

Professional capacity dealing with diversity in Estonia

Report of the NAOS study visit April 2016

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1. Introduction

1.1 NAOS: background and goals

Countries face challenges in catering for the diverse needs of migrant students and narrowing the gaps in education outcomes between native students and immigrant students. International evidence (OECD 2010 Reviews of Migrant Education) suggest that strategies to raise education outcomes for migrant students need to focus on school level and system level, such as:

- preparing school leaders and teachers to meet the needs of diverse student groups;
- increasing student opportunity to learn language (mother tongue as well as language of instruction) in regular school lessons;
- encouraging schools to build capacity in the area of dealing with diversity;
- making collaboration between school and community more effective.

The central topic in NAOS is professional capacity concerning dealing with diversity related to migration (in all its different forms). Professional capacity includes innovative forms of cooperation between educational professionals and other professionals dealing with children. Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton and Luppescu (2006) who view professional capacity as one of the fundamentals of school improvement define it as follows:

“Professional capacity encompasses the quality of the faculty and staff recruited and maintained in a school, their base beliefs and values about responsibility for change, the quality of ongoing professional development focused on local improvement efforts, and the capacity of a staff to work together as a cohesive professional community focused on the core problems of improving teaching and learning.” (p. 12).

The objective of NAOS is to strengthen professional capacity in the partner countries and their respective schools. With the ultimate goal to increase educational attainment and reduce drop out and unemployment among groups of migrant children. NAOS is a star that refers to the fundament of a Greek building. By choosing this name, we emphasize the idea that professional capacity is the fundament of good quality education.

The OECD country reviews in “Closing the gap for immigrant students” (2010) shows that developing policies and curricular adaptations at the national level is not enough for closing the achievement gap between native and immigrant students. It also needs institutional changes, made within every school, including changes in school leadership,

teaching methodologies and school-home co-operation. NAOS wants to take a deeper look at what kind of institutional changes inside schools are needed by looking at the professional capacity in schools.

Naos is complementary to the SIRIUS policy network carried out from 2012 - 2014. SIRIUS has promoted and enhanced knowledge transfer among stakeholders in order to improve the education of children and youngsters from migrant background. One of the focal points in Sirius was professional capacity. The difference between the Sirius activities in this area and the Naos activities concern the specific focus on pre- and in-service modules for professional development as well as the inclusion of schools in the network.

The current project partners (see below) have been chosen on the basis of complex migration histories (Netherlands and Belgium), language instruction (Estonia and Lithuania), a variety of strategies for building professional capacity (Norway and Lithuania), economic crisis in combination with educational issues (Portugal and Greece) and new EU countries facing future immigrants and educational challenges (Croatia and Cyprus). All partners in the Naos network are centres of expertise which will yield critical, theoretical and empirical contributions to the development of knowledge and practice on professional capacity. In each of the countries, the centre of expertise will connect to a set of schools and support the Naos activities.

The Naos partners:

Name of the Organisation
Risbo B.V.
Forum za slobodu odgoja
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO
Public Policy and Management Institute
Tartu Rahvusvaheline Kool Tartu International School MTÜ
PAIDAGOGIKO INSTITOUTO KYPROU - CYPRUS PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE
University of Patras
UNIVERSITEIT ANTWERPEN
Algemeen Pedagogisch Studiecentrum
HOGSKOLEN I OSTFOLD

1.2 The study visit: content and procedure

A review of the literature (Severiens, Wolff & Van Herpen, 2014) shows that strengthening professional capacity with the aim to stimulate school success among diverse groups of migrant students asks for expertise in five content areas.

1. Urban teachers (or teachers in classrooms with diverse student populations) should first of all know about language development in classes of pupils whose first language is not the language of instruction.
2. These teachers should be competent in using pedagogic and didactic resources that support the learning of all their pupils. Diverse classes need different didactic resources and different types of instruction than homogeneous classrooms. If schools and teachers are committed to encouraging the talents of all their pupils they should have knowledge of the use of teaching materials, methods and types of instruction designed for diverse classes.
3. Urban teachers should know about social psychology issues such as stereotyping, teacher expectations and ethnic-identity development issues.
4. Urban teachers that succeed in engaging the parents of their diverse pupils as well as
5. cooperate with community organisations on a basis of equality will further support school achievement in their urban schools.

The review by Severiens et al. concludes that if schools are committed to increasing achievement among migrant groups, and closing the achievement gap, they should facilitate high levels of professional capacity in these areas of expertise.

Naos organizes ten study visits in a period of three years. The general aim of these study visits is to collect and exchange good practices between schools. These good practices concern one of the areas of expertise as described above. In this way, each area of expertise will be the topic of two separate study visits.

Each of the ten partners was asked to choose an area of expertise and indicate two schools with a good practice in this area. During the kick-off meeting the distribution of areas of expertise was made as follows:

Organizing Partner	Visiting partner 1 (writers)	Visiting partner 2	Theme
Belgium	Netherlands	Greece	School-community relationships/parent participation
Greece	Croatia	Norway	Social psychology

Norway	Netherlands	Cyprus	Language/pedagogy/social psychology
Croatia	Portugal	Lithuania	School - community relationships
Cyprus	Belgium	Netherlands	social psychology/School - community relationships
Estonia	Greece	Belgium	Pedagogy
Lithuania	Cyprus	Estonia	Language/pedagogy
Portugal	Estonia	Netherlands	School-community relationships/pedagogy
Netherlands	Lithuania	Croatia	School-community relationships/language
Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	Pedagogy

Some partners indicated that whereas the distinction in the five areas of expertise could be made on a conceptual level, in practice many schools combine different areas and conduct activities in several areas at the same time. For example, oftentimes parent participation and school-community relationships are combined, but other combinations are also possible. In the schedule above it becomes clear how the areas of expertise are combined in each of the study visits.

Procedure

The focus during the study visits is on the good practice itself, but especially on the in-service training or professional development activity that supported the development of the good practice. Two general questions guide the study visit:

1. What does the good practice entail?
2. How were the teachers prepared for this good practice?

In the first session of the study visit, these general questions are translated to more detailed questions that refer to the specific area(s) of expertise and are relevant given the context of the study visit. In general, a distinction is made between questions regarding the context, the goals of the good practice, the activities, the results and the professional development activities.

This more specific set of questions guides the school visits as well the reflection during the final session of the study visit. In paragraph 3.3 the questions that were used in the Study visit in Cyprus are phrased.

All participants take turns taking notes (observations and notes of interviews), which are shared with the partner responsible for writing the report. The writing partner analyses the notes and wrote the report according to the general questions and the basic categories (context, goals, activities, results and professional development).

1.3 Participants in the Estonian study visit

The study visit started with a presentation by the organizing partner (*Tartu Rahvusvaheline Kool* Tartu International School MTU) on education in Estonia and the theme of professionalization. They organized and participated in the visit to two schools. The visiting partners were the Greece (which was responsible for the report) and Belgium. In total, a group of six visiting participants took part in the study visit, among which were teachers with expertise in the area of education and migration.



The NAOS-visiting team in Tartu, Estonia

1.4 Content of this report

This report will describe the sixth Naos study visit that took place on the 19th and 20th of April, 2016. Both the introduction as well the school visits will be described in separate chapters. The report will end with some general reflective notes prepared by the group in a “debriefing” session.



The NAOS-visiting team in Tartu, Estonia

2. Context

2.1 Estonia

Estonia is an e-society, with electronic ID-cards, e-government, e-health, e-school, and e-parking. It takes only about 20 minutes to found your own company online and 99% of banking is done online. As a result, Estonia has more successful start-up companies per head than in any other country in Europe, e.g. TransferWise, CrabCAD, and Fortumo. So it's no surprise that Estonia was selected as one of Europe's start-up hot-spot by Forbes Magazine in 2014, or the fact that Estonia is the only Eurozone nation to run a budget surplus, which got them voted as the best-performing economy in Europe.

Many know Estonia as the mother of Skype – the Skype software was developed by four Estonian engineers. Skype has an office in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, and the company also provides scholarships for bright IT students who have chosen to study in Estonia.



Estonia's capital, Tallinn

Estonia ranked 1st worldwide in air quality (World Health Organization 2013) and 2nd in Internet freedom (1st place Iceland, 3rd place Canada, Freedom of the Net, 2015). They also ranked second in the world for Internet access in schools (1st Iceland, 3rd Finland, the Global Information Technology Report, 2015) and it is considered one of the safest countries in the world. Estonians also rank 1st in Europe's largest 4G coverage (95% of the country). Only Singapore and South Korea have managed to do the same.

2.1.1 *Tartu*

Tartu is the second largest city of Estonia, following Estonia's political and financial capital Tallinn. It is placed 186 kilometres southeast of Tallinn and 245 kilometres northeast of Riga, with a population of 97,332. The city lies on the river Emajõgi, which connects the two largest lakes of Estonia (Emajõgi river means “mother river”). Tartu is built around a hill topped by an old fortified castle and a restored 13th-century cathedral (the site of the present university library). The rest of the city dates mostly from the 18th and 19th century.



The NAOS-visiting team in Tartu, Estonia

It's considered an important cultural center, especially since it is home to the nation's oldest university, the University of Tartu. Tartu University was founded in 1632 by Gustavus II of Sweden, suppressed in 1656, and reopened in 1802. The university is noted for its observatory, art museum, botanical garden, and library.

In addition to its academic role, modern Tartu is a city of factories producing instruments, agricultural machinery, footwear, foodstuffs, and other goods. Food processing, metalworking, printing and publishing, and the production of leather footwear and agricultural machinery are the leading industries.

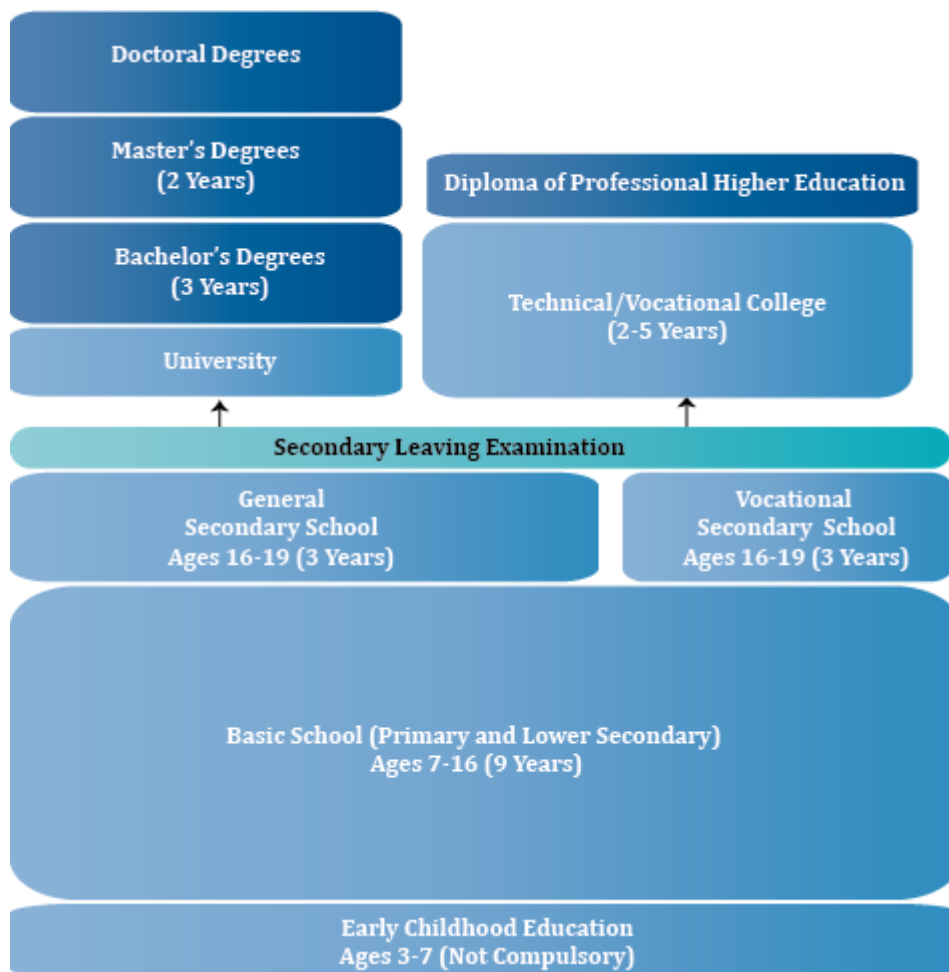
2.2 Estonian educational system

Every Estonian citizen has the right and responsibility of obtaining a nine year education for free (that occurs only in public schools). But you can also obtain your university education for free through scholarship programs. At the beginning of the academic year 2015/2016, 222,000 students enrolled in formal education in Estonia, out of which 146,000 enrolled in general education, 25,000 in vocational education and 51,000 in higher education.

In Estonian education, strategy education has been defined as the generator and maintainer of personal cultural and social values. This means that education forms and carries on value attitudes which serve as a basis for personal happiness, cultural sustainability and

interoperability of the society. Participation in education facilitates the development of the state and develops the human resources of the society.

The history of education in Estonia dates back to the 14th century when the first cathedral schools were founded. Today the education system is divided into 4 hierarchical phases including **pre-school**, **basic**, **secondary**, and **higher education** with provision for academic or vocational schooling within the system (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011). Basic schooling takes 9 years from age 7 to age 16. At the end of this period, successful pupils receive a Basic School Leaving Certificate or Põhikool lõputunnistus.



Estonia's Education System at a Glance

✓ *Pre- school education*

Pre-school education is delivered to children between the ages of 18 months to seven years in especially dedicated educational institutions (kindergartens). The main aim of the pre-school education is to support the child's family through fostering the child's growth and development by taking into account their individuality. The national curriculum for pre-school institutions follows the Scandinavian approach of combining different child-centred active

learning methods such as “Step by Step”, the Montessori method, the Waldorf method of teaching, Reggio Emilia, language immersion as well as research, entrepreneurship and outdoor learning. The goal of pre-school education is to support the children’s individuality, creativity and help them learn through playing. The Estonian pre-school institutions for child care emphasise on teaching values, including supporting children’s well-being and safety, preventing bullying and developing tolerance, caring, honesty and courage in children. Also they support the development of children’s general skills (personal, social, play and learning skills) and their overall development in seven areas of learning and teaching: me and the environment, language development, Estonian as a second language, mathematics, arts, music, physical development and movement. As a rule, learning and teaching activities are carried out in Estonian, but local government council can also decide that the activities are carried out in different languages. Children whose home language is other than Estonian receive state support to learn Estonian from the age of three onwards.

Facilities for the pre-school education are provided by the local authorities at the request of parents. These institutions follow the national curriculum that is specifically formulated for the purpose. Children who have passed the pre-school curriculum will be issued a certificate that records the child’s development. The parents will submit this certificate to the school where the child will be enrolled.

✓ Basic education

Pre-school is not mandatory in Estonia. All children who reach the age of seven by the 1st of October of the given year have to start school. Basic education is the minimum compulsory education. Compulsory school attendance lasts until basic education is completed or the child reaches the minimum school leaving age of 17.

The rural municipality government or the town government has the duty of providing basic education to all children of compulsory school age who live within the territory of the town or municipality. The local government designates a school for every child in the area where the child lives. The main criteria for designating a school are the proximity of the school to home and a sibling already attending the same school.

Basic education serves as the mandatory minimum of general education requirement, which can be acquired either partially in primary schools (grades 1 to 6), basic schools (grades 1 to 9) or upper secondary schools that also teach basic school curricula.

The basic school is divided into three stages:

stage I – grades 1-3

stage II – grades 4-6

stage III – grades 7-9

Basic education is made available through two national curricula:

national curriculum of basic school (2014)

simplified curriculum for basic school.

The national curricula establish the standard for basic and general secondary education. The curricula are implemented in all basic and upper secondary schools of Estonia, regardless of the school's legal status, unless otherwise stipulated by the law.

Students' knowledge, skills and proficiency are usually assessed on a five-point scale where «5» is «very good», «4» is «good», «3» is «satisfactory», «2» is «poor» and «1» is «weak». However, schools can use a different marking system. Between grades 1 to 6, schools can use a descriptive marking system without numbers. Graduating basic school requires that the student learns the curriculum to a satisfactory level, as well as passing three basic school graduation exams consisting of the Estonian language or Estonian as a second language, mathematics and an exam on a subject of the student's choice as well as completing a creative assignment. School year starts in September and consists of 175 school days (or 35 weeks). The upper limit of a class's size is 24 students in basic school.

Following graduation from basic school, there are a number of possibilities for the child. There is the possibility of acquiring general secondary education at upper secondary school, vocational secondary education at some vocational education institution or simply an occupation.

Basic education can be provided by home-schooling upon request of a parent or for health reasons. Distance learning is available for individuals of at least 17 years of age and in special cases it is also available upon the recommendation of the advisory commission for younger students.

✓ Secondary education

Secondary education is based on basic education and divided into general secondary education, provided by upper secondary schools, and vocational secondary education, provided by vocational educational institutions. Acquisition of general secondary education gives the right to continue studies for acquisition of higher education. Secondary vocational education is direct way to the labour market. General secondary education constitutes a set of knowledge, skills and competences, set out in the national curriculum for upper secondary schools, the acquiring of which is the precondition for further studies at universities and vocational educational institutions.

Attending secondary school isn't mandatory. It is viewed as a distinct educational level with various options students can choose from. They can either choose between a course where they learn a set of skills for a particular job, or they can attend secondary school which goes from the 10th to the 12th grade.

The 3 years of secondary school education that follow provide opportunities in 2 different streams. General academic education ends with a secondary school completion certificate called a *gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus* (certificate of secondary education), while completing secondary vocational education achieves a certificate on acquiring secondary vocational education based on basic education *tunnistus põhihariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*.

Especially for vocational education, students may go on from vocational secondary school to a post-secondary vocational institution, where they may qualify for a certificate on acquiring secondary vocational education based on secondary education (*tunnistus keskhariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*) in a wide variety of subjects. Vocational education is offered by upper-secondary vocational school and post-secondary professional school. Post-secondary professional school gives a vocational higher education.

Estonia has also focused on upgrading its vocational education system that serves about 30% of its upper secondary school students. In 1999, the country created a national qualifications system, developed national standards for vocational education and established more than 40 regional vocational training centers across the country. Almost all large employers and more than half of small firms participate in the system, which offers training places to all students.

✓ Higher education

After you graduate from secondary school you can pretty much do anything you want! The most common path that children choose is higher education (university), or work. Some even decide attending a vocational school. In the 2013/2014 academic year, a total of 59,998 students studied in higher education study programs, which is 7% less than the previous academic year (<https://hm.ee/en/activities/higher-education>).

There are usually two types of schools for higher education in Estonia. Universities and Higher Schools of Applied sciences. Tertiary education in Estonia is spread across 3 levels, bachelors, masters and doctoral studies. Universities enjoy a fair degree of autonomy too, with rights to establish their curricula and admission requirements. A three year studying course in a university gives you a Bachelor's degree, obtaining a Master's Degree takes two more years. Getting a degree in a school of applied sciences usually takes 3 years.

There are six public universities in Estonia. The universities are autonomous to the extent determined by the law of universities. This autonomy means that universities have the right to independently determine their academic and organizational structure, content of teaching and research work, course curricula, requirements for admission and graduation, etc.

Higher education in Estonia is both academically and practically oriented. Teaching is carried out in various forms such as lectures, seminars, group work, laboratory work and independent studies. In the process of learning, the students' responsibility and individual

performance are considered important and the grades obtained reflect not only the results of the final examination but also the participation in the course.

Science degrees may also include laboratory and practical work requirements. A significant feature in all teaching and studying at the Tallinn University is the use of modern technology, which is conveniently accessible to all staff and students. The oldest, largest and highest-ranked university of Tartu has an extensive range of faculties, and its students enjoy exchange opportunities with many other universities around the world.



Tartu University

2.2.1 Lifelong Learning

The Lifelong Learning Strategy is a document that guides the most important developments in the area of education. It is the basis on which the government will make its decisions for educational funding for the years 2014-2020 and for the development of programmes that support the achievement of necessary changes Ministry of Education and Research, 2014a).

The general goal of drafting the Lifelong Learning Strategy is to provide all people in Estonia with learning opportunities that are tailored to their needs and capabilities throughout their whole lifespan, in order for them to maximize opportunities for dignified self-actualization within society, in their work as well as in their family life.

To pursue the general goal, five strategic goals have been established.

- Change in the approach to learning

Implementation of an approach to learning that supports each learner's individual and social development, the acquisition of learning skills, creativity and entrepreneurship at all levels and in all types of education.

- Competent and motivated teachers and school leadership

The assessments of teachers and headmasters including their salaries are consistent with the qualification requirements for the job and the work-related performance.

- Concordance of lifelong learning opportunities with the needs of labour market

Lifelong learning opportunities and career services that are diverse, flexible and of good quality, resulting in an increase in the number of people with professional or vocational qualifications in different age groups, and an increase in overall participation in lifelong learning across Estonia.

- A digital focus in lifelong learning

Modern digital technology is used for learning and teaching effectively and efficiently. An improvement in the digital skills of the total population has been achieved and access to the new generation of digital infrastructure is ensured.

- Equal opportunities and increased participation in lifelong learning

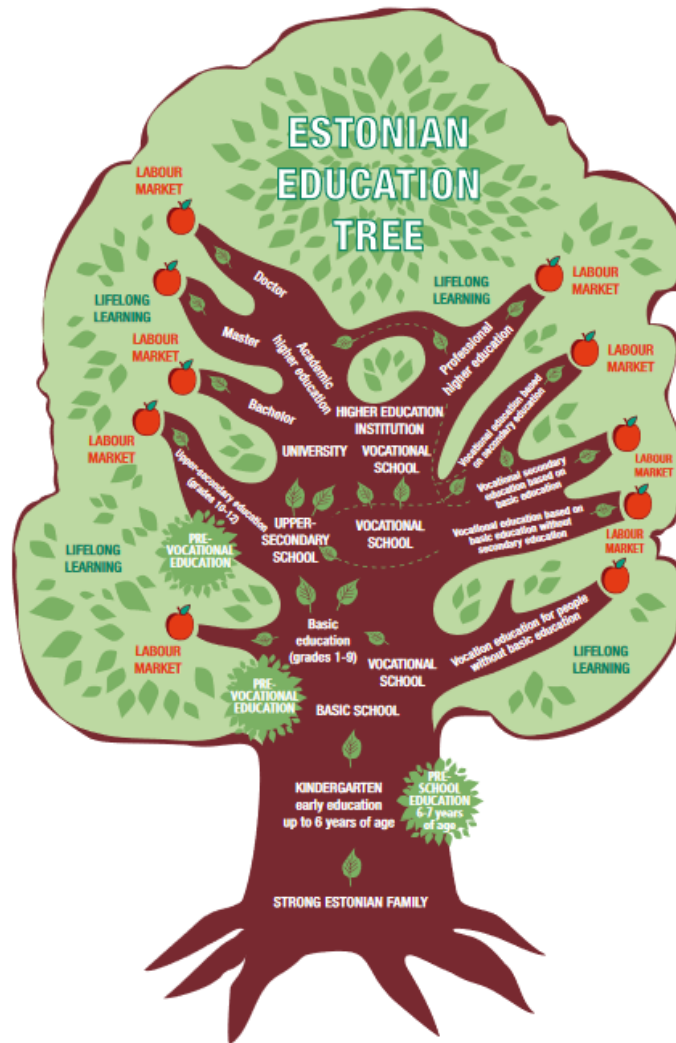
Equal opportunities for lifelong learning have been created for every individual.

The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 sees learning as a lifestyle. It is necessary to notice development opportunities and search for intelligent solutions. The learning process itself is based on values like:

- *Responsibility* – people are aware that learning and self-development are their own conscious personal choices as well as responsibility.
- *Necessity* – the learning process is guided by the individual's personal interests and abilities and supports their development, whilst keeping in mind the requirements of the labour market.
- *Opportunities* – a system of lifelong learning offers high quality, contemporary and flexible learning opportunities that are tailored for individual needs.

Lifelong learning begins with general education. There is a common system applied for general education in Estonia. In practical terms, this means that a common curriculum is taught in all levels of education, regardless of the language of study. The length of the study period consists of at least 175 teaching days (35 weeks) and four intervals of school breaks.

All municipal schools have designated service areas, meaning that the schools must ensure vacancies for all school-aged children living in their designated area. Parents can influence the school's development through school board.

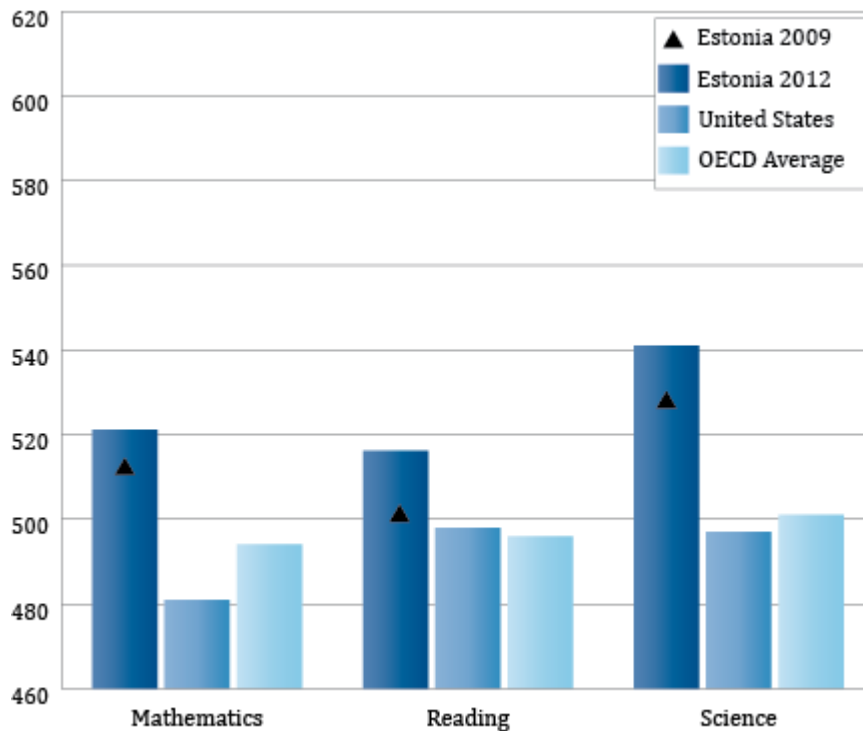


The Estonian Education Tree shows the possibilities for young girls and boys for life-long learning

2.2.2 PISA exams

Estonia emerged as a top performer in PISA 2012, ranking 11th in reading and math and 6th in science among all PISA participating countries and regions. Among EU countries, Estonia ranked 2nd in math and science and 4th in reading (Ministry of Education and Research,

2015). This is a remarkable achievement for a country that only gained independence in 1992. Since that year, the Estonian economy has grown nearly tenfold, with a well-developed information technology sector central to that growth. Part of this growth strategy was the development of an educational system to foster a high-tech, high-skill, high-wage economy.



PISA 2012 Mean Scores by Country for Reading, Mathematics, and Science

What’s interesting is that Estonia’s performance on PISA isn’t in spite of its poor students; it’s because of them. Though its students may come from diverse backgrounds, Estonia’s schools give them very similar educational experiences. On the 2012 PISA math exam, more than a third of low-income students were among the country’s top performers. Estonia had the second smallest gap in performance between its poorest and richest students out of all participating countries known as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

This impressive and steady rebuilding of the Estonian education system occurred in three main areas: the development of a new national curriculum adapted to the needs of a new economy; revamping teacher training to focus on innovative teacher practices and teacher mentorships; and upgrading the status of vocational education and training (VET). Notable to Estonia was their national strategy to develop an information society by 2015. As part of that strategy, the Tiger Leap project, which started in 1998, put in place a computer science curriculum for all secondary school students. This has since expanded to all students in all

grades, with an emphasis not just on programming but on problem-solving skills and logical thinking.

2.2.3 Professional development

The number of teachers working in general education (basic schools + secondary schools) is 14.409. In 1998, the government of Estonia, teacher education institutions and the teachers' unions drafted a Memorandum of Understanding on Reform of Teacher Education in Estonia. The Soviet model of teacher education, which Estonia had adopted, focused mainly on subject knowledge and traditional pedagogical practices. With the reform, teacher education now prepares Estonia's teachers, not only in the subject they will teach using particular approaches to teaching those subjects, but also for a job where they will develop curriculum, use new pedagogical approaches to serve more diverse student needs, engage in self-assessment activities with teacher mentors and promote an interest in life-long learning among their students.

Teacher education currently consists of two routes: a five-year BA/MA program of study for primary and secondary subject teachers and a one-year teacher education program for adults that have already completed an MA in a field other than education. Both programs focus on subject knowledge, pedagogy and understanding of the professional standards in the Teacher's Standard of Professional Competence of Estonia. Teachers have a year of internship following completion of teacher training.

Teacher education and training at the Master's level takes place in three stages: Pre-service education that provides basic pedagogical knowledge and skills, an induction year that supports the students' introduction to educational organizations and promotes the development of skills through practice and analysis, and in-service training once the student has graduated. The induction year restricts new teachers to a maximum of 18 working hours a week and all new teachers also have access to mentors. After completing the induction year, novice teachers acquire a certificate of teaching, issued by a certification board, while a certificate of completion of the support program is issued by the university. The latter requires an individual development portfolio and an evaluation of the new teacher's performance.

The Ministry of Education now mandates an individual professional development plan for teachers which outlines educational and training targets for professional development, based on teachers' qualifications and work experiences. Under this plan, teachers must undergo at least 160 hours of continuing education in five years. The funding for the continuing education of teachers is provided from the state budget. Professional development in teaching plays an important role for the different salary levels and in progression up the career ladders, as in other top-performing countries.

Estonia has also developed teacher career pathways. These pathways aim to enable teachers to stay motivated in the profession by seeking new opportunities, engaging in skills development and self-reflection and assisting new and beginning teachers to improve their practice. The teacher career ladder system in Estonia consists of four positions: junior teacher, teacher, senior teacher and teacher-methodologist. Teacher pay increases linked to the four positions fall under a thirty-four step career ladder that covers all educators in the country from classroom aides to directors of post-secondary institutions. The profession of the teacher and its value, teachers' professional development and worthy pay are the priorities of Estonian teacher policy during 2014-2020 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2014b).

2.3 Immigration in Estonia

The wars and global demographic developments of recent years have created a major refugee crisis, including in Europe. Estonia is participating in resolving the crisis voluntarily and in proportion to its weight within the European Union. Estonia has received a relatively small number of applications for international protection compared to other EU member states, but the number of applications has increased each year.

In Estonia, the pupils whose mother tongue is not Estonian or Estonian/Russian form nearly a quarter (24% – 33 895 pupils) of all pupils. Finland (26%), Russia (23%) and Ukraine (8%) are the major countries of origin of immigrants in Estonia. It is also notable that returning nationals comprise a big part of Estonia's population inflow in the recent decades since 60% of people crossing the border in Estonia during 2013 held an Estonian citizenship (Mägi & Siarova, 2014).

Throughout the years, Estonia has received the largest number of applications for international protection from Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan weight within the European Union. From 1997 until 31 May 2015, Estonia received a total of 709 applications, and protection was granted to 114 persons (including 74 refugees and 40 recipients of complementary protection). 90 applications for international protection were received in the first five months of 2015 (2014 total 147, 2013 total 97, 2012 total 77).

The aim of their action plan is to ensure Estonia's readiness to launch the resettlement and relocation schemes and ensure their smooth operation. This is accomplished by mapping the necessary activities and additional resources required. Refugees are entitled to state pension, family benefits, employment services and employment subsidy, social benefits and other support on the same basis as any permanent resident of Estonia. Also, refugees may work in Estonia on the same basis as permanent residents of Estonia.

3. School visits

3.1 Focus school visits: Pedagogy and didactics - Language

The topic in the first school visit is pedagogy and diversity: how do teachers address diversity in the classroom in the area of pedagogy and didactics? This area of expertise can be described as follows: Teachers should be competent in using didactic resources that support the learning of all their pupils. Diverse classes need different didactic resources and different types of instruction than homogeneous classrooms. If schools and teachers are committed to encouraging the talents of all their pupils they should have knowledge of the use of teaching materials, methods and types of instruction designed for diverse classes.

During our interviews we used a specific questionnaire as our main guide (see appendix for "Questionnaire No 1). However questions weren't limited to those, we always took the chance of asking further questions, depending on where the conversation headed.

The topic in the second school visit is Language: how do teachers address language diversity in the classroom? Urban teachers (or teachers in classrooms with diverse student populations) should first of all know about language development in classes of pupils whose first language is not the language of instruction.

Again, a particular questionnaire was set as a guide for the interviewers. It can also be found in the appendix ("Questionnaire No 2").

3.2 Choice of the school visits

As agreed at the kick off meeting by the NAOS-project partners, the Tartu Rahvusvaheline Kool -Tartu International School MTU was asked to select a primary and secondary school which could boast a good track record in working with immigrants.

During the whole stay in Tartu, Estonia, the Greek, Belgian and Dutch partners were accompanied by Ms Kristi Aria and Ms Elo-Kai Kurel. They introduced the NAOS-partners in the following schools:

- Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium. This school was selected for being an Estonian-Russian bilingual school and includes grades 1 through 12.
- Tartu Raatuse School. This school includes grades 1 through 9 and follows the basic national curriculum.

These schools were not exactly one primary and one secondary school but they were representative of the diversity policy. In both schools the visiting group was given a warm

reception. Both visits had an identical format: introduction by the headmaster, interviews with the headmaster and teachers, a walk through the school building and a “debriefing” session.

3.3 School visit 1: Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium

3.3.1 Context

The first study visit took place on the 19th of April, 2016, at Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium. This school was founded in 1964 and is nowadays considered an Estonian-Russian bilingual school. In Estonia, primarily during the period when the Soviet Union was in control, schools were divided into Russian-language schools and Estonian-language schools. Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium used to be a Russian-language school, in which all courses were taught in Russian. With the fall of the Soviet Union however it became one of the first schools which introduced an Estonian-Russian bilingual teaching curriculum which provides classes in both languages. Depending on the needs of the student, parents may choose to enroll their child into the early total, early partial, late total or late partial immersion program. The difference between these is based on the percentage of classes that take place in Estonian. The early total immersion program for instance provides 100% of classes in Estonian from the 1st grade. Russian is taught after the first grade.



The school currently consists of roughly 1000 students and 100 teachers. It includes grades 1 through 12, which is unusual for Estonia. Most schools have grades 1-6 (primary schools), or 1-9 (basic schools), or are considered upper secondary schools (grades 10-12). The Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium however houses all 12 grades in the same building.

Due to its bilingual curriculum, the majority of the students are Russian speaking children whose first language isn't Estonian. This doesn't necessarily mean that the students came from Russia. Many of them also originate from different countries, such as Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and other former Soviet countries. Some of them can speak Estonian and have a background in the Estonian culture from one of their parents, while others speak only Russian and learn Estonian at the school. It's also not unusual for students to have two mother tongues, Russian and Estonian, but most of them speak primarily Russian and a little Estonian. Therefore, Russian is usually treated as the first language, while others (Estonian, English) are considered second and third.

What's interesting is the fact that the school doesn't create separated groups for the children depending on their cultural background; they support diversity and believe that everyone should be open to different cultures and backgrounds thus making the students more open minded and hopefully better people. Even when culture conflicts take place, especially among younger children, the school welcomes the chance to talk about xenophobia and teach them respect towards other cultures. This is enhanced by the fact that even the staff is diverse. About half of the teachers have an Estonian background, while the other half have a Russian (with studies in Estonian).

One of the biggest problems and concerns the school has is the poor quality of the building. Even though it's in a good area, the building is old and incapable of covering all the needs a school has. The staff mentioned several times their need for a new building and hope that in the near future they will be able to move somewhere else.



During the school visit we had the chance to talk to the principal, several teachers and a teacher who is also parent of a child attending this school. They kindly responded to all our questions and described the history and daily routine of the school. They also provided us with a guided tour of the classrooms and building areas.

3.3.2 Goals

Regarding the academic progress of the students, a lot of effort is put into helping them develop equal academic skills with the native Estonian children. By offering classes in Estonian, Russian, or both, the school has developed a curriculum orientated towards bilingual or Russian speaking students. The staff is focused on maintaining a high academic level and on providing students with as many educational chances as possible.

However the purpose of this school is also to create a safe and fun environment for these students. The principal made it clear that the aim of this school isn't to simply integrate non Estonian children into the Estonian society, forcing onto them a new culture. The staff strives daily to help children develop 2 identities: a Russian and an Estonian. Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium tries to make sure that children equally learn to respect both cultures and become an equal member of the Estonian society, while at the same time they find pride in their Russian (or other) background.



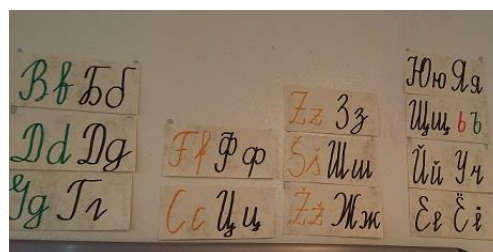
When asked about their goals, the teachers' response seemed to support the claim that Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium focuses on more than just academic skills. First of all, they expressed their strong desire to help children gain the knowledge and skills the school is supposed to provide and guide them through not only understanding but also applying everything they learned in their everyday lives. At the same time though, they stressed the importance of making students happy and allowing them to express their feelings and thoughts. The teachers specifically mentioned how much they enjoy exchanging ideas with their students beyond the subjects they teach, and that they hope to teach their pupils that every opinion is important, valuable and respectable.

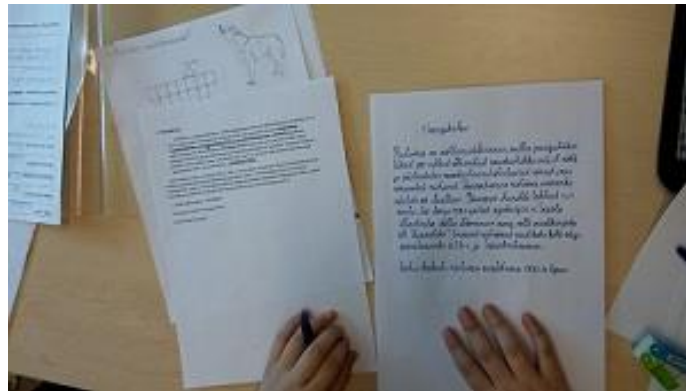
In conclusion school seems to have a clear vision of its goals. After the interviews, we concluded that the school's vision can be extended beyond academic achievement and test scores in that the school's aim is to also develop the cultural and ethnical identity of its children.

3.3.3 Activities

The method which is used by the school is primarily “content and language integrated learning” (CLIL). Based on this approach, the educators of the school teach the content of each subject in Estonian, thus improving the academic capabilities of children in both the subject and the foreign language (Estonian). As it has been mentioned before, if parents feel that their children’s Estonian is not good enough they are given the option of enrolling their child into the late total or late partial immersion program where Estonian is taught after the first grade.

Regarding the learning materials, when we visited the classrooms and interviewed the teachers, we understood that quite a bit of freedom is given to them regarding their teaching methods. It is up to the teacher to organize his lesson according to the methods he considers best for the children he is instructing. But overall, the staff uses bilingual learning materials, smart-boards, projectors, power point presentations, text books and different tests depending on the needs and level of each child.





What is quite interesting is the approach of the school towards Russian and Estonian national holidays and big events. Naturally, they make it a habit of celebrating both Russian and Estonian holidays, placing equal emphasis on both. However, they add a particularly happy, upbeat and cheerful touch to the celebrations due to cultural differences. As described by the staff, Estonians tend to be more laid back in their celebrations. Someone specifically mentioned playfully that “Estonians are big masters of poor celebration”. The Russians on the other hand, tend to be more extroverted and cheerful during their national holidays. Therefore, the school tries to format everything into the Russian context the children have learned from their homes, which leads to upbeat and more “Russian type” celebrations which allows children to fully and equally appreciate both of their identities.



In the past, students were granted the opportunity to visit other countries. The school has organized trips to a Stockholm-Estonian school and to the Estonian section of a Brussels international school. During their visits the pupils saw how Estonian was taught to other foreign students. They met and discussed with other Estonian children who had dual (or more) national identities and saw how they are capable of accepting, managing and valuing

more than one cultures and identities. The staff considered these experiences so important that when asked what they would do if they won a one million Euros cash prize (besides upgrading their building), one of their responses was that they would organize more trips like these.

3.3.4 *Results*

One of the goals, the school seems to have achieved, is the fact that language is not taught for the sole purpose of learning the words, but is approached as a mean of exploring the world. Due to the bilingual curriculum, no labels are set on languages; they are all presented as equally important. Regardless if it is Estonian or Russian, the staff's purpose isn't simply to improve the student's skills, but to develop their culture and to make them feel accepted, wanted, and liked. In this sense we could say that Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium is more a bicultural school than a bilingual one.

During our interviews we got the chance to speak to a teacher whose daughter goes to Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium and whose son attends an Estonian school. It was quite interesting to hear how each child's experience compared. Academically both schools are at about the same level, but the boy in the Estonian school doesn't feel as if his Russian identity is respected as much. According to this parent's experience, Tartu Annelinna Gümnaasium deals better with the bilingual and bicultural identity of the children leading them to equally respect both of their national identities.

One of the most interesting things stated by the staff was the way children handle the languages. Teachers have seen their students think and answer in Estonian when the lesson is in Estonian, and think and answer in Russian when the lesson is in Russian. Another teacher mentioned that during the school breaks, she often hears children start a sentence in Estonian and end it in Russian. These further demonstrate how children have incorporated both of their cultural identities and how much the school supports bilingualism.

The school's success could also be measured by the number of students who apply to attend. Parents are allowed to select the school they desire to send their children to. According to the principal, at the end of each school year, the number of applicants increases. Unfortunately, there is a limited number of children who can attend, so many are refused. The principal hopes that someday they will be able to accept all who apply.



3.3.5 *Professional Development*

First of all, we must mention the effort put into selecting the most competent, skilful and well educated teachers. The school's staff is selected by the principal, who assured us that she tries to select only the best. Many of the teachers actually used to be interns working at the school (since the school also functions as an internship for university students), which means that the principal has the benefit of previously meeting them and working with them. Regarding diversity and multiculturalism, the teachers stated that they hadn't received much preparation during their university studies, so initially they had to deal with it on their own. In order to support their effort and to maximize their efficiency, once teachers are hired and during their years as a part of the school, several methods are used to help them improve daily and to reach their maximum potential.

New teachers arriving at the school are assigned a mentor. The mentor doesn't necessarily need to be a staff member teaching the same subjects. Being more experienced, allows them to help the new teacher. The mentor's role is to support the teacher in his development and help him deal with issues that trouble him. He provides tips, daily advice, and materials. When it comes to behavioral and disciplinary issues, the mentor is extremely helpful. According to staff members, the new mentoring system has helped many teachers adjust to the school and has provided necessary support during their first years.

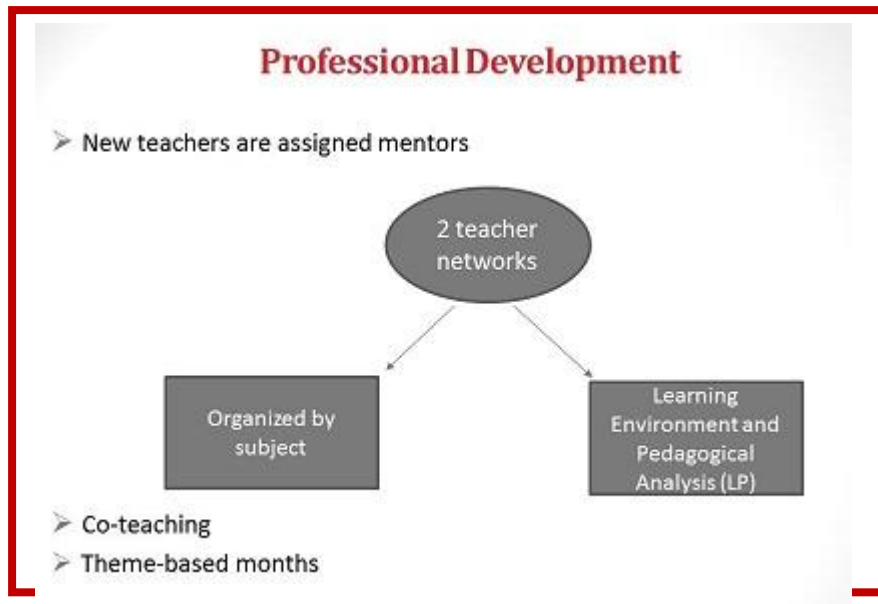
Aside from this, there are two (2) teacher networks in which the staff participates. First, all teachers are organized by the subject they teach. So there is a group of Math teachers, Language teachers, etc. The purpose of these groups is to help teachers communicate and develop common lesson plans, activities and exchange information and materials that may help each other. These groups have autonomy and can even ask for extra funding for various projects.

The second group, to which all teachers belong, is part of a Norwegian project called Learning Environment and Pedagogical Analysis (LP – model). The staff is divided into 10 groups which are as diverse as possible, gathering teachers from all subjects. Each group

consists of 6 to 10 members. It is funny that the only strict rule is that each group must have one man! There is a total of 11 men who teach and therefore, in the spirit of keeping the groups as diverse as possible, they try to evenly spread them out throughout them (one group of course will end up having 2 men). The goal of this project is to bring all the teachers of the school together in order to discuss and to solve common issues that trouble them. The groups gather every second Tuesday and teachers discuss whatever difficulties they may have had during those weeks or items they believe should be discussed and perhaps changed. Often, when there are common issues that must be discussed, the principal brings them to the group's attention and some meetings are devoted to discussing particular subjects. The principal stressed the amount of autonomy these groups are given and the fact that they are encouraged to take initiative. According to the staff's testimonial, this project is very effective and has solved several issues throughout the years, helping the school function more smoothly. The teachers mentioned feeling supported and appreciate the fact that they can discuss their school-related problems with the groups. This helps them feel more confident, and more importantly it allows them to leave the school each day carrying less problems home.

Furthermore, the staff often engages in co-teaching in order help each other improve. A math's teacher whose first language is Russian for instance might team up with an Estonian language teacher and teach a class together. This benefits both of them since the first will get the chance to observe a native Estonian speaker teach, which helps him improve both his didactic methods and his Estonian, and the other teacher benefits from improving his own teaching skills and his Russian, in order to be better understood by the bilingual children. And this is just one of the many examples. All sorts of combinations take place with the purpose of improving both educators.

During the school year, theme based months are created. The theme is relative to instruction. For example, the theme of the month can be music, where musical activities take place and the whole school (along with the staff) participates in various music classes. This also helps with the professional development of the teachers, for they participate in co-teaching and also get the chance to observe others teach and to draw ideas from their methods. Another benefit of the theme based months is that the principal gets the chance to watch the staff teach and then provides feedback for them. When asked about the teachers' response to her feedback, the principal stressed the friendly nature of the comments she provides. The purpose of commenting on the teachers' methods is not to discipline them, but aims towards improving their skills, something which she believes has been understood by the staff. Therefore, teachers are open towards her comments and also tend to help each other improve in any way possible.



3.4 School visit 2: Tartu Raatuse School

3.4.1 Context

The second study visit took place on the 20th of April, 2016. We visited Tartu Raatuse School, which dates back to the 15th of September 1919, making it nearly 100 years old! The school's age also reflects the many changes which have taken place over the years. Its original name was Tartu Girls' Gymnasium, which, as the name suggests, only hosted girls in the secondary level. In 1934 the school was renamed to "Tartu Second Gymnasium", only to be changed 6 years later into "Tartu Secondary School No 2". During the 2nd world war the building was used by military units and teaching was carried out in the rooms of Tartu Secondary School No 1. In 1944 the building was destroyed by fire, leading to the creation of a new building. While the school moved into the new building, it also changed its name into "Tartu Secondary School No3", which again changed on the 1st of May, leading to the name it has today, Tartu Raatuse School. The final change took place on September 2013, when the school was reformed into a basic school, hosting grades 1 until 9.



All schools in Estonia follow national curriculum that allows each school and teacher to choose the most appropriate pedagogical approaches and methods to meet the needs of the school's student body. Two things struck us as interesting at Tartu Raatuse School. The first one is the fact that they don't give out grades until the 5th grade. For classes in music and arts, grades are not given until the 9th grade. As mentioned before, the typical Estonian grading system has a 5 point grading scale, where 2 of them are negative, leaving the option of grading each child on a 3 point scale. The school believes an evaluation should reflect the individual skills and abilities of each child, as well as his specific weaknesses. No grading system, and especially the typical Estonian one, can reflect these on a student, which is why they delay using it as much as possible. Instead of grades, teachers provide the pupils' parents with an oral or written feedback every three months, assessing their childrens' progress and providing tips for improvement. The second interesting aspect of this school is the fact that German or English is taught from the 1st grade. This was applied in order to help children learn the foreign language better, since studies show that starting at an earlier age is more efficient.

The school is attended by about 500 students, and roughly 50 staff members work there. It's considered a normal municipality school, which hosts children from a diverse socioeconomic background. The school hosts quite a few Russian children, and recently, several refugee children from Syria joined the school. The last type of diversity is something relatively "new" for this school. Teachers are prepared to teach students from Russia (because they occur quite often), but not children from other countries. The most difficult part was the lack of communication between these Syrian children and their teachers, since there was no language which both spoke well. These refugee children were mainly the focus of our study visit, seeking out Tartu Raatuse School's approach on diversity.



3.4.2 Goals

The principal seemed to have great expectations from his staff and thought highly of the school. At one point we asked him what he hopes the school will have accomplished within the next 5 years. He replied that he hopes in 5 years it will be the best school in Estonia!

Within the next two years the school is planning on renovating the building and creating larger classrooms which will fit more than 60 students. They want to create open classrooms in accordance to the Nordic model. The principal envisions interdisciplinary courses where many students will get together and 2-3 (or more) teachers will teach. He believes teachers will be able to collaborate easier in this way, learn from each other, implement group projects and generally approach teaching in a more flexible and unique way. At first, teachers didn't meet this idea with much enthusiasm. They were afraid to implement such an innovative idea and preferred maintaining the old classrooms they're familiar with. The principal however is quite optimistic about their skills and seems to have convinced most of them that there are many benefits to this approach and that it's worth trying.



The school's vision for its students is simply for them to succeed in life. Success can be measured in many different ways, so the principal wouldn't specify the type of success they aim for, but what he considers extremely important is for the children to develop the ability to understand and assess themselves and their work.

We also asked the refugees' teachers about their goals for their students. The first thing they mentioned was how difficult it is for the children to adjust to their new environment, which makes setting goals really hard. One of the things they are trying, and hope to accomplish, is to help the children feel fully comfortable in their new setting and learn to communicate their thoughts and feelings. It's important to connect firstly on an emotional level with them, and then help them academically. Regarding school subjects though, the teachers' short-term goals are to help these students learn how to speak, read and write Estonian. Their long-term goal is to help young people fully integrate into the school community and Estonian culture, while retaining their own individual background.

3.4.3 *Activities*

One of the first things we found interesting was the school's approach towards the culture of its students who originate from another national background. A nice example is the way the school handles the Russian traditions. Russians celebrate Christmas on different dates from Estonians. Therefore students with a Russian background are allowed to be absent during those dates and celebrate Christmas when their culture requires it. This is just a small example of how the school tries to incorporate all the national identities of the children and create a safe and welcoming environment. Another example was the fact that the staff was in the process of organizing a "Syrian cooking" event. The children who came from Syria and their parents would cook several of their traditional foods and share them with the whole school. In this way Estonian children would come in contact with the Syrian culture and approach it with an open mind.



Regarding teaching tools, the teachers told us it's hard finding books and generally materials for students who don't speak or understand Estonian, Russian or English. So they've had to devise their own strategy and come up themselves with the appropriate exercises for them. One teacher's approach was creating "talking walls" and "talking floors". She added lots of pictures to the walls and floors of the classrooms with letters, words and sentences which would help the students learn the language. This approach is usually applied to students learning to read and write in their mother tongue, so she tried modifying it to suit the specific needs of those students, based on her knowledge of special needs children.



As mentioned before, the principal considers the skill of self-assessment to be one of the most important and necessary skills a child must acquire. Therefore, at the end of the year, students engage in a self-analysis of the year that passed. Teachers get together with students and their parents and discuss the progress of the past year. Templates are also handed out to the children in order to assess themselves and write down their own critique of their progress. The templates naturally aren't fixed, but vary depending on the class or even the child.

3.4.4 Results

The school has come a long way since the arrival of the refugee children. The first stepping stone was getting the students to learn simple words and phrases in Estonian, those which can be helpful in everyday conversations with their friends or family. Once this was achieved, the teachers moved on to teaching them larger sentences and grammar. It seems like the children have now reached the level of using several simple sentences and words. Naturally though, they can understand much more than they can actually say.

The staff seemed really happy with the students' progress. The oldest of them can normally attend some other lessons, such as math, and will also be joining them soon in chemistry, physics and several other subjects. Their progress however extends beyond academic achievements; they've managed to cooperate with native students, join them in outdoor activities and become friends with some of them.



3.4.5 Professional Development

The principal first stressed how important the teacher selection process is. He characteristically mentioned that all he needs to assess a teacher's capabilities is 15 seconds! He makes sure that he selects the most skilled candidates, not just the qualified ones. He interviews teachers and hires those who are ambitious and willing to learn, and those who want to become the best teachers. He constantly compared teachers to doctors and underlined the importance of the job as well as the need to let teachers think for themselves and apply the methods they consider best. The principal takes his responsibility

of making administrative decisions very seriously, but strongly believes that teachers should be allowed to take initiative. The resources are available; it's up to the teachers to decide how and where they will use them.

Regarding the teachers' preparation for students with another (or more) national identities, the school's policy is that these kids shouldn't be approached any differently. The staff views these children just like all the others and tries to teach them the significance of all cultures. The principal also stressed the individuality of each child and the fact that the best way to help the students is to let the teachers apply the methods they consider best. Some children might need more help some less. It's up to his teacher to judge the best and most efficient approach.

Our interview with the teachers seemed to fully support this claim. Many teachers defined themselves as autodidact, referring to the fact that they've personally searched for solutions to their problems and haven't just been waiting for help to come from somewhere. They've used the internet a lot, searching for materials created for immigrants. Some have contacted other European teachers via Skype and have joined informal online networks which are consisted of teachers helping each other in the field of diversity. Others had even visited Finland in order to personally experience how their educational system helps and supports immigrants within the school context.

At the same time however, there are several ways through which the school provides help to the teachers that seek for it. The principal believes in letting the staff search for answers on their own, but also tries to provide the necessary support in any way possible.

First of all, teachers are provided with a mentor upon their arrival. The mentor can be any other teacher provided he has the necessary experience to help the new member. Just like all mentorship systems, the teacher's mentor provides him with daily support and tries to help the new teacher adapt smoothly. Often they will watch each other teach in order to exchange ideas and provide tips for improvement. The school furthermore has a psychologist and four special needs teachers who are always on standby and provide valuable support.

Also, the school's teachers are divided into groups, based on the subject they teach, which meet about every second week. When the groups get together they discuss the curriculum, any difficulties they might have, ideas for projects and generally anything that might concern them. Several teachers we spoke to mentioned how valuable these groups are to them. The most important aspect of them is that they allow them to talk about the progress of their students, especially the refugees, and decide the most appropriate course of action.

Another way teachers improve themselves is by their self-evaluation. At the end of the school year the teachers are asked to evaluate themselves by filling in some templates. This helps them think over the year that passed and write down what they would change.

It was quite interesting to learn that schools occasionally cooperate and help each other. A new student from a Syrian family joined the school last year. We learned from the staff that a meeting was set up between this school and the one we visited the previous day (Tartu

Annelinna Gümnaasium). The school set up the meeting in order to seek some advice on how to help the child, which was gladly provided by the other school. Unfortunately these meetings don't take place often, but the staff expressed its desire to arrange them more frequently in the future.

It is also noteworthy that upon the arrival of some new refugee children the school sent four teachers to receive special training. The Estonian ministry of education and research organized some special training courses aimed towards helping refugee children integrate better into the schools. The school covered the expenses for four of the teachers, who participated in the courses and helped with the inclusion of the refugee children upon their arrival. The Integration and Immigration Office also tries to help such teachers in some ways. They organize seminars twice a year for teachers who teach immigrant students, but are limited to language issues and are not enough to give the right direction on immigration. They also provided the teachers with some materials, even though they were primarily made to teach Estonian to Russian pupils. Even though their support practically wasn't much, they did help the teachers come up with some ideas of their own, which the staff considered a step in the right direction.



4. Summary & remarkable observations

Due to its location and history, it seems like a big concern of the Estonian educational policy is the diversity in migrant education (Mägi & Siarova, 2014). The large flow of diverse groups has made it difficult for both their classmates and the staff to handle. The children need to learn to accept diversity, which isn't something that can happen overnight, and the staff must acquire the proper instruments and skills in order to best help these children. The long history of Estonia with the Soviet Union is also another factor that can't be overlooked, and

definitely makes some aspects of the inclusion more difficult. However, no such issues were mentioned from the interviewees, which means that perhaps enough time has passed for the historical differences to have been forgotten.

The second school of course made it clear that besides Russian speaking children, there are more diverse groups which should be cared for. The example of the Syrian children brought out the issue of the lack of tools available to the teachers. Due to the large number of children who originate from Russian speaking countries, it seems like the government has developed teaching materials to help these children, as well as institutions which can facilitate and educate them (such as the 1st school visited). On the other hand, children who don't speak Estonian, English, or Russian seem to have it the worst. No particular policy has been developed for them, nor did the teachers seem to be provided with the tools necessary, which made helping these children the sole responsibility of each teacher and school.

Overall though, the study visits showed that the results are headed in the right direction, and many schools have things to learn from the ones we visited. The decentralization of the Estonian education seemed to be something noteworthy. It is both an incredible opportunity if professional capacity is there, but can also be a major challenge if professional capacity is not present. The government allows each town to select the schools' principals, who in return choose the staff themselves. This seems to create schools with strong leaders and big visions, who have set big goals and high standards for their schools and were ready to give it everything they had, fighting for what they believed would be most beneficial. And with the strong leadership came of course staff members who were just as focused and had understood the importance of their job.

Another interesting aspect was the schools' approach towards diversity. When asked about their policy, both schools seemed to not only place a focus on the academic achievement of minority students, but also on cultivating both the migrant as well as the native students' cultural identities. So their focus was first on creating a safe and friendly environment for them, and then helping them learn and explore the world.

The first school presented an interesting approach towards bilingual children. Its bilingual curriculum and the fact that their policy is geared around helping children integrate into their new environment, makes the school a good example of migrant education. The proper materials, the mentorship system, the in-school networks and the co-teaching lessons are all important aspects which make the teachers' jobs easier and more efficient.

The second school was quite different from the first one. It was an average Estonian school, created for hosting native children, which had recently come across refugee children and was in the process of learning how to integrate them. Whereas the first school has been focused for many years on minority children, the second one seemed to be experiencing something it wasn't prepared for (the refugee children from Syria), which forced them to change their policy and methods. This school's teachers seemed to have a tougher time dealing with the specific minorities due to the lack of tools available. However, the decentralized Estonian educational system seemed to give the school great room for dealing with the issue, which allowed them to create separate classrooms for them when necessary,

and also led the principal and the school to seek for the best action plan in national seminars and internet support groups.

A common issue, mentioned by both schools, was the bad quality of their buildings. It seems though the first school is in more need of a renovation, whereas the second school wishes to take a totally different approach to education, creating larger classrooms and having many staff members co-teach.

It is also interesting how greatly each school valued trips to other countries. The fact that both of them considered such experiences helpful and stressed their wish to visit more countries and schools and learn from them, demonstrates the value of exchange programs and the importance of exchanging views with other countries and cultures.

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6. Appendix

6.1 Questionnaire No 1

Questionnaire No 1. Used for the first school visit.

	TEACHERS	PRINCIPAL
CONTEXT	<p>-What is the diversity context of your school/classroom?</p> <p>- In what ways do you consider minority students to be “teachable”?</p>	<p>-What type of school is this, what are the characteristics?</p> <p>-How would you describe the school’s student population?</p> <p>-Who are described as minority students?</p> <p>-How would you describe the local context of the school, such as the quality of living, employment/unemployment, among the students’ parents, socio-economic conditions for parents and students?</p> <p>-What are the school’s basic values (e.g. visions of the school)?</p> <p>-How may I recognize those values?</p> <p>-What is the general school approach/ vision to diversity?</p> <p>-How may I recognize those values?</p> <p>-What is the general school approach/ vision to diversity?</p> <p>-How may I recognize those values?</p> <p>-What’s the background of this approach</p> <p>-What is the history of the school concerning (projects in the area of) pedagogy and didactics</p>
ACTIVITIES	<p>-What kind teaching tools (resources, types of instruction etc) do you use to address the diversity?</p>	<p>- What practices/projects does the school have on pedagogy and didactics in the area of diversity?</p>

GOALS	<p>-What do you aim for, given the diversity in your classroom?</p> <p>-Is the way you teach in accordance with the school vision on diversity? Please describe.</p>	<p>-What are the goals of these practices?</p> <p>-Focus on process or progress?</p>
RESULTS	<p>-To what extent do you reach the goals?</p> <p>-Do you feel satisfied with the activities? (teacher's perceptions).</p> <p>-Why/Why not?</p>	<p>-To what extent do you reach the goals?</p> <p>-Do you feel satisfied with the activities? (principal's perceptions)</p> <p>-Why/Why not?</p> <p>- In what ways do you consider minority students to be included?</p> <p>-Does school keep data of students' perspectives/attitudes about "otherness" (racism, acceptance, tolerance, diversity)?</p>
PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION	<p>-How did you learn about the teaching tