills in literacy lessons by giving conversational lessons support. Among the mechanisms developed by the trainers to manage the heterogeneity, we can highlight the following ones: to divide the class in smaller work groups, to teach at least 3 literacy levels and to adapt the materials to the diversity of necessities.

Participant 02 FGD2: *“sometimes for me it's better to make groups and go to the goals (...) adapting to each specificity”.*

Participant 03 FGD1: *“I have at least three levels.”*

Participant 06 FGD1: *“what I think is that the materials should adapt at least in three levels and in a progressive grade of difficulty.”*

Another proposal is to teach oral language first, and don't start literacy lessons until the students have achieved a minimum of speaking skills.

Participant 02 FGD1: *“We have established as a condition a minimum of oral Spanish/Catalan. Otherwise, we focus first on the oral language and then on the literacy.”*

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

Diversity

Levels of heterogeneity

Plurilingualism

Risk of social exclusion

Specific Necessities

2) **Teacher profiles and ability to face the participant's profile diversity.**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

All of the trainers that participated in the focus groups in Barcelona, are currently teaching literacy in non-profit organizations either as employees or as volunteers. Some of the volunteers were professionals and some not. Professional volunteers developed their professional life in adult public schools. It is important to note that in Barcelona for non profit organizations is not possible to develop their activity without volunteers. That is because of many reasons, for instance, the importance of the civic participation in the City, which in some way provides a great amount of volunteers or the lack of human resources, among other motives. About the typology of trainers in the organizations where the focus group participants are teaching literacy:

Participant 06 FGD2: *volunteers.*

Participant 02 FGD1: *“Yes but I think Caritas is one of the few organizations that pay for a teacher, isn't it?”*

The majority of the professionals have an academic and professional background related to education, social education and psychology. Almost have of them come from the field social education. The rest of background studies is very diverse: art history, engineering, children teaching... Few of them have specific training in teaching Catalan/Spanish as a foreign language or host language, neither in literacy. The main reason for having few literacy training is that there is not an official specific training for that. The only providers of some training courses are non-profit organizations and this is all the training these teachers can access currently.

Participant 01 FGD1: *“There is quite a lot retired teachers.”*

Participant 06 FGD1: *“There is not a specific training, nowhere.”*

Participant 02 FGD1: *“When I say that there is not is that there is not a postgraduate, there are not university studies (...) I think that this professionals may have an specific training, postgraduate or a specialization. With a minimum of 150 hours.”*

Participant 06 FGD1: *We started without any kind of training, me at least I am talking about my experience. I studied contemporary history.*

Another noteworthy topic that emerged in the conversations was related to motivation. To the question of what you consider to be the main motivations of the volunteers when they decide to collaborate, some of the answers were as follows:

Participant 01 FGD1: *“Most of them (the volunteers) arrive (...) without knowing very well what they are going to face.”*

Participant 07 FGD1: *“Responsibility.”*

Participant 04 FGD2: *“Well, it is like the continuation of, it means, look like they throw you in the garbage (regarding to the retirement but you can continue doing something.”*

Participant 05 FGD2: *“desire to transmit”*

According to trainer’s experience, the average of teaching literacy experience is less than 5 years. People with longer experience on literacy present less than half of their experience with migrant people. It means that their experience on literacy in the host language is lower.

Participant 04 FGD1: *“Well, i had no kind of teaching experience when i arrived (...) they gave me a training of 4 hours explaining to me (the method that they use) and some advices but then, when you arrive to the class, the reality is another . Each student has an specific profile.”*

Participant 02 FGD1: *“we collect the experience of 40 years of literacy.”*

Context-specific factors

During the focus group the trainers started talking about who must be protagonist during the lessons. All of them agreed that it should be the students. Curiously some of them recognized that many times they are not able, or they don’t have the mechanisms/resources, to develop a lesson with the student as the main protagonist.

Participant 06 FGD2: *“Mainly thinking about that i must try not, there are many times that i have been more protagonist than them (the students).”*

Another difficulty expressed by employees from non-profit organizations, was the volunteers management. Many times the lack of resources complicates their job.

Change over time

The student's profile changes (see above) affects directly to trainer's practices. Regarding this, the most veteran trainer in the group expressed as follows:

Participant 06 FGD1: *(...) the (international) migration topic was a topic for us. It came after we had taught literacy to native speakers for a long time. With native speakers you had a pivot language, normal, that was yours, let's say Spanish. So we had to start changing our minds because of the huge diversity (...) and I believe that there have been too many years in a inertial situation. This inertia has made difficult for us to realize that we must change.*

This declaration indicates that over many years, the professionals were having some resistances to change. It suggest us thinking that maybe, this is one of the reasons because new methodologies and materials in this field have hardly been developed until now.

Specific improvement proposals

In this part of the focus group, the trainers described the mechanisms that they have developed to face the daily problems exposed before. They also remarked some proposals in order to improve their practice.

In relation with the change of the students profile over the years (from native speakers to not native speakers), again, a minimum proficiency of the host language before starting the literacy process is suggested to be important

Participant 02 FGD1: *"The oral language is the indispensable vehicle to literate."*

Talking about trainers' profile, the participants expressed different opinions and strategies developed. Some of them defended the importance of having professional teachers, no matter if they are volunteers. Some others, have developed volunteering management strategies as accompaniment, tutorship and continuous training in order to supply the lacks of non-professional volunteers.

Participant 02 FGD1: *"Our option is that literacy must be with professionals..."*

Participant 01 FGD1: *"when a new volunteer joins the group, we have a person of reference (...) accompanying the volunteer (...) in order to make him feel less lost at the beginning. It is how we try to supply (the difficulties of) the first day..."*

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

Lack of specific training.

Lack of professional teachers.

Lack of specific materials in host language literacy.

A necessity to adapt more to the changes of the students' profiles.

3) **Main methodologies and activities applied and successful approaches identified.**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

Goals, methodologies, materials, typology of the activities, planification/evaluation.

During the focus groups, the participant trainers expressed that literacy lessons' main goal is to teach the students how to read the world and understand it. For one of the participants, to provide literacy instruction means as follows:

Participant 06 FGD1: *what is important is for what is useful the literacy isn't it? So, if they (the students) are clear about what is it for (literacy): to discover the world, to read it, to understand it, to communicate, after that they do this (showing the syllabic material) and whatever.*

In order to achieve these main goals, we asked to the participants how do they do that and which kind of methodologies are they using during the lessons. The results were that the predominant methodology is mostly mixed with a predominance of the syllabic method (PA-PE-PI-PO-PU). During the conversations, the trainers noticed the importance of the significance of the content in the literacy learning process. But nevertheless, frequently they decide to use a less significative method:

Participant 07 FGD2: *"You have to adapt as you can because, I started (...) is a system that I am not convinced with, this direct-syllabicall system. "Pa-la, pie, pu-pa" and all of this... because after that there is not reading comprehension. We move along the writing but there is not reading comprehension."*

Participant 06 FGD2: *“...because I think that with the global method sometimes, it is longer because its complexity is different.”*

One of the reasons given by the participants to explain this situation is that there are not specific materials for literacy in the host language. Most of the used materials in the lessons are conceived to teach literacy in the mother tongue. It means that this kind of material does not give a response to the students necessities. Some of the participants described it as follows:

Participant 03 FGD2: *“Boring”*

Participant 01 FGD2: *“very boring (when talking about syllabically materials)”*

Participant 06 FGD2: *“I agree much more with a fridge note or something like that because it has an enormous simplicity.”*

Participant 01 FGD2: *“I mean that in Spanish there are many things to be used , or thousands of manuals but, we have any for literacy.”*

Regarding to the activities used in their literacy lessons, the participants mentioned different types. Some trainers pointed out the importance of using oral activities that introduce a reflection around a word:

Participant 04 FGD1: *“For example, today is...what day is today?, Wednesday. And I say, I stay in front of the blackboard and I say, ok, which are the vowels in the word Wednesday? and they say "e", "a"... “*

They also pointed out the importance of the development of psychomotor skills using different kind of materials. Manipulative material, sugar blackboards and writing guidelines were some of the examples:

Participant 04 FGD2: *“...we have written guidelines with 4 lines to write, the Montessori one.”*

Taking into account that the illiterate students usually have a more developed kinesthetic path of learning, some teachers consider this can be an advantage in order to use manipulative materials as well as other kinds of activities.:

Participant 03 FGD2: *"I've started this year to do more things (activities) because before it was much more...(sillabical) and now I see it works much better.*

Also the significance of the material is considered to be very important. In this regard, one of the topics that was discussed in the conversations was the use of real material in the classroom.

Participant 02 FGD2: *"real materials yes but, adapted."*

Participant 05 FGD2: *"One thing is to brig real materials but in the moment of using them, make it easy, it means ...what you ask to the student to do."*

When the participants were asked about the lessons planning and the evaluation system, all of them agreed that there is few time to plan the lessons. The employees and also the volunteers themselves recognized that the lessons preparation is an added difficulty, especially when volunteers are in charge of that.

Participant 06 FGD2: *"It requires a lot of preparation."*

"I believe that the volunteers many times (...) we don't have more time than the lesson itself...responsibilities"

Context-specific factors

Even if the trainers have expressed the importance of using different kinds of activities in literacy lessons, the results from the questioner and focus group were that few of them do implement that methodology indeed. One of the reasons that explain this is the lack of specific materials as well as the lack of time and staff. This is the current situation in most of the non-profit organization, and this is making very difficult to implement innovative methods and activities in the literacy and host language language lessons.

Participant 6 FGD1: *"well, I think that in the organizations and even in the (public) schools it is (the lack of time and class preparation) one of the important deficits."*

Change over time

As a result of what we were pointing before, the majority of the interviewed trainers keep using literacy for native speakers materials. Most of the trainers are realizing that a change is necessary but the lack of resources prevents it from happening.

Main successful strategies developed

There are many strategies developed by the trainers in order to try to keep the quality and balance this lack of resources. For example, to counter that the volunteers usually don't have enough training and neither enough time to prepare the sessions. Some organizations plan the teaching sessions themselves to help the volunteers in this task:

Participant 2 FGD1: *“what we do is that sometimes the organization facilitates the planning and the resources to the person that comes (volunteer).”*

In order to facilitate the evaluation of the learning process, ongoing assessment is one of the best tools. It also serves as a way of controlling the evolution of the course and also, as a communication tool between volunteers in shared courses.

Participant 04 FGD2: *“In this course we have a Google Drive with a file that is called "ALPHA" where you can find the name of all the students and once you have finished your lesson, each volunteer has to explain what has been done and what is the proposal for the next lesson.”*

Participant 02 FGD2: *“you can do it with the diary, through class observation and after that, you can do something. With literacy you can make a specific evaluation activity that you say, they have to know: "name", "address"...”*

Specific improvement proposals

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

Necessity of innovative activities and methods

Lack of resources

The importance of planning and evaluation.

4) **Perceived difficulties, challenges and proposals.**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)-Context-specific factors

All of the trainers who participated in the focus group stand out that there is a great lack of resources. Most of the non-profit organizations (excepting the religious ones) depend directly on governmental grants. This makes their economic structure unstable. Lack of resources is a transversal problem, as it affects to all areas related to literacy teaching to migrant and refugee population.

Participant 06 FGD2: *“It is very precarious.”*

Participant 02 FGD2: *“... in (name of a religious organization) for example we got a computer's benefaction because there is a person that is working to get donations. But at the organizations usually they don't have enough money to pay for a person who is looking for donations.”*

Another remarkable topic that affects transversally to literacy in the host language areas is the lack of specific trainings. Nevertheless, thanks to the effort of non-profit organizations there are some projects that try to solve this problem. However this topic is almost unknown for the academic institutions and, thus, it is not worked as a training topic in any of the universities or teacher education centers.

Institutional coordination is also a matter to solve. The public Adult schools are reducing the literacy offer exponentially²². In the last years there has been a gradually reduction of the investment. Because of this, non-profit organizations are getting more and more the

²² See annex 1.

responsibility to offer literacy to immigrant people and refugees over time, specially to those who have less economic resources.

Participant 2 FGD1: *"... what i am saying is that the public administration and the educative administration, Department of Education (...) is leaving its functions (...) and who is funding literacy (programmes) is the Department of Work. There are no rights. The Department of Education is giving the responsibility of teaching literacy to biologists, mathematics, people that at the end... they give up."*

Participant 02 FGD2: *"...public administration should invest more."*

Change over time Weaknesses/strengths- Specific improvement proposals

In recent years, public investment in literacy has declined considerably. A direct consequence of this is the lack of economical, human and infrastructure resources.

Participant 03 FGD3: *"In the adult school where I had been working the last years of my professional career, literacy has been stopped. (...) and many schools have already deleted it (from their offer)."*

Another remarkable strength is the big sense of responsibility shown by the groups. The participants expressed a high level of consciousness about the boundaries that the students find in their daily life as a result of their personal situations and their "migrant" or "refugee" status. They directly link the worsening of the conditions in literacy classrooms with abandonment from public administrations. They are very empowered in the claim of literacy as a fundamental right.

Consequently, they consider a matter of duty of the Public Administration to take seriously their responsibilities and guarantee the right of illiterate foreign citizens and refugees to have a quality education. To achieve this goal, is necessary to invest more resources and particularly in the following fields: train of trainers, materials, research and infrastructure.

Participant 02 FGD1: *"...I believe that it must be a requirement to the competent Administrations in this country. In this country there should be an adequate training for everybody. For collaborators, volunteers, professionals and there must be good devices with materials, resources..."*

There are also remarkable and positive strengths. Usually there is a high level of motivation and a good atmosphere in the classroom. These facts make the classroom become a place to socialize that can be taken as a basis in order to develop social intervention strategies.

Participant 02 FGD1: *“The atmosphere in the classroom is very positive.”*

Participant 06 FGD1: “...we should know how to reach the people we don't arrive to (...) but you know that there is much more (illiterate people) that for sure need it (literacy) so, there has to be an approach (by social intervention).

Participant 02 FGD1: *“We'd have to see how to arrive to the collective we don't know (...) and improvement of the methodology (...) these would be things to improve.”*

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.

Public Administration and basic rights guarantee.

Need of public administration investment

Social intervention challenges

New methods and materials development challenges

Conclusion: New times, new challenges.

According to the INE data (2012), one of the most vulnerable groups in terms of social exclusion is the immigrant population with a low proficiency in the host language (s) and reading skills. This means that, illiteracy and low skills in the host language (s) are direct causes of social exclusion and poverty.

In this regard, literacy devices must be ready in order to guarantee the rights of illiterate citizens, especially those who are living a risk of social exclusion. Given the situations described during the focus group sessions, we can conclude that in Spain, and specifically in Barcelona, the Public Administrations are not providing the necessary response to the necessities in this field. At least in Barcelona, over time, the Public Adult Schools have delegated the literacy tasks to non-profit organizations.

On the other hand, we find out that the illiterate students profile has changed during the last 20 years. Nowadays, one of the characteristics of illiterate young and adult people is that most of them are not Catalan/Spanish native speakers. This entails that the adults literacy methods used traditionally are not longer appropriate to the current needs. Diversity and heterogeneity are new challenges to face in literacy classrooms.

However, considering what was said in the focus group, we have realized that the lack of public investment in this field makes organizations face many difficulties to adapt to the new times. The main difficulty is that they do not have enough resources. They claim for infrastructure, professionals (volunteers or employees), specific training and specific materials.

A topic to remark is the lack of specific training. Even if the organizations are training their volunteers and offering workshops, literacy in the host language is almost nonexistent in the University. In Spain there isn't any research investment and this issue has a direct impact in the trainer's competencies which is reflected in the difficulties expressed by the trainers during the focus group. Literacy trainers have to face complex problems as it lacks the support of specific materials and studies.

Literacy trainers have started generating a professional network in their willing to improve their daily practice. They are developing workshops and new materials in order to go one step beyond the traditional methods which don't fit with non-native speakers literacy necessities.

We can conclude that there are new challenges to face. A better coordination between public Administration and non-profit organizations is a necessity. Only joining forces between public administration, non-profit organizations, Universities and social services it would be possible to improve the daily practice in literacy lessons. New methodologies approaches are needed, as well as new materials. There is also a necessity of professionalizing training and developing of social intervention strategies. Only taking as an advantage the work that have been done until now and investing on its improvement and development, will be possible to guarantee the right of illiterate people in our society.

Annex

1. Description of the country language learning/ literacy system (devices and access)

The legislative framework of the Education System in Spain is based on the Spanish Constitution of 1978 and a series of organic laws. In particular these laws are, the Organic Law of Education, LOE, of 2006 and the Organic Law for the Improvement of the Educational Quality, LOMCE, of 2013.

According to the Spanish Constitution of 1978, there is a division of competences in education between the various entities and Regional Administrations that are part of the State. The Central Administration owns the exclusive competence to regulate the structure of the different educational levels and the conditions of obtaining, issuing and homologation of the academic and professional degrees. The different regional educational Administrations are responsible for applying and adapting the current legislation to the characteristics of their population²³.

Regional Autonomous Administrations: The Education System in Catalonia

The *Generalitat* of Catalonia, is the Regional Autonomous Administration for the regions of LLeida, Girona, Barcelona and Tarragona. Adult people can access basic skills education and literacy through these two ways:

Inside the Education System structure as adult education (Education Department)

“First Reception Devices”. (Work, Welfare and Family Department)

²³ Gobierno de España, Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional. “Aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida”. <https://aprendealolargodelavida.mecd.gob.es/inicio.html>

The Education System

1.1. Education System structure

The Education System in Catalonia is divided in the following levels:

a). **Pre-primary education** is for children between the ages of 0 and 6, and is divided into 2 stages:

a.1) Nursery school: from 0 to 3 years. Nursery education is not compulsory, and is not costless. Its cost in a public center is around 200 euro per year and child, although there are some grants and financial aids to cover these expenses.

a.2) Kindergarten: for children aged 3 to 6. This educational period is not compulsory although it is costless when is provided by the state-owned centers. Some private schools can provide this education being subsidized by the State, wherewith the final costs for the families are not so expensive as it would be without those subsidies. We call them state-sanctioned private centers.

b). **Compulsory primary education** is for children aged 6 to 12. It lasts of 6 academic years, divided into 3 stages, namely an initial stage (from 6 to 8 years old), an intermediate stage (from 8 to 10) and a higher stage (from 10 to 12). Education is free in state-owned centers and is partially subsidized in state-sanctioned private centres.

c). **Compulsory secondary education** is for youngsters aged 12 to 16 and is provided in **secondary schools**. The access to secondary education is costless in state-owned centres and is partially subsidized in state-sanctioned private centres.

d). Pupils who successfully complete compulsory secondary education (ESO) may choose to continue studying between the ages of 16 and 18. They can choose between these two options:

d.1.) **Vocational training:** intermediate vocational training and, subsequently, advanced vocational training. These courses provide training that leads to qualifications leads to professional skills and qualifications.

d.2.) **Higher secondary education:** this option gives access to advanced vocational training and University education.

These courses cost around 360 euro per year in public centers. Students between 16 and 24 years old who do not successfully complete compulsory secondary education can register for **social guarantee programmes** (in charge of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security), which provides the training necessary to labour insertion.

e) **University Studies**

e.1.) **Degree.** Is the basic university degree. The minimum length is of of 240 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). It provides the general theoretical and practical basis to develop a professional activity or to master a particular subject.

e.2) **Master and postgraduate programmes.** The most common length is between 60 and 120 ECTS, although some postgraduate programmes can last less than 60 ECTS. It provides advanced training, focusing on academic or professional specialization.

e.3) **The postgraduate doctoral degree.** is awarded to the students that have spent a minimum of one year and maximum of 7 years researching in particular subject in order to provide significant contributions to that subject.

f.) **Adult learning centres** offer a wide range of courses and study programme: literacy, numeracy, digital skills and general knowledge.

Courses for basic skills learning (literacy, numeracy and environment basic knowledge).

Courses that lead to Secondary education certificate.

Courses that prepare the students to pass the test to access intermediate and vocational training.

Courses that prepare the students over 25 years old to pass the access test to University.

Courses and workshops on foreign languages or ICT among others, and great range of cultural and learning activities.

1.2. Adults Education in the Education System

Adults Education is conceived as a strategic line by the Education and Professional Training Ministry. The basis for adult education in Spain follows the European guidelines set by the Lisbon Strategy (2000), and is regulated by the Organic Law of Education (LOE) of 2006, and the the Organic Law for the Improvement of the Educational Quality (LOMCE), of 2013.

Lifelong learning is nourished by the initiatives carried out by the State and autonomous regions educational administrations, the councils or municipal education institutes of city councils, labor administrations and non-profit civil society organizations. **Adult learning centres** offer a wide range of free education²⁴ : **basic skills, secondary education, vocational training and university access exams preparation.**

Basic training.

Courses for obtaining a certificate of successful completion of secondary education (called a Graduat en Educació Secundària or GES in Catalan).

²⁴ Gobierno de España, Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte. "Plan Estratégico de Aprendizaje a lo Largo de la Vida". Disponible en pdf: <https://www.mecd.gob.es/dms/mecd/educacion-mecd/areas-educacion/sistema-educativo/estudios-sistemas-educativos/espanol/especificos/estrategia-competencias-ocde/documentacion/Plan-estrat-gico-de-aprendizaje-a-lo-largo-de-la-vida.pdf>

Access to intermediate and advanced vocational training.

University access for over 25s.

Workshops on languages, IT and the like are also available, along with a great variety of cultural activities. These activities depend directly on centers direction decision.

Following the ordinance 186/1988 (DOGC 1st of August), the Generalitat Social Welfare Department²⁵, is the public organism that assumes the competences in the field of adults permanent training. This field is regulated through the second chapter "Instrumental Cycle Training for Adults". The 11th article establishes three levels for the Basic Skills Education that are:

First level, in which the learning must focus on acquiring the fundamental mechanisms of reading and, and computation, besides elementary notions about the social and natural environment.

Second level, in which the central objective is to consolidate these mechanisms and acquire the essential elements of knowledge that explain the environment.

Third level, in which the previous ones are extended knowledge until reaching the general objectives of the cycle.

Each level includes three areas of knowledge: language area, maths area and the area of social and natural sciences. The curriculum of the instrumental training cycle has a duration equivalent to 1,100 hours of learning.

However it does not take into account the previous knowledge, specific needs and learning paths of each student. In the case of citizens whose mother tongue differs from the host language, no specificities are contemplated. Catalan/Spanish as a Foreign language and its literacy is conceived as an option outside the curriculum for adults education centers.

2. First Reception Devices in Catalonia

²⁵ Govern de Catalunya (2002): DECRETO 213/2002, de 1 de agosto, por el que se establece la ordenación curricular de la formación básica de las personas adultas. Disponible en: http://dogc.gencat.cat/es/pdogc_canals_interns/pdogc_resultats_fitxa/?action=fitxa&mode=singl e&documentId=299157&language=es_ES

For people that are unfamiliar with Catalan and/or Spanish, the Catalanian Department of Work, Social Affairs and Family has generated the “First Reception Device” in collaboration with the local Administration, social agents and various specialized entities. The objective is to promote the personal autonomy of new citizens and Catalans returned and as well as equal opportunities among citizens.

The contents to be credited are divided into three modules: a module to learn Catalan and Spanish with a minimum of 90 hours of training in each of the two official languages, a module on work knowledge with a minimum duration of 15 hours and a third module on knowledge of Catalan society with a minimum of 15 hours. there are various associations offering courses in the cities. There are also **official language schools** for those aged 16 or over.

Additionally, the **Consortium for Linguistic Normalisation (Consorti per a la Normalització Lingüística)**: offers a complete range of options (presence-based and distance-learning courses, language partner programmes, advice, etc.) for learning Catalan.

Instituto Cervantes?:

3. Second Language and its Literacy: the case of Barcelona

3.1. Adult Schools and Social Organization Offer

In Barcelona city, we find out that the reality of the literacy as a second language is a result of the central and regional administration politics. There are two local entities that administer the services of literacy: The Education Consortium of Barcelona (Generalitat and Barcelona City Council) and the “Language Coordinator” (Barcelona City Council).

Adult Schools in Barcelona are managed by the Education Consortium of Barcelona. Consulting the database²⁶ of the Adult education offer in the city of Barcelona, we find out that the Basic Skills education (levels 1 and 2), suffered a considerably decrease during the last 3 years. In 2015-2016 course there were 11 of 25 adults schools offering Basic Skills.

²⁶ Consorci d’Ensenyament de Barcelona. “Oferta d’educació d’adults a la ciutat de Barcelona: 2015-2016, 2016-2017 i 2017-2018”. Disponible en: https://www.edubcn.cat/ca/alumnat_i_familia/informacio_general_matriculacio/acces_als_estudis/educacio_dadults#/3

In 2016-2017 it decreased to 8 of 25 and during the academic course 2017-2018, only 5 of 25 Adult Schools were offering this kind of education.

On the other hand, in Barcelona there are 79 organizations that take part of the Language Coordinator. This is a working group that is part of the Welcome and Accompaniment Network for Immigrated People. It brings together different types of institutions (adult and official language schools) with social organizations (NGOs) that work for the linguistic integration of the immigrant population in the city of Barcelona. The total number of organizations that are part of the Language Coordinator is around 79.

The last data available²⁷ shows that during 2015 the entities that were teaching literacy to new citizens and refugees were:

-11 Adult Schools (3 of them are part of the Language Coordinator)

-21 Social Organizations (NGOs)

This information shows that there is a tendency in Barcelona to leave the responsibility of literacy and language teaching to immigrants and refugees in Social Organizations hands.

Debate:

Aquest rejueniment del perfil d'estudiants, afirmen, ha assimilat la formació de les escoles d'adults a la dels instituts (Chacón et al., 2006) i Conclouen que aquest caràcter i orientació escolar ha perjudicat el desenvolupament d'una xarxa de formació d'adults més transversal i ha comportat un allunyament progressiu de la població adulta de la formació bàsica (Casamitjana et al., 2005).

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²⁷ <http://www.bcn.cat/novaciudadania/pdf/ca/mercat/actors/A2.XESAJE151007.pdf>

2. Description of focus group participants

Example:

Participant 01 (FGD1): Female; 35 y.o., volunteer, University Degree in Arts; lives in Barcelona, teaching experience in non-profit organisation, currently teaching literacy with Gambian origin women twice a week (two hours p/d), all the school year.

Participant 01 (FGD1): Female; 25 years old; Employee; University degree in Psychology; lives in Barcelona; Teaching experience in a non-profit organisation currently managing courses and volunteers that teach literacy to migrant people. (around 10 h of literacy lessons per week). Between 2 and 3 years of experience.

Participant 02 (FGD1): Male; 61 years old; Trainer and employee; University degree in Psychology; Master degree in Primary School Teachers; Teaching experience in adults primary, secondary school and University; Experience in public school and non-profit organisations; 41 anys of experience in literacy; 30 anys of experience with migrant people. Currently teaching literacy to migrant people 3h per week in a non-profit organization.

Participant 03 (FGD1): Female; 46 years old; employee as first reception technician. University degree in Art History. Specific certification in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language, new citizenship: language and culture. 2 years of literacy teaching experience and with migrant population. Currently teaching literacy+oral spanish 3h per week in a public center.

Participant 04 (FGD1): Female; 23 years old. Internship student in a non-profit organisation. High Secondary School Diploma. Teaching experience in particular lessons and non-profit organisation. Less than 1 year of experience. Currently teaching literacy to migrant population 1,5h per week.

Participant 05 (FGD1): Female; 21 years old. Internship student in a non-profit organisation. High Secondary School Diploma. Teaching experience in a non-profit organisation. Less than 1 year of experience. Currently teaching literacy to migrant population 1,5h per week.

Participant 06 (FGD1): Male; 79 years old. Volunteer in a non-profit organisation. University Degree in Contemporary History. Teaching experience in Adults Public School (Primary and

Secondary) and University. 37 years of teaching literacy experience. 18 years of experience teaching to migrant population. Currently teaching literacy to women 2 hours per week in a non-profit organisation.

Participant 01 (FGD2): Female; 67 years old. Volunteer; University Degree in Primary School Teaching; Experience teaching in Public School. 3 years of literacy teaching experience and 3 years of experience teaching to migrant population. Currently teaching literacy 6 h per week in a non-profit organisation.

Participant 02 (FGD2): Male; 30 years old; trainer and volunteer; University Degree in Social Education; Expecific diploma in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign language; Experience in non-profit organisations; 9 years of experience teaching literacy to migrant population. Currently teaching literacy 3h per week in a non-profit organisation.

Participant 03 (FGD2): Female; 44 years old; Employee; University Degree in Spanish Philology; Master Degree in Adults Education; Specific Diploma in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language; Teaching experience in Adult Public Schools (Primary and Secondary) and in non-profit organizations. 7 years of experience teaching literacy and 16 years of experience working with migrant population. Currently teaching 15 hours per week, 2,5 of literacy.

Participant 04 (FGD2): Female; 70 years old; Volunteer; University Degree in Technical Industrial Engineering; Master Degree in Teaching Maths and Science; few training on literacy; Teaching experience in secondary and adults public schools. 5 years of mathematical literacy experience and 1 year of literacy in Spanish experience. Currently teaching literacy 3 hours per week in a non-profit organisation.

Participant 05 (FGD2); Female; 38 years old; Volunteer; University Degree in Translation and Social Education; Specific Diploma of Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language and Train of Trainers; 11 years of experience in teaching literacy to migrant population in a non-profit organisation. Currently teaching literacy 3 hours per week in a non-profit organisation.

Participant 06 (FGD2): Female; 68 years old; University Degree in Primary School Teaching, Catalan Philology and Speech Therapy; Volunteer; Experience teaching in primary public school. 4 years of experience teaching literacy to migrant population in a non-profit organisation. Currently teaching 1 hour of literacy and 1 hour of “First Reception” per week in a non-profit organisation.

Participant 07 (FGD2): Male; 63 years old; volunteer; University Degree in Primary School Teaching; Experience in Public Schools (Primary) and non-profit organisations. 1 year of experience teaching literacy; 3 years working with migrant population. Currently teaching literacy 3 hours per week in a non-profit organisations.



Country Report 04. Acefir

Theoretically, how do you do it?

[2018-11-09]

Responsible institution:	ACEFIR – Associació catalana per a l'educació, la formació i la recerca.
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Introduction

In this Report, we will focus on the principles and methodologies employed by each of the participants who joined the focus group ran on 16 June 2018 in the city of Girona, and led by Acefir Association. This focus group was made up of seven participants, all of them professionals in the fields of adult education or secondary education. There were six females and one male and their ages ranged from 28 to 68 years old. The professional profiles were also varied; one professional has worked as a literacy teacher for more than 30 years in an adult public school. Three of them have worked from 4 to 22 years with students with migration backgrounds, teaching literacy intermittently in different kinds of organizations (public schools and private non-profit organizations). The other two participants with experience in adult learning have worked from 1 to 3 years as literacy teachers in non-profit organizations. Finally, one of the participants has worked for more than 20 years as foreign language teacher in a high school.

All the information of this report is based on the analysis of the data obtained from the abovementioned focus groups and the questionnaires distributed to the same participants. While the main source to write the body of this report comes from the actual information provided by the participants in the empirical data gathering process, the studies, resources and other materials mentioned in this report were gathered a posteriori.

The information and data gathered through the focus group concerns to the Adult Education System in Catalonia as well as to the educational context of the regions and organizations where each participant was working. Furthermore, this report does not describe accurately the Spanish Education System, nor the Catalanian one or other regional services. This is because adult education policies in Spain are transferred to the Autonomous Communities (Catalonia, in this case), so that the National Legislation does not concretize as much as to be enough informative. Consequently, this report aims at drawing an overall picture of the literacy and host language local and regional services by describing the impressions and situations experienced by the participants. Similarly, the didactic and methodologic proposals and practices described in this report are just a sample of those developed by the participants. Therefore, this description do not aim at representing the totality of the educational practices and methodologies in any particular city or region nor in a particular school or educational setting.

The quotes are transcribed in the original language (catalan) and then translated to english below the original ones. When a quotation includes more than one quote, then we wrote the translation immediately under the two or more quotes in the original language.

The exact meanings for some of the technical lexicon used in this report can be found in the brief lexicon in section 1 of this Report (complete name?).

Finally, we would like to thank all the people and organizations that have supported this project through their participation and valuable contributions: Mar Montoya and Marisol Escribano, from the school Escola d'Adults Natura and the Municipality of Pineda de Mar, Quim Coma and the Municipality of Celrà and Acefir Association, Gemma Colom and the Adult School Centre de Formació d'Adults Montserrat Roig as well as the Education Department of the Generalitat de Catalunya, the Highschool Alexandre Deulofeu from Figueres, all the colaborators from Acefir Association and Associació Dota.

Theoretically, how do you do it?

1) Participant's profiles (in literacy groups) and adaptation to the teaching/learning process to them

The students are adult women and men between 18 and 53 years old that have migrated from their homeland mostly for security and economic reasons. In some cases, though, the main motive to migrate is the reunification with the familiars in the host country. Their legal status varies depending on the number of years they have been living in the host country. Many of the students have lived in the host country for more than 5 years but also a few of them have arrived recently. Normally, the basic Residence Permit can be applied from the third year of living in the host country after getting the 'Informe d'Arrelament', (a report proving that you have spent some time in the host Country and that you have intended to learn the host language). Some people can also apply for Family Reunification, this way one can get the residence permit easily. Once people have spent a certain number of years with permit in the host country, then they can apply for Nationality. The number of years needed to be able to apply for the Nationality differs considerably depending on the country of origin. Furthermore, the process to achieve a legal status is different depending on the conditions of the migration process (asylum, family reunification, irregular migration, etc.) and the labor situation that people achieve during the first years spent in the host Country.

The students come from several countries. Mostly from Morocco, Pakistan, Gambia, China, Senegal, South America, India, Russia and Hungary among other Countries. In some cases, the students have lived in several countries before arriving to Catalonia and thus, they already master some foreign languages. Their employment situation is characterized by the temporality and the precarious work conditions, especially in terms of schedules, wage, regularity and social protection (social security, stability...). In addition, some of the students receive social aid (sometimes a monetary one and sometimes not: food or clothing for example). Frequently, the male students have come alone, without the rest of the family.

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

Concerning the educational profiles, the main characteristic is the heterogeneity especially in terms of literacy levels and learning backgrounds. The majority of the students need literacy support even though this is not the case in the oral courses, where some students might have attended the school for several years or even be graduated in the high school or the University. This heterogeneity in the learning backgrounds of the students influence the methodology. This fact usually entails differences in the ways the students learn. In addition, the participant teachers in the focus group have observed a significant difference in basic skills proficiency by gender. While men frequently have some skills in literacy, numeracy and sometimes even ICT, a large amount of women show a very low proficiency in literacy and numeracy skills. The fact that women have lower opportunities to access the primary school during the childhood results in a great difference between men and women in terms of basic skills. This fact entail a feminization of illiteracy.

The most common spoken languages of the students are Amazigh, Mandinka, Chinese, Arabic, Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Sarakhole, Bambara, Wolof, Fula, Soninke and English. Some students speak their mother tongues and some other ethnic languages, and sometimes they can speak other European languages. The most common are English, French, Italian or Spanish.

On the other hand, the most common written languages are Arabic, Chinese, French, Urdu and Punjabi. When a student can write and read a language with a Latin alphabet, the learning process is observed to be a bit easier:

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:01:50-0# Per exemple els paquistanesos ja saben anglès, i això és molt important i (...) la segona llengua l'agafen rapidíssimament. I en canvi un xinès costa molt.

Participant 02 (FGD1): For example, the Pakistanis already know English, and this is very important as they rapidly achieve the second language. It is not so with the Chinese.

The main motivation to attend a literacy and host language course is generally to find a job and regulate the legal situation in the host Country. Nonetheless, there are also personal motives involved, like establishing relationships and being part of a peer group.

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:00:23-7# Hi ha interessos diversos, no venen només a tenir el títol i a aprendre, venen també una mica a socialitzar-se també, això és molt important. Dones que potser repeteixen el curs, perquè estan molt a gust en aquesta classe i el que fan és relacionar-se amb persones diverses que potser tenen els mateixos interessos i és un acompanyament que tenen.

Participant 02 (FGD1): There are different interests. They do not come [to the courses] just to learn and get the certificate but also to socialize, this is very important. [for example] Women who repeat the course because they feel comfortable in the group and they relate to other different people that may have common interests and this is an accompaniment for them.

Context-specific factors

Most of the women who participate in the courses are in charge of two or more children and are usually caring of the other family members. They are commonly in charge of the household and all the domestic labors. In this context, they have to attend many appointments (doctor, schools, social workers, etc.), preparing all the meals and organizing the celebrations and reception of the family visits. Their attachment to the school schedules means they have a much-reduced availability from 4:30 p.m., the time when the kids leave the school. Because of this, they are likely to miss class or drop out. In addition to this, kids from 0 to 3 years old are usually not schooled (children begin the compulsory primary school at the age of 3 in Spain), and thus, most of these mothers cannot attend literacy and language courses for several years. These two problems affects directly to women and could be at least reduced if there were a public childcare service or some kind of support to their caring tasks. In addition, the adaptability to women' schedules should be a methodological principle when establishing the courses' schedules. Unfortunately, nor the Administration neither the social organizations which provides literacy and host language courses have articulated a structured solution to this problem. The child caring has been traditionally considered a private issue instead of a public concern that affects the equality of opportunities for the women to get access to education.

Similar consequences results of the informality and temporality of the jobs of the majority of the students. As we have pointed out previously, in many cases the students are not able to find a long lasting and regular job until many years after their arrival. This causes a drop in attendance and a higher probability of dropping out of the courses. In order to find a solution

to this issue, a commitment from the labour organizations to facilitate the attendance of their workers to the courses could be a first step. This commitment is not easy to find, since the informal working is still the most common situation and the working rights of these students are usually being unattended. As we have stated before, the conditions to obtain the Residence and Working permit stated in the law sentence people to remain in a very vulnerable situation for a long time.

There is not a common pivot language in any of the courses because there are lot of mother languages in each group of students. This lack of a common pivot language generates translations between the students in their common languages. Even though, the most common pivot languages are Spanish, Catalan, French and English. The Catalan community is bilingual and the Autonomous Community of Catalonia has two official languages, Catalan and Spanish, and the teachers normally know both.

Change over time

Some of the students doesn't have a regulated legal status, so most of them are motivated to enroll in language courses in order to get the report that helps to apply the residence permit (Informe d'arrelament). Over the time, if they consider applying for the Nationality, they have to pass the Spanish and constitutional knowledge exam, and thus, they enroll in Spanish courses for this purpose.

In general, the students are usually interested in learning the official languages of Catalonia, Catalan and Spanish. Nonetheless, we observe a higher interest in learning Spanish than Catalan, although this tend to change over time. Usually, as the students spend more time in Catalonia and they need to interact more and more with the schools, the labor market and the public services, they start to perceive the advantages to know also Catalan. Obviously, they are very interested in writing and reading. Nonetheless, at least at the beginning of their stay they often prioritize the oral skills than the writing ones.

Specific improvement proposals

As mentioned above, there are several aspects to improve concerning the organization of the courses in relation to the context-specific factors.

There has been mentioned the importance to adapt the schedules, the modules and the general evaluation of learning. These changes should focus on the adaptability of the

courses' organization to the students' needs. In order to improve the access to the courses, it would be very important to assure the gratuity of the inscription and frequent inscription periods. In this regard, it is important that the inscriptions opens several times a year to adapt to the different job cycles (seasonal jobs, temporal jobs), family and personal issues (short trips to the country of origin, permits and documents issues, family visits, etc.) and other needs of the students. In addition, it's very important facilitate the access to all the mothers who are in charge of children and familiars. To improve this situation, more resources are needed to guarantee a childcare service or similar actions.

On the other hand, the incompatibility of the work schedules and the study schedules should be solved in some way. Not only the Adult Schools have the responsibility to adapt their organization to the students, but also the enterprises that are hiring the students must commit with the literacy process of their workers. The social services and the schools could also be part of this process of change, detecting the cases and making this adaptability easier for the learning centers.

On a methodological level, the heterogeneity of the profiles (origins, previous skills, motivation), has some consequences in the classroom management. In particular, these specific conditions in the classroom should be faced with a more personalized learning and a lower student ratio. This, in turn, should entail more teachers and materials for each course in order to be able to manage the diversity in the classroom.

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

- Heterogeneity of the students' profiles in terms of learning backgrounds
- Feminization of illiteracy
- Child caring affects the equality of opportunities for the women to get access to education in the host Country
- Precarious labor conditions associated to administrative vulnerability causes dropping out and narrows access to education
- Different motives to attend literacy and host language courses: from finding a job to establishing relationships

2) **Teacher profiles and ability to face the participant's profile diversity.**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

Teachers' profiles and backgrounds were very heterogeneous. The participant teachers are graduated in primary teaching, language, psychology, science or arts among others.

The professional profiles were also divers; one professional has worked as a literacy teacher for more than 30 years in an adult public school while three of them have worked from 4 to 22 years with adult students that have migrated, teaching literacy intermittently in different kinds of organizations (public schools and private non-profit organizations). The other two participants with experience in adult learning have worked from 1 to 3 years as adult literacy teachers in non-profit organizations. Finally, one of the participants has worked for more than 20 years as foreign language teacher in a high school, with teenagers.

Some of the professionals have also carried out management and coordination tasks, as well as counselling, career orientation and psychopedagogy.

Most of these professionals have attended short trainings to specialize in literacy and language teaching. All of them consider that is very important to have more experience in teaching to acquire the professional competencies.

In the Focus Group the importance of the teacher figure and her motivation has also been highlighted, especially in terms of the emotional wellbeing of the students in the classroom:

Participant 04 (FGD1): #00:00:54-8# Llavors també fas que aquestes persones se sentin bé, és molt important la persona que tenen al davant. Crec que el formador és 'summament' important, la seva implicació i sobretot la seva motivació per estar a aquest davant i fer-los partícips de les activitats que es fan al poble.

Participant 04 (FGD1): Then you can make these people feel good, the person who is in front of them, this is very important. I believe that the teacher is extremely important, her implication and especially her motivation to be in front of the students and make them participate in the life of the town.

For instance, the ability of the teacher to create an emotional nearness that generates a comfortable atmosphere has been highly remarked. Concerning this, it is important not to be too much rigid with a specific didactic method or with a rigid session structure, but to be able to flow with the students' needs:

Participant 07 (FGD1): #00:20:54-9# és important que el formador sigui capaç de generar aquest vincle per aprofitar l'oportunitat que té això, que facis de connector.

Perquè si utilitzes potser un mètode molt estructurat, sense poca sensibilitat per connectar amb el grup (...) fas servir l'aula clàssica, tots mirant el professor, sempre el mateix...no generes aquest espai.

Participant 07 (FGD1): Is important that the trainer generates this link, to take advantage of the opportunity of this, for him to bridge. Because if you use a very much structured method but with a lack of sensitiveness to connect to the group (...) you use the traditional classroom, everybody looking at the teacher, always the same...you don't generate this space.

Context-specific factors

As mentioned before, the teachers' profiles can be very different. This depends on the experience trajectory and the study background of each teacher. On the other hand, there are different kinds of adult education providers in Catalonia (public centers, NGO's, associations, etc.), and every kind of these providers have different recruitment rules. The Adult Schools in charge of the Department of Education must follow the general recruitment rules established by this Department. Basic skills' teachers²⁸ working in these public schools must be primary teacher graduates. In this regard, the profiles in the public Adult Schools are relatively homogeneous.

The situation is significantly different in the rest of the providers, namely the non-public or semi-public schools, where the management and the teacher recruitment procedures are not attached to the public recruitment rules. The private organizations like Non-profit organizations, Associations and Foundations have their own recruitment processes and criteria. In addition, the large amount of volunteers teaching literacy and host language courses in these kind of organizations result in a great variety of teacher profiles. On the other side, the Municipal schools can have various kind of recruitment processes depending on the model of management they have. A Municipal school can be managed through public contracts by Non-profit organizations or be managed directly by the Municipality. This fact in turn, results in a great difference among the Adult Schools owned by the municipalities and a great heterogeneity in teachers' profiles depending on the providers.

²⁸ Basic Skills teachers are those who teach the basic skills cycle (literacy, numeracy and basic knowledge cycle) and the first levels of Catalan or Spanish as a host language in public adult schools in Catalonia.

Change over time

Even if this topic has not appeared directly in the focus group, indirectly one can deduce that the students' profiles in adult literacy and 'second-language' courses has been changing a lot over time. Since the new migrated population have come to live in Catalonia, the challenges concerning teaching literacy have changed. Specifically, the participants in the focus group have remarked the fact that the host-language materials were traditionally designed for a target group with a higher homogeneity in terms of pivot language knowledge, life and learning profiles. Nonetheless, the current situation is marked by an enormous heterogeneity in several factors that affects directly to the learning and teaching process. This has to be faced with a very new and adaptable approach to design the materials, the methodologies and the organization of the learning process and thus, the teachers must be as adaptable as the heterogeneity of the groups of learners. This fact means that the traditional image of a teacher using a single method and a limited set of materials is over and that the new teachers will need to adapt to the changing situations of the migration processes. Continuing education and specialization are very important to face all these changes and a very open and flexible mind is and will be an important characteristic of a literacy and host language teacher.

Specific improvement proposals

As mentioned in the Focus Group, in the field of literacy and host language the professional profile must be very specific. Not all the profiles are suitable to run a literacy group:

Participant 04 (FGD1): #00:18:08-0# ...per això el formador és tan important a l'hora de fer aquesta cohesió [del grup], de que això funcioni, perquè de vegades la mateixa classe amb un altre formador, no ens ha funcionat tan bé, que tenim experiències (...) a lo millor en aquesta feina en concret no és el perfil de persona que es necessita per alfabetitzar.

Participant 04 (FGD1): That's why the trainer is so important to achieve the cohesion [of the group of learners], to make this [group] work, because sometimes the same group with another trainer does not work, we have experiences on this (...) maybe in this specific work is not the profile that we need to alphabetize.

The main challenge regarding the materials is to find quality and adaptable materials available. This issue has repeatedly appeared along the Focus Group. The way teachers normally solve this is having creativity and experience to redirect the classroom dynamics.

Participant 01 (FGD1): #00:02:09-2# actualment quins cursos tenim, des del Departament, d'alfabetització de persones adultes específic per adults, quina oferta hi ha formativa...

Participant 01 (FGD1): Which training courses do we have about literacy, specifically focused on adult people from the Education Department...

Concerning the institutional support to literacy, the teachers interviewed have remarked the lack of institutional recognition and, specifically, the lack of training for the newcomer teachers:

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:02:49-5# ho hem parlat moltes vegades eh, ara es comença a tenir una mica de material per a formadors, però fins ara no n'hi havia. El professor el que havia de fer era generar-se els seus propis materials. Llavors tenia a davant 15 persones, no? i l'experiència et dona, donar a cada persona el que necessita en aquell moment, no?

Participant 02 (FGD1): We have talked about this so many times. Now we start having a bit more material for the teachers, but we haven't had this until now. The teachers had to generate their own materials. Then, with 15 people in front of her, isn't it? And the experience gives you [the ability] to give to each of them what they need in that moment, isn't it?

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:21:56-9# mai hi ha hagut cursos de formació per professorat d'alfabetització.

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:22:02-3# Ara comença a haver-hi alguna coseta, però petita.

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:22:05-2# Però normalment són cursos d'entitats. Entitats que els organitzen. No és tant els responsables, l'Administració.

Participant 05 (FGD1): It never have really got training courses for literacy teachers.

Participant 02 (FGD1): Now something is starting, but not much.

Participant 05 (FGD1): But anyway, normally these are courses organized by the Organizations. The Administration is not organizing these courses.

The Public Administration doesn't seem to know the training necessities that the adults' teachers have. In addition, the Adult Schools themselves have to involve in a process of reformation or rebuilding. Concerning this, it would be an improvement for Adult schools to establish a future plan and the steps to achieve it. For example, it would be worth to organize Round Tables with the representors of the Adult training organizations and teachers in order for the Administration to know the necessities of training for the teachers:

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:22:46-3# és que hem de començar a partir d'aquí, què és el que volem, les escoles d'adults i hem de començar a posar punts. Això és cap a on anem, no? Estan evolucionant les escoles d'adults, no? I les estem evolucionant la gent que estem dins de les escoles d'adults perquè veiem les necessitats, no? però no hi ha res escrit, com tu deies.

Participant 02 (FGD1): we have to start from here, what do we want the Adult Schools, and start pointing. This is where we are going, isn't it? The Adult Schools are evolving, isn't it? And we, the people who are inside the schools, are evolving those schools because we see the necessities, isn't it? But nothing have been written, as you said.

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

- Heterogeneity of the teachers' profiles depending on the kind of provider (public, private or semi-private) and the recruitment procedures they follow
- Lack of institutional recognition and support (especially on professional training)
- Heterogeneity in the classrooms and lack of research and materials available to face the diversity

3) **Main methodologies and activities applied and successful approaches identified.**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

The most highlighted topic in this regard has been the adaptability of the materials and methodologies to each group of students.

The interviewed teachers don't use a single kind of material nor a single method of teaching. Instead of this, they always use different materials in the literacy and host language sessions. Even though, the teachers may use textbooks or unified methods of literacy but always combined with many other resources. As remarked by the teachers, the textbooks and the methods are not always useful in literacy learning contexts as they are marked by the heterogeneity of the students. In addition, these books scarcely represent the social and cultural reality of the students, and they are conceived more to be used with groups that are more homogeneous than the real groups they deal with. Sometimes, these books are simply not adapted for students with a low proficiency in the pivot language or the host language. Due to all these facts, teacher often design their own materials.

The kind of activities they apply vary in relation to the needs of each group. Some commonly used methodologies are: to involve the students in discussions, organizing visits abroad, engaging the students in in-group activities as well as in individual tasks and foster the participation of all the students. Some of the teachers work on intercultural projects too.

When working on the writing and reading skills, some teachers train the identification of the vowels, the consonants and their combination, as well as the decomposition of the words in syllables (syllabic method). Nevertheless, the main strategy is to recognize the whole word and relate it with a picture representing their meaning. In order to train the lexicon, the teachers always use a large repertoire of images, combining the graphic material with the written words.

When training the reading, the teachers sometimes use ICT like WhatsApp, blocs or Twitter. When it concerns to train oral skills, teachers promote the dialog between the students around significant issues. It is worth to promote dialogues around the meanings of the words themselves when an unknown or a polysemic word appear in a conversation. It is interesting to be able to negotiate the meanings to get the nuances in the uses of language.

The evaluation is made by means of exams, rubrics or briefcases, but in the case of literacy courses it is also done through the daily observation and the notes taken by the teacher.

One typical activity is working on the welcoming and the goodbye in different languages.

Context-specific factors

In every classroom, the adaptation of the contents to the groups' interests is one of the most important issue to take into account when designing the materials and orient the classroom dynamics. Some important topics are those related to finding a job, legalize the social situation, getting the life skills including the knowledge of the most important bureaucratic processes in the host society as well as the general knowledge regarding the public services and the citizenship and the legal situation.

The socio-cultural recognition is very important in a multicultural context. Therefore, in all the cases the participant teachers have designed themselves most of the didactic materials so that it could include some linguistic references in the native languages of the students, real pictures of their daily life and real stories about their experiences and daily life. When possible, the teachers use the native languages of the students.

Change over time

The most important changes in the methodologies and materials have to do more with the heterogeneity of the groups and the specificity of the profiles and not so much with the particular period of time or the change over the time.

The lack of reflections about the changes over time along the focus group is maybe due to the fact that the majority of the professionals who have participated in it started their professional experience already with students with migration backgrounds. This means they don't know how it was the situation in the adult education centers before the current situation. Nevertheless, most of the teachers have remarked the fact that some of the old materials they can find in their Adult schools and on internet fit better in the adult school context of some years ago, when adult illiteracy were more common among native Spanish people.

Main successful strategies developed

The need for variety of methodological approaches has been repeatedly highlighted along the focus group. This is consistent with the idea of adaptability to the context and the specific group of students.

Some of the most outstanding used methodologies are training through art and the oral discussion. These discussions are about day-to-day topics and significant or relevant contents with the aim of enhancing the participation of the students in the group dynamics and thus, in the orality.

Another important contribution is related to this need to be flexible in as much elements as possible to the needs of the group. Be able to adapt the materials and the class dynamics when necessary has been highlighted as a good practice:

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:03:50-5# A lo millor aquell dia, allò que has preparat no faràs res, o bé també perquè han fet un comentari, fas aquell comentari per motivar-los per parlar. Sempre has de tenir una programació, però has de ser prou flexible per canviar-ho tot al moment donat, no?

Participant 05 (FGD1): Maybe that day, what you have prepared, you won't use it, or maybe somebody has done a comment and you want to take it to promote the orality. You must always have the activities prepared, but you must also be able to be enough flexible to change all the course if necessary.

Another of the good practices remarked is to work on the emotions through art-based activities.

There is a preeminence of the oral skills over the writing and reading skills when working with students who cannot speak and understand the pivot language at all:

Participant 04 (FGD1): #00:00:43-6# és molt important començar amb un nivell d'oralitat, fer una acollida oral abans de fer una alfabetització genèrica. A nosaltres això ens funciona.

Participant 04 (FGD1): It is very important to start with the orality, to make an oral introduction before carrying out a generic alphabetization. We find this works.

Concerning the role of the teacher when teaching language in order to promote the orality, the teacher must be able to let the students talk, avoiding speak too much and take too much leadership:

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:04:11-0# I deixar-los parlar. Donar-los l'oportunitat, no 'abasallar'. Que de vegades tenim aquest rol de voler parlar molt i això doncs fa que es frenin.

Participant 05 (FGD1): And let them [the students] talk. Give them the opportunity, not overwhelm them. Sometimes we [the teachers] have the role of speaker and we want to speak a lot, and this make them [the students] stop talking.

It's also very important to promote the relations between the students, make them know each other so that they get more and more confidence within the group to talk and express themselves:

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:05:04-6# és molt important que entre ells es coneguin, fer grup, això per mi és fonamental al començament.

Participant 05 (FGD1): It is very important that the students know each other.

There are some good experiences regarding this last point. For example, in one of the courses all the students were women and there was just one men. Even though this might been an obstacle, the students and the teacher went to the restaurant owned by the only man of the group. This was a way to break the segregation between men and women and contributed to normalize the mixed nature of the course.

On the other side, some worthy strategies have been described in relation to organize community-based activities:

Participant 01 (FGD1): #00:16:18-6# Jo crec que en alfabetització, especialment en alfabetització, és molt clau fer projectes comunitaris (...), fem molts projectes transversals en el centre cívic i va ser fantàstic, vam fer una passarel·la intercultural de defensa de la dona on homes paquistanesos estaven llegint una línia de 'Yo amo a mi mujer porque es fantàstica' i bueno, va ser una experiència fantàstica. Inicialment estava pensada únicament per dones i com que vam dir que: home però, homes d'altres països estan defensant la dona, i vam ometre aquella línia que posava 'només participació de dones' perquè el més maco és que home si dones defensin els drets de les dones. (...) i va ser fantàstic, va ser una de les experiències més maques que hem fet aquest curs.

Participant 01 (FGD1): I think in literacy, especially in literacy, developing community-based projects is very important to (...) we have been carrying out a lot of transversal projects with the Civic Center and t has been fantastic. We have done a, 'Intercultural Footbridge' in defense of women where Pakistanis have read a line

of text stating 'I love my wife because she is fantastic' and, well, that was a fantastic experience. Initially the project was designed to allow just women participation but we thought: 'well, men from other countries are defending women's', and we omit that line where we specified that only women could participate, because we thought the best was to see men defending women's' rights. (...) and it was fantastic. It was one of the most beautiful experiences we have carried out last year.

Specific improvement proposals

Some of the main improvement proposals are about including ICT tools in the learning processes as well as increasing the audiovisual resources to improve the understanding of the students.

This is one of the experiences on including the ICT as a learning material:

Participant 04 (FGD1): #00:09:02-0# dintre dels nous aprenentatges, el que volia aportar era: la utilització de les noves tecnologies dintre d'aquestes aules és molt fàcil. Tu fas una acollida lingüística, comences tothom parlant igual, doncs cadascú fa, el que ens toqui fer o del que vulguem parlar aquell dia i pots utilitzar les noves tecnologies. Fins i tot nosaltres utilitzem el WhatsApp per aprendre. El noi xinès, ens ha fet el 'WeChat' o el que utilitza ell, doncs jo m'ho he posat i jo li parlo cada dia 'Bon dia...' (...) i això és una forma de poder parlar una mica més, perquè aquesta persona en concret treballa a la cuina, no surt, sempre en un àmbit molt tancat de xinesos, en aquest cas, o podríem parlar d'altres persones. Llavors hem trobat aquest punt (...) i ha sigut un bon punt de trobada.

Participant 04 (FGD1): Among the new ways of learning, what I want to remark is the using of the new technologies in these groups [the groups that are at the very beginning of the second language learning, so called 'linguistic reception']. [When] You make the linguistic reception, everybody is speaking the same level, and we do what we must do or we talk about what we want to talk and then you can use the ICT. We use the WhatsApp to learn. The Chinese man has installed us the 'WeChat', and I have installed it and I speak to him every day 'Good morning...' (...) and this is a way to talk a bit more because this person works in a kitchen, he does not get out of the kitchen, is always in a very closed place only with Chinese people, at least in

this case, but we could be talking about other cases and people. Then, we found that this has been a meeting point.

Some other proposals are, for instance, working on the citizenship through neighborhood-based activities and also implying several agents of the neighborhood in the activity.

Visiting the main facilities, services and agents in the Town:

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:14:28-6# que participin molt del poble, les persones, no? l'any passat (...) vam anar a visitar els bombers, la policia, l'Ajuntament. Clar, tot això és molt important per ells, veure que tenen tots aquests serveis que estan al seu abast.

Participant 02 (FGD1): ...To participate in the Town, isn't it? Last year (...) we visited the firefighters, the Police, City Hall. All this is very important to them, to see that they have all those services and that they are at them service.

Participating in the education activities organized by the Municipality:

Participant 04 (FGD1): #00:15:14-9# Fer-les partícips del Pla Lector del poble (...) no fa falta que sàpiguen llegir. Amb una poesia l'hem fet, l'hem dividit en diferents idiomes i han participat en el seu idioma. Han llegit un tros, quatre línies que s'han preparat amb la seva família, perquè nosaltres no les hem pogut ajudar, però aquestes quatre línies, els seus fills les han ajudat perquè estaven en català, les han traduït en el seu idioma (...) totes les llengües de l'escola. Això ha sigut molt productiu perquè és una activitat dins del municipi, amb tots els alumnes de primària i de secundària que han participat i ells també. Un Pla Lector, que això és súper xulo, més que l'aula tancada i parlar quatre: com et dius, d'on ets (...) estaven tant contentes i tan contents de participar!

Participant 04 (FGD1): Make them participate in the Reading Plan of the Town (...) it's not necessary to be able to read. We had a poetry, and we have divided it in different languages and each student has participated in her mother tongue. They have read a piece of the text, four lines that they have prepared with their family, as we couldn't help them, but just with these four lines, their daughters and sons have helped them, because it [the poetry] was in Catalan, they have translated in their mother tongue (...) all the languages of the school. This has been very valuable

because is an activity made with the municipality, where all the pupils of the schools and high schools participate, and they [their students] have participated too. A Reading Plan, which is great, greater than the closed classroom and speak the common things: what is your name, where are you from (...) they were so happy and excited to participate.

Carrying out activities within the classroom with representatives of the most important public services can be very important as it can help the students to introduce to these professionals and services:

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:20:40-3# lo important és això, que, tu ets el connector i has de veure què els interessa. Per exemple, la llevadora va venir l'any passat a l'escola, perquè elles tampoc de vegades no s'atreveixen a preguntar algunes coses, no? si estan amb el grup i tu estàs allà pots ajudar a fer de pont també

Participant 02 (FGD1): this is important, you [the teacher] are the connector and you have to see what is interesting for them. For example, the midwife came last year to the school, because they [the students] sometimes doesn't dare to ask certain things, isn't it? If they [the students] are with the group and you are there, you can help and bridge [between them and the society]

The availability of the teacher to the students for any necessity they might have is important as these students usually have some basic needs they cannot cover themselves with their current level of knowledge of the host society and the host-language, so the teacher represent a reference in this regard:

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:19:34-0# ...i que també ajuda [el formador] en molts casos, perquè de vegades tenen problemes de fer algun paper, demanen ajuda i això, com fer-ho, també és important.

Participant 02 (FGD1): ...and she [the trainer] helps in many cases, because sometimes they [the students] need to do some paper, they ask for help and, this, how to fulfill this, is important.

Concerning the materials, the teacher must know a large variety of materials and be able to combine them. Moreover, is important to be able to structure the sessions without setting

too much the didactic structure, then being able to adapt every single material or objective along the session:

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:30:58-3# Jo crec que el professor (...) ha de conèixer gran varietat de materials. No n'hi ha un de perfecte o que un..., si només segueixes aquell, aconseguiràs els objectius, sinó que el bo és tenir-ne molts i en cada situació i cada moment anar adaptant el material que necessitis a cada moment. I sobretot (...) un comentari o una situació et dona per canviar la classe, has de tenir aquesta agilitat i dir avui doncs faig això altre.

Participant 07 (FGD1): #00:32:09-2# estructurar la sessió també t'ajuda a tu com a professional a seguir un ordre, tenir una referència en cas de...

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:32:23-1# Tenir material sí, però no cenyir-te estrictament com quan fas una classe de geografia per segon d'ESO.

Participant 05 (FGD1): I think the teachers (...) must know a large variety of materials. It doesn't exist a perfect material or is not that with just one material, if you follow just that one, you will achieve your objectives. What is better is to have several materials and adapt them in every situation and in every moment. And especially (...) a comment or a situation [in the classroom] can give you the chance to change the session, and you must have this agility and just do something else.

Participant 07 (FGD1): Structuring the session helps you as a professional to follow a particular order, having a reference in case of...

Participant 05 (FGD1): Having material is ok, but it's not about narrowing all the session to the material you have prepared like when you give a course of geography in the secondary school.

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

Most of the ideas suggested derives from the essential heterogeneity of the groups of students in terms of learning and life backgrounds. The main proposals to face this challenge are:

- Adapt the materials and the methodology to the diversity of the groups, using and combining different kinds of materials.
- Be able to make the programme of each session flexible, changing the dynamics and even the content on the progress of the sessions if necessary.

Regarding the importance of the oral, these were the main proposals:

- Give preeminence to the oral competences through allowing and promoting communicative interactions between the students, to practice the orality. Elaborate a student interest-oriented content and run student interest-based dynamics in the classroom.
- Work to foster the oral interactions promoting the relations between the students to know each other and get confidence and express themselves within the group.

Concerning the sociocultural recognition, the materials and the emotional atmosphere are key issues to consider. Some of the ideas stated were:

- Adapt the materials to the context and the specific group of students, including socio-cultural significant references.
- Generate a mutual support climate inside the classroom, which include helping the students with their daily needs in the host-society.

In regard to the need of the students to better know the host-community, these were important measures:

- Deepen on the link between the school and the community. Integrating the school activities to the educational activities organized by the Municipality.
- Visiting, knowing and coordinating with the facilities, services and agents in the town and neighbourhood.
- Improving the infrastructures would also be important to increase the use of ICT.

To break the gender and cultural segregation within the classrooms is also been highlighted even though, this process should not be forced. Some activities were described so that this process can be naturally achieved.

4) **Perceived difficulties, challenges and proposals.**

Similarities and differences (between groups of cases)

The lack of a teacher training quality offer has appeared to be extremely important to all the participant teachers. It seems to be a forgotten area for the Department of Education and the Adult Education System in general.

Whereas the lack of implication by the Administration has been repeatedly mentioned along the focus group, there has also been pointed some good experiences, especially with the local Administration and services:

Participant 04 (FGD1): #00:38:00-0# Donar una pinzellada positiva, molt positiva. Dintre de l'Administració, en el nostre cas, Benestar Social i el Centre Obert ens ajuda molt, són les persones que envien mares o pares per alfabetitzar o fer una acollida lingüística.

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:38:24-1# en el nostre cas, l'escola és municipal i han de pagar una mica de diners i hi ha famílies que no poden, llavors Benestar dona una mica de beques, i l'Ajuntament també.

Participant 04 (FGD1): Giving a positive view, very positive. Within the Administration, in our case, the Social Affairs Office and the Open Center [centers dedicated to leisure and school support] helps us very much. They send us the mothers and the fathers to enroll in literacy or language courses.

Participant 02 (FGD1): In our case, the Municipality owns the school and they [the students] have to pay a little money and some families cannot pay, then the Social Affairs Office gives them [the students] grants, and also does the Municipality.

There are some differences in the access requirements depending on the ownership of the adult learning center. Whereas the public schools should be costless or almost costless at least in the basic skills cycle, this is not always like this. At least one of the schools represented by the participant teachers were not costless. This fact entails an obstacle to the more vulnerable students. Although this problem can be partially solved through grants and social aids, this kind of solution entail a bureaucratic processes that can difficult the inscription process.

Context-specific factors

Some schools have found in the Erasmus Plus Calls an opportunity to get the training offer they cannot find in their work organizations:

Participant 01 (FGD1): #00:24:04-4# nosaltres hem vist que aquesta possibilitat de formació la tindrem mitjançant els projectes Erasmus + a Europa perquè aquí no la trobem (...) per això també ens posem en contacte amb associacions...

Participant 01 (FGD1): We have found this training opportunity in the framework of the Erasmus Plus, in Europe, because here we cannot find it (...) that's why we contact associations...

Change over time

There is the perception that the Primary and Secondary Education System is in some way more advanced than the Adult Education System. According to the participants' opinion, the former has had historically more resources to implement innovative projects while the latter has been relegated to a precariousness that has impeded this innovation process. This endemic precariousness can be the consequence of the historic lack of recognition of adult education and the lack of a structured and consistent adult education policies over time. In this regard, the Adult Education System is a bit out of phase. As stated in the quote below, when the Adult Education System have been build up, at the beginning of the Democracy regime in Spain, it was so long in charge of the Work and social affairs Department while it should depend on the Education Department as it does currently.

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:26:33-2# Però també pensa que l'escola d'adults va començar com a part de Benestar Social (...) era com una ajuda, no? (...) i llavors es va veure que no era només donar quatre lliçons a la gent que volia llegir i escriure. Quan van veure això van dir, ho posem a la formació reglada però s'ha quedat com si fos una cosa que no té importància, no se li dona la importància que té realment.

Participant 02 (FGD1): But also consider that the Adult Schools, when they started, they depended on the Department of Social Affairs (...) it was conceived as a social aid, isn't it? (...) Then it was realized that it was not just about giving a couple of courses to people that wanted to be able to write and to read. When they [the Administration] realized this, they said: we include this education in the formal education system, but it has remained as if it was a minor thing, it hasn't been given the importance it really has.

Weaknesses/strengths

At the organizational level, some weaknesses have been highlighted, for instance, the lack of coordination among the various institutions and organizations that are currently offering literacy and basic skills courses. This lack of coordination sometimes causes the loss of resources, the repetition of contents, the duplication of services and discontinuous learning trajectories of the students.

Regarding the students themselves, the lack of motivation is pointed out as a risk, and is related to the methodological perspective taken in the courses. As more passive and unidirectional is the relation between the content, the group dynamics or the teacher proposals and the students, more is the perception of demotivation in the students.

The risk of segregation between the different nationalities/cultures of origin as well as between the genders within the classroom is also been highlighted. The participant teachers in the focus group observe a resistance of some students to assist to mixed courses. This is an issue to be improved within the classroom dynamics.

Regarding the innovation in the Adult Education System, a teacher has stated that it is not exactly true that the Adult Schools are out of phase, but that the problem may come from in the atomization of the schools that makes the good and innovative initiatives invisible. This is conceived as a weakness of the Adult Schools System.

Participant 04 (FGD1): #00:24:47-3# (...) jo crec que a les Escoles d'Adults falta visibilització perquè a dintre les escoles (...) realment estem fent projectes que són 'xulíssims', cadascú amb les seves possibilitats i amb els seus recursos.

Participant 04 (FGD1): I think Adult Schools lacks in visibility, because in those schools (...) we really do gorgeous projects, each schools with its possibilities and its resources.

Concerning the need of rebuilding the Adult Education System, a participant has highlighted the need to redefine the budget and the structure of this System also pointing out that a bigger structure does not necessarily produce a better quality. On the other hand, he has remarked the benefits of not having a very big and fixed or predefined structured system, as a more little and open one can foster the motivation and innovation processes in the Schools:

Participant 07 (FGD1): #00:25:50-0# Com s'han de finançar, amb quins recursos s'ha d'organitzar l'escola d'adults? Potser hauria de ser una estructura més àmplia.

Tot i que quan és aquesta estructura més àmplia també hem vist que hi ha unes tendències de molta estructuració.

Participant 07 (FGD1): How do we have to finance [the Adult Schools], with which resources must we organize the adult schools? Maybe it should be a wider structure. Nonetheless, when this structure is wider, we have observed the tendency of over-structuration.

A considerable strength has been remarked in the so-called 'Centres Cívics', or Civic Centers. These Community-based centers are public facilities where all the people can participate and get services: inform themselves about courses, organize an association, participate in other activities and associations, give or take a course or just join together and spend time there. These kind of spaces contributes to diminish the isolation and promotes the mutual support between people. These facilities are also a natural place to enable participation and socialization, the sharing of experiences and thus, the construction of citizenship.

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:34:12-2# els centres cívics són necessaris, calen, són intergeneracionals, interdisciplinaris (...) i a més, una altra experiència que jo l'havia vist a Anglaterra i l'he vist aquí a Girona (...), el centre cívic amb la biblioteca de barri al costat i un bar. Aquestes tres coses són necessàries perquè, a la biblioteca, mentre estan fent els deures els nens, ells van a fer un curs al centre cívic, o al revés, i en el bar és un moment d'entrar, de relació.

Participant 05 (FGD1): the Civic Centers are necessary, they are intergenerational, interdisciplinary (...) and, furthermore, another experience that I have seen in UK and here in Girona (...), the Civic Centers stay alongside the neighborhood library and beside the bar. These three facilities together are necessary because, in the library, while the kids are doing their homework, they [the adult students] go to a course in the Civic Center, and the bar is the perfect place where one can stablish relationships.

Obviously, one of the biggest weaknesses is the lack of financing for the whole Adult Education System. This issue has resulted in a process of relegating more and more the responsibility of providing adult education to the private NGOs and associations:

Participant 01 (FGD1): #00:36:46-9# Potser no hi ha el mateix perfil d'alumnat però hi continua havent molta demanda [d'alfabetització] i malauradament molts instrumentals estan desapareixent de les escoles avui en dia. I passem a àmbits més associatius o més privats.

Participant 01 (FGD1): Maybe there are not the same student profile [compared with the past], but still there is a lot of demand [of literacy] and, unfortunately, many Basic Skills courses [instrumental cycle in Catalonia] are being suppressed from the Adult Schools. Then, we move [in the sense that the providers are these:] to Associationism or private organizations.

The generic weakness that underlie all this lack of recognition and financing from the Administration is, according to the participants' opinion, a lack of interest by the Administration:

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:35:23-7# em sembla que el problema és (...) que l'Administració no s'ha plantejat mai a fons el tema de l'alfabetització i de l'educació d'adults.

Participant 05 (FGD1): I guess the problem is (...) that the Administration has never posed thoroughly the topic of alphabetization and the Adult Education.

Another weakness is the fact that some adult education projects get started but doesn't have continuity. This sometimes happens due to the change of political Administrations or the variability of the financial aids, among other motives:

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:41:58-4# I també de vegades comencen projectes però no s'acaben. Perquè la Diputació de Barcelona va començar un projecte molt maco que volien arropar totes les escoles d'adults, la xarxa municipal, és que, es perden i és una pena.

Participant 02 (FGD1): And sometimes the projects starts but does not end. Because [for example] the Diputació of Barcelona started great projects to join all the Adult Schools, the municipal net, and it has been lost.

Specific improvement proposals

One of the main improvement proposals is about the socio-cultural recognition within the course content, materials and practices. There is a need for breaking the stereotypes in the

materials and the methodology with the aim of recognizing the different cultures and social situations within the classroom and the schools. This recognition have to be included not only in the materials but also in the dynamics and the oral productions in the classroom. Giving importance to the sociocultural background of the students is one of the best improvement or best practices proposed.

Participant 04 (FGD1): #00:06:54-0# I donar la importància que té en la seva cultura, respectar-ho i coneixent les seves llengües i la seva cultura i donar-ho a conèixer a la classe, penso que també és un moment en què agafes a la gent.

Participant 04 (FGD1): Giving the importance that [any practice or phenomena] has in their culture, respecting it and knowing their languages and their culture. To introduce their cultures in the class contents, this is the point where you can catch the people [in the sense of making them having interest on the course].

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:07:18-8# Preguntar-los cada dia què fan i què mengen. Això els interessa i els fa molta il·lusió explicar-ho.

Participant 04 (FGD1): #00:07:24-2# Sí, i per què ho fan (...) la cuina és un bon recurs

Participant 05 (FGD1): Ask them what they do every day, and what they eat. This is interesting for them and it's exciting for them to explain it.

Participant 04 (FGD1): Yes, and why they do that (...) the topic of cooking if a great resource.

Carrying out more research has been also pointed out as an improvement proposal:

Participant 07 (FGD1): #00:26:30-1# (...) s'ha de treballar molt i s'ha de fer molta recerca, estructurar, tenir mètodes, són les dues coses.

Participant 07 (FGD1): It takes a lot of work and it takes a lot of research, structuring, having methods, both things.

Concerning the improvement of access to adult education, there are some good experiences of collaboration between primary and secondary schools and Adult Schools. It would be important to develop a permanent partnership with the pre-primary, primary and secondary

schools and with all the facilities and services available, in order to be take advantage on these resources:

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:28:22-0# Jo penso que si hi ha persones que no saben la llengua, poden agafar una aula a dins de la mateixa escola allà mateix i que elles vagin a aprendre. I això, no donen aquestes facilitats. Estan les dones allà i tenen temps de fer-ho, doncs portem-les a una aula.

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:28:45-6# Aquí a Girona hi és; Instituts o escoles que tenen una aula on es troben les mares i hi ha algun professor que els fa classe mentre la mainada és a classe. Això es fa en alguna escola o institut.

Participant 02 (FGD1): I think where there is people who doesn't know the language, they [the school] can take a classroom there, within the school, and make them [the mothers that go to the school to bring and pick up the children] learn. And this, there isn't these possibilities. Women are there and they have the time to do it [go to the course], then take them to the classroom.

Participant 05 (FGD1): Here in Girona some high schools and primary schools have a classroom where the mothers can meet up, and there is a teacher who give them a course when the children is in the classroom. This is happening in some school and high school.

Another specific proposal of improvement would be to include social workers in the schools:

Participant 02 (FGD1): #00:35:51-3# l'altre dia vam estar discutint, potser necessitem recursos d'un integrador social, un educador social que faci un, una, dintre de l'escola...

Participant 02 (FGD1): Some days ago we were discussing, maybe we need a Social Worker [a Social Integrator is not exactly a social worker, it is more a facilitator of social processes], a social educator who makes (...) within the school... this is very important.

It is also important to work with the community, the neighborhood and the city or the town to bring closer the students with the surround.

In terms of the administrative organization of the Adult Education System, the proposal has been about bringing the management to the local, giving more decision power and funds to

the Municipalities. This does not mean to give the Municipalities the whole responsibility to provide adult education but to give the leadership to them with a suitable accompaniment by the Government Administration:

Participant 05 (FGD1): #00:38:36-0# És que jo crec que l'Ajuntament és clau. (...) Els Ajuntaments coneixen les necessitats de la seva població i són els que poden fer una programació més adaptada a les necessitats de la seva població, cosa que des de la Generalitat el que hauria de fer és donar recursos als Ajuntaments perquè ho puguin fer.

Participant 07 (FGD1): #00:39:51-2# Hi ha d'haver un paraigües més gran que sigui el que dirigeixi i ajudi a l'Ajuntament a muntar tot això i a estructurar-ho més i que no depengui de si el polític hi vol dedicar més recursos o menys.

Participant 05 (FGD1): I think the City Hall is a key fact (...) The Municipality know the needs of their population and thus, they are able to design an adapted programming. The Generalitat [the Government Administration] should contribute giving the resources to the Municipalities so that they can organize the courses.

Participant 07 (FGD1): It has to be a wider framework that lead and help the Municipalities to organize this [the courses] and structure so that this don't depend on one politician that take the decision to dedicate more or less resources to this area.

Finally, a huge increase on the adult learning budget is needed to be able to improve the personal and material resources that are essential in order to face the above-mentioned challenges and weaknesses.

Ideas suggested by empirical data (pre-hypothesis formulation, other data connected, etc.)

Along the focus group some important aspects of the Adult Education System have been highlighted. On the one hand, the Public Administration and the policies implemented have a great influence to the whole system and this means that is important to try to find the eventual solutions to the system with the commitment and support of the public Administration. The lack of a quality teacher training offer, for example, is due in some way to the progressive precarization of the whole Adult Education System and to a lack of a coordination to carry out an improvement plan by the Administration in charge. Even though,

the Adult Schools and the private and semi-private organizations that provides Adult Education have found a way to finance and carry out more research and professional training through the European grants and projects. This mixed model (public Administration on the one side and other grants and projects carried out by the providers with the help of the European or other public funds), can be a way to reach this trainings and a better specialization for the professionals.

The historic lack of structured, consistent and stable policies for the Adult Education System is an important issue to be solved by the Department of Education. This lack of consistent policies can be in part the cause of the underfinancing and the lack of modernization of the adult schools.

On the other hand, the insufficient offer of literacy courses have resulted in a progressive relegation of these learning courses to the private organizations. This, in turn, have produced a large variety of organizations offering courses of all kinds, as a way for them to respond to the needs of the persons they work with. The lack of a plan to coordinate the different adult learning providers sometimes results in a loss of resources and can cause a repetition of contents and a discontinuous learning trajectories for the students. This could be partly solved if the Adult Education management were placed in the Municipalities or the regions, instead of in a sole and centralized office. This centralized model is not able to respond to the variety of situations and needs of the population in each region and cannot coordinate the diversity of organizations that are providing learning services.

Moreover, the community-based centers like the Civic Centers model has been highly recommended as a way to promote the civic participation, the socialization and the cultural development of the adult learners.

Finally, concerning the content and methodological area, the challenges are still there to solve. Specifically, it would be important to improve the methodologies so that to promote those which are more active and participative. Moreover, the sociocultural recognition, the gender contents and sociocultural contents must be improved.

Conclusion

As a brief conclusion, we will summarize some of the most relevant topics that emerged in the focus group led by Acefir.

On the one hand, concerning the students' profile, it is remarkable the great heterogeneity in terms of learning styles and trajectories, sociocultural backgrounds, life situation and socio-economical needs. This produces a heterogeneity that forces the teachers and the curricula to be very flexible and adaptable to the classroom situation and personal needs of the students. This, in turn, means that the methodology, the materials and the classroom dynamics must be as adaptable as the students' needs might require. A specific proposal in this regard is the necessity to use a large diversity of materials. To promote this, the participants have recommended avoiding methodologies and methods that leads to teach literacy with a fixed set of didactic materials and a fixed programme. Another remarkable contribution is the need to enhance the social conditions (work conditions, legal status, children care...) and life situations of the students.

On the other side, in relation to the teachers' profiles, an urgent necessity of professional trainings has been highly remarked. In addition, this kind of professional training must be available for all the professionals involved in the literacy and host-language services, no matter the kind of provider (public, private, semi-private) they work with. Furthermore, when the volunteers support a professional teacher within a classroom, these volunteers have to be duly trained and should not substitute the teacher figure but just be a support within the classroom.

Finally, in relation to the specific methodologies and materials to use in the literacy and host language courses, the participants have highlighted the need to enhance the ICT in the classroom as a way to improve the learning processes. Lastly, the concept of literacy has been extended to cover all the Basic Skills needed to live and interact in the host society. These Basic Skills are not only the reading and the writing basic skills, but also the numeracy skills, the digital skills and the so-called life skills.

As a general challenge, there is an urgent need of modernization and innovation in the adult education services (ICT, new and adapted materials, etc.). There is also a need to coordinate, share and visibilize the advances that have been already occurring in terms of new didactics and materials in many Adult Schools and non-profit organizations in an

isolated way. The need for a deeper commitment with adult learning and especially in the Basic Skills area by the Public Administration has been also repeatedly remarked during the focus group.

Annex

1. Description of the country language learning/ literacy system (devices and access)

Providers:

Consortium for Linguistic Normalization

This service depends on the Generalitat de Catalunya. The courses are open to every people literate and to illiterate people only in the oral practice courses.

It offers Catalan courses every three months. The courses are not free, but can cost between 5 and 10 € if the applicant can prove the economic necessity.

The minimum age is sixteen years old.

First Reception Devices

The First Reception Devices depend on the Municipalities. When there is a First Reception Service in a Town or a City, this Device offers a 90 hours training course that is directly organized by that device. The courses are costless and the minimum age is sixteen years old. It includes the following three modules:

- i) 90 hours of Catalan language (only for literate people): in charge of the CLN (Consortium for Linguistic Normalization)
- ii) 15 hours about the labor system and market: in charge of the First Reception Office.
- iii) 15 hours of general knowledge about the host society (it includes legal topics about the citizenship status): in charge of the First Reception Office.

Adult Schools owned by the Generalitat de Catalunya (this is the case in Girona and Salt)

These Adult Schools follow the curricular law of the Government of Catalonia (Decret 213/2002 de l'u d'agost). These Adult Schools offers two levels of Catalan language and two levels of Spanish language for literate people and also the Instrumental Module of Basic Skills for illiterate people. It can cost until 40€ per academic year and can be granted by the Social Service. People can access them with a minimum of sixteen years old.

Catalan and Spanish: two levels, each level last one academic course (four hours a week).

The Instrumental Module (1100 hours): divided in different levels, it covers the Basic reading and writing skills, the ICT basic skills and the basic numeracy skills as well as some ICT skills and general social and scientific knowledge.

There are two Adult Schools in Girona and one in Salt. Only two of these offers the Instrumental Module and all of them offers Catalan and Spanish language for literate people.

Specific programmes run by the Immigration Department (only in little Towns which doesn't have Adult School or other literacy services)

The regional Immigration Department manage the immigration affairs in the Comarca of Girona (the region of Girona). The department finance externalized courses in the places where there are any other literacy offer. These programmes last from 90 to 105 hours. They can be costless except when the students must buy some materials.

Non-Profit Organizations

These Organizations whether depend on a wider organization in a national or sometimes international lever or are completely independent. They organize oral groups and sometimes also literacy, Catalan and Spanish groups. The offer varies a lot depending on the financial aids, the calls available and the volunteers available. Some of these programmes are organized by:

- Caritas (National organization): the oral programme called TALC is running in Girona.
- Creu Roja (National organization): usually offers Catalan and Spanish courses held by volunteers in Girona.
- Gentis Foundation (Catalan organization): offers literacy courses for adults in Salt when they have the funds.
- Associació Akan (local organization): offers literacy, Catalan and Spanish courses in Girona.
- Associació Dota (local organization): offers literacy courses and orality courses in Salt in collaboration with Ateneu Popular Coma Cros. The courses are costless. The minimum age is eighteen years old.
- Will steps organization (local organization): offers Catalan courses in Girona.

Reception process and facilities and literacy/language learning services:

The Adult students usually access the Adult Education system by means of the following information and social aid services:

The City Hall: when the people makes the first register at the City Hall (empadronament), they get some information regarding the general learning services. The City Hall itself doesn't manage the inscriptions.

The Social Services: the social services offices inform and sometimes can even manage the inscription to the courses. The social services pay the fees for the inscriptions.

The Reception Service of the Town (when it exist): these services inform and sometimes manage the inscription to the courses.

Private Organizations that works as a Reception Services: for example Caritas, have their own Reception Service dedicated to manage the reception and can make the inscriptions and pay the fees of the courses.

Private and Civic organizations that are in contact with migrant people: they usually inform the people about the general offer of the town or about the place where they can inform.

Centres civics: In these centers, there are flyers to inform people about the courses offered in the surroundings.

Primary and secondary schools and other public basic devices: the teachers and the schools and high schools can sometimes inform about the courses. In the schools as well as in all the public services and devices you usually can find the flyers and other information concerning the courses offers.

2. Description of focus group participants

Participant 01 (FGD1)

Participant 01 (FGD1): Female; 34 y.o., professional (teacher), University Degree in English as a second language teacher; lives in Barcelona; teaching experience in private secondary and adult schools, as well as public primary schools. Currently teaching English and literacy in a public Adult school with Moroccan, Peruvian, Colombian, Dominican, Honourees, Russian, Hungarian, Indian and Pakistanis women and men once a week (two hours p/d), all the school year.

Participant 02 (FGD1)

Participant 02 (FGD1): Female; 48 y.o., professional teacher and Director of the learning centre, University Degree in Geological sciences; lives in Pineda de Mar; teaching experience in private and public schools. Currently teaching literacy in a public school with Moroccan, Senegalese and Gambian women and men 7,5 hours a week all the school year.

Participant 03 (FGD1)

Participant 03 (FGD1): Female; 51 y.o., professional secondary teacher, Bachelor's Degree in English & German Language and Literature; lives in Cabanes; teaching experience in a public high school. Currently teaching English with young men and women in a public High School 15 hours a week all the school year.

Participant 04 (FGD1)

Participant 04 (FGD1): Female; 59 y.o., professional teacher and Learning Coordinator of the learning centre, University Degree in Chemical Engineering; lives in Pineda de Mar; teaching experience in private and public adult schools. Currently teaching literacy with Gambian, Moroccan, Senegalese and Chinese men and women in a public school with migrant women and men 2 hours a week all the school year.

Participant 05 (FGD1)

Participant 05 (FGD1): Female; 68 y.o., professional teacher retired with more than 32 years of experience in adult teaching, Direction of an Adult School and Coordination of the Adult Learning Centres of the Generalitat de Catalunya among others, University Degree in Elementary school teacher and adult teacher; lives in Girona; teaching experience in public adult schools. Currently volunteer at Acefir Association.

Participant 06 (FGD1)

Participant 06 (FGD1): Female; 31 y.o., professional teacher, University Degree in Philosophy and Educational Sciences; lives in Salt; teaching experience in non-profit organizations. Currently teaching literacy and second language with Malian, Gambian, Moroccan, Senegalese, Ghanaian, Pakistanis men and women in a public school and in a non-profit organization 14 hours a week all the school year.

Participant 07 (FGD1)

Participant 06 (FGD1): Male; 28 y.o. literacy teacher, University Degree in Psychology; lives in Girona. Currently working as literacy teacher with Gambian and Moroccan women for a Municipality programme of literacy, 4 hours a week all the school year.

Section 3

Conclusion

As a general conclusion, we will summarize some of the main ideas that have appeared through the four reports. In order to do this, we will follow the four main topics discussed in each report, for instance: the participants' profiles (the students), the teachers' profiles, the methodologies and activities as well as the challenges, difficulties and improvement proposals in literacy and host language courses.

The **student's** ages in the literacy and host language courses range from 16 to 60 years old. They usually have migrated to the host countries alone or with family, coming from several countries all over the world but mainly from African and Middle East countries. The causes and conditions of migration are very different, and so are their legal statuses. The students can have spent from less than one week to several years in the host country when starting their participation in the courses, so their knowledge of the host country and society and the oral understanding and speaking in the host language can vary a lot. In literacy courses, the students are illiterates or functional illiterates, in host-language courses though, students can be completely literate. The most common characteristic is the heterogeneity of the profiles, giving that the learning backgrounds always differ from one student to another. This heterogeneity have deep implications in the constitution of the learning groups and in the teaching methodologies. The first challenge is the classification of each student in a particular level. The heterogeneity also implies a diversified strategy of teaching, testing and validating the knowledge.

On the other hand, the personal situations of the students normally affect the teaching and learning process. There is a high prevalence of job insecurity and risk of social exclusion among most of the students. This life insecurity situation affects the learning disposition, the concentration and the attendance rates.

Concerning the **teacher's profiles**, there is a great diversity between the participant organizations. In most of the towns, regions and countries of the interviewed providers, the educational system in the fields of literacy and host language is partially regulated. Most of the teachers are university-trained even if the study fields vary a lot. Some are graduated in languages, educational sciences, pedagogy or psychology, but some others in history, chemical sciences or philosophy among others. In addition, the volunteers and trainers

usually have different backgrounds and profiles. This heterogeneity normally is equilibrated through continuing education, which provides teachers and volunteers with the necessary applied knowledge to exercise as literacy and host language teachers.

The **methodologies** used in the learning groups are usually combined. The teachers scarcely use a single type of material or resource, nor a single type of activity or literacy method. Instead of that, the tendency is to mix as much resources and activities as necessary to adapt the class dynamics to the changing and heterogeneous necessities and demands of the group (audiovisual documents, group activities, games, storytelling, computer-based activities, communicative activities, role-play, readings, writings, cultural activities outside the school, expressive and art activities, etc.). The syllable method, the phonetic methods and the reading by writing methods are also usually mixed. The fundamental basis to design the courses' contents is the attachment to the reality (in the material references and the topics), the recognition of the sociocultural and knowledge backgrounds of the students, and the real needs of the students. In all the analyzed cases, the selection of the contents to be taught and learned is based on the practical necessities of the students. The skills related to manage the daily requests of the social, bureaucratic and labor life are the fundamental topics. In this regard, in order to bring closer the students to their surround, most of the providers carry out community-based activities and activities to connect the school and the students with the neighborhoods. A very personalized assessment and accompaniment is also necessary for most of the students when they begin the process of alphabetization. As it is stated in the reports, this fact can be partially solved with volunteers and support teachers in the classroom and lower student ratios as well as carrying out tutorship plans.

The **organization** of the learning processes must be also adapted to the students' life conditions. It must be taken into account the bureaucratic, the labor and the familiar conditions of the students so to adapt the schedules and the general organization to them. Otherwise, there is always a risk of drop out and fragmentation of the learning process. Modular courses, adapted schedules and flexible evaluation could be possible solutions to this problem. The social responsibility of the labor organizations and other instances to foster and allow the involvement of the worker students in literacy and host language learning processes has been also remarked throughout the reports.

One of the biggest **challenge** stated by the interviewed teachers is finding quality literacy and host language materials as well as adapted materials to the different students' profiles and class groups. Flexible materials and diversity of resources are ways to manage the issue of heterogeneity. In this regard, more research and tested materials would be necessary to improve. On the other hand, most of the teachers does not feel well trained to exercise their job. In fact, most of the interviewed teachers find a lack of quality teacher trainings, especially to improve the methodologies, the didactics and the group management competencies. A greater commitment from the public instances would be a key fact to improve in these issues. The capacity to share materials and knowledge between the colleagues and the schools is also good practice that could help to improve the general quality of the literacy courses. In this regard, the coordination between the different literacy devices (schools and other organizations) would be a great improvement, not only in terms of the quality of the teaching but also in terms of the general literacy and social services for migrant people. Most of the participants in the Focus Groups highlight the importance of a greater commitment of the Administrations to literacy services, particularly in terms of increasing the resources to achieve better teacher training, more research in this field, and better infrastructures and conditions for the professionals who work in these services.