SIRIUS WATCH 2020

Taking stock of the clear agenda and new developments in migrant education

The Clear Agenda, adopted in 2014 at the eve of the refugee crisis, has been a guiding document for SIRIUS partner countries and EU stakeholders to engage in developing inclusive education policies taking into account needs of migrant children over the past six years. While the authors of the Clear Agenda could not have foreseen the extent to which migration to Europe would increase after the adoption of the document, the recommendations have proven to be of crucial importance and relevance for the integration of refugee children in education systems.

SIRIUS CLEAR AGENDA (2014) RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPROVING EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A MIGRANT BACKGROUND

Thematic areas of the Clear Agenda 2014:

Remedying the school concentration of socially disadvantaged learners.

Diversity in teacher training and professional capacity.

Creating effective support for newly arrived migrant learners.

Guaranteeing equal access to high quality vocational education and training for all, regardless of residence status.

Promoting multilingualism among all learners.

Increasing the representation of people with a migrant background in the education professionals.

Expanding peer-to-peer mentoring for learners with a migrant background.

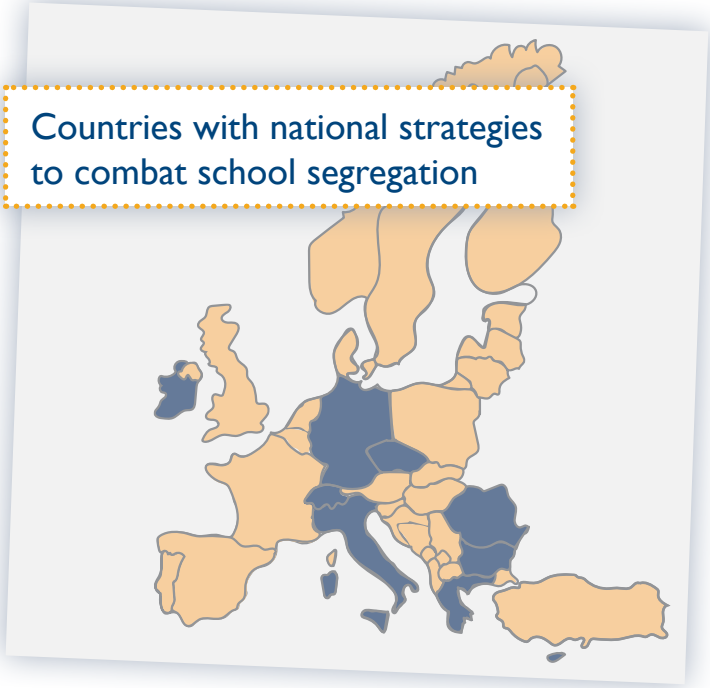
This report has highlighted that the progress made towards the implementation of the Clear Agenda for Migrant Education has been mostly uneven, both among countries in Europe and across seven thematic dimensions highlighted by the Agenda. One of the main challenges to quality and inclusive education for migrant children remains the lack of a holistic and interconnected approach to inclusive education, which considers how elements such as inclusive pedagogies, teacher training, linguistically and culturally sensitive school climate, etc., should be linked together to facilitate inclusion.

Isolated fragmented initiatives are not likely to achieve sustainable impact if other aspects of education are not included as well.

PERSISTING CHALLENGES – KEY FINDINGS

1

School segregation remains a challenge in practically all countries in Europe, as it is often linked to residential and societal segregation. Policies combating segregation remain ineffective due to the lack of comprehensive strategies addressing residential segregation.



*Countries in dark blue reported national strategies combating school segregation

Source: Eurydice https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf

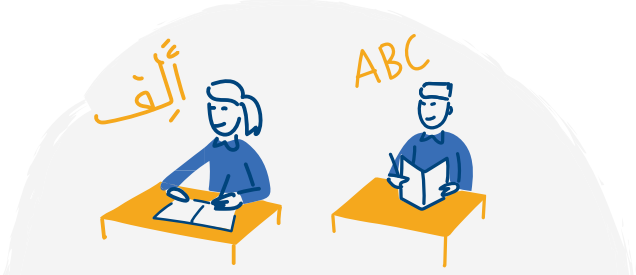
Progress towards implementation of the Clear Agenda (2014)

Eliminating school segregation	1 2 3 4 5
Advancing multilingualism and inclusive language education	1 2 3 4 5
Ensuring comprehensive teacher training for diversity	1 2 3 4 5
Promoting diversity within teacher profession	1 2 3 4 5
Inclusive reception of newcomers	1 2 3 4 5
Advancing inclusive and innovative pedagogies and positive school climate	1 2 3 4 5
Creating inclusive VET systems	1 2 3 4 5

Assessment is based on expert judgement:
1 - Very limited or none.
2 - Slight progress,
3 - Moderate progress,
4 - Significant progress,
5 - Goal achieved.

2

All European countries recognise the importance of multilingualism of both native and migrant children. Mother-tongue education for migrant children has become increasingly common, though not yet universally present or guaranteed. Foreign language teaching and multilingualism remains predominantly focused on the main European and global languages, such as English and French. Languages of countries of origin of migrants (such as Arabic or Farsi) are less often offered by schools.



Entitlement to mother-tongue language education

National regulations / guidelines on mother-tongue education	Responsibility of schools or local authorities	No regulations or guidelines in place
Austria, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden	England, Finland, The Netherlands	Bulgaria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Scotland, Wales

Source: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf

3 Overall, while many studies have been conducted on the role of teachers in facilitating diversity in the classroom, and despite the high demand from teachers themselves, countries across Europe have yet to develop consistent programmes for the integration of multicultural and multilingual pedagogies in teacher training.

4 Despite various efforts on national or regional levels to make the teacher profession more attractive to migrants, research has indicated numerous challenges for migrants to enrol in teacher education or to be employed as teacher. Barriers to the teacher profession for migrants as identified in prior research include comparatively lower learning outcomes of students with a migrant/minority background during their school careers; language barriers; lack of financial resources; lack of confidence and awareness to opt for a teaching career; low prestige and low salaries associated with the teaching profession; structural barriers; and negative/discriminatory experiences in schools deterring those from a migrant/minority background to train as teachers themselves.

5 Welcoming and reception strategies are mainly focused on the acquisition of the schooling language and transition to mainstream education. Inclusive pedagogies facilitating the reception of NAMS in mainstream education are limited

6 Various schools across Europe introduce mentoring programmes or academic assistants to support migrant children with both school-related matters and with overall integration. While the growing presence of such support personnel is commendable and certainly important, it does not account for the lack of preparedness of teaching staff to create inclusive classrooms and implement inclusive pedagogical approaches.

7 VET systems in many countries are overrepresented with children from vulnerable and/or migrant backgrounds. To some extent, the current design of the VET systems and tracking systems in general contribute to enhanced segregation and marginalisation of socially disadvantaged population.

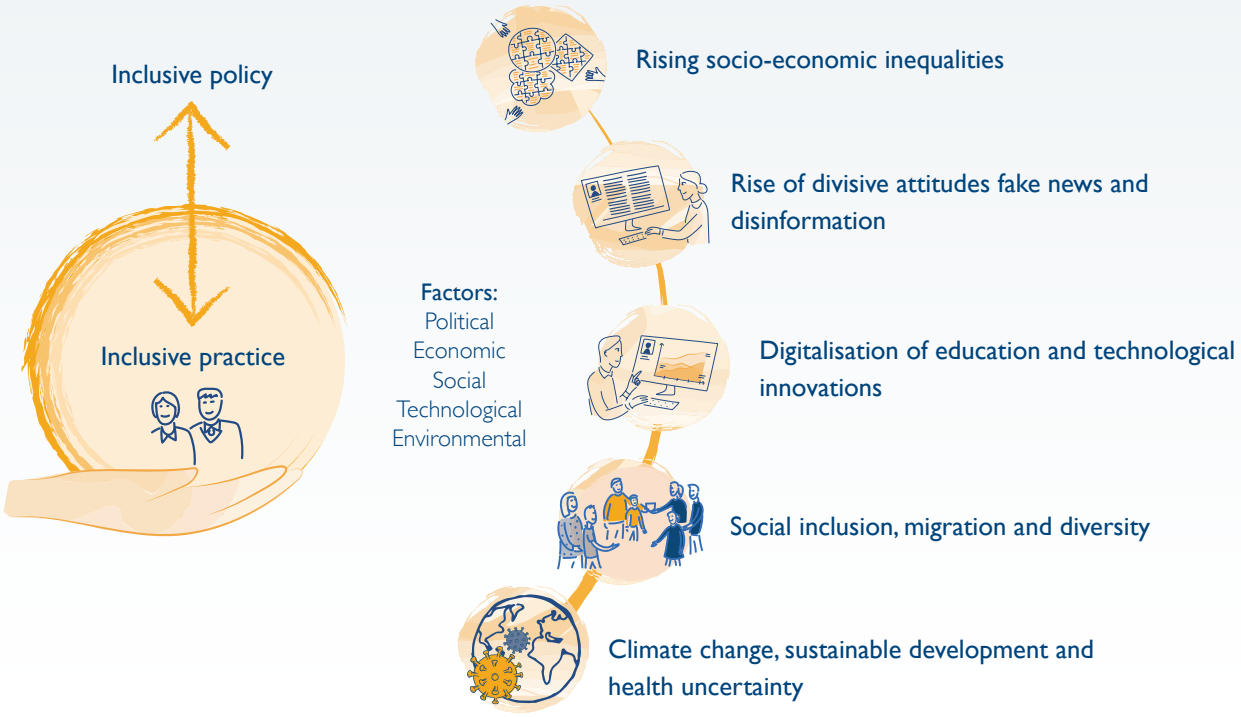
Persisting challenges to be addressed by the SIRIUS Inclusive Agenda 2030

- Investing in teachers and other education professionals (including support personnel) (ITE and continuous professional development)
- Continuity of learning, smooth transitions horizontally and vertically, flexibility of learning pathways
- Addressing school segregation
- Inclusive school climate – cultural and linguistic sensitivity, sense of belonging, innovative pedagogies, schools as social and civic space
- Recognition of skills and qualifications, schools as learning communities (education beyond school walls), synergies of formal and non-formal learning

EMERGING CHALLENGES – KEY FINDINGS

While many of the gaps highlighted by the Clear Agenda in 2014 persist, though the progress in closing them in some countries must be acknowledged, there are a few emerging challenges in the light of broader societal, economic and political trends, that will have an effect on achieving the goal of ensuring high quality and inclusive education for all in the future.

Emerging trends and drivers affecting inclusive education



Emerging challenges to be addressed by the SIRIUS Inclusive Agenda 2030

- Intersecting inequalities – migration and gender, migration and sustainability
- The need for developing sustainability mindset, sustainability and global citizenship
- Digitalisation of education – schools and home as safe digital learning and social spaces
- Education as a social responsibility of different actors (e.g., partnerships between public education providers and EdTech sector for inclusion)
- Resilience and investment in families

To be able to respond crisis in the future education systems need to become more resilient. Resilience is also the key factor in the context of digital and green transitions in Europe. The fast-changing world of today is becoming less predictable and so, together with the technical competences, more emphasis in education should be given to fostering interdisciplinary, transversal as well as cognitive and socio-emotional skills to keep pace with the changes.

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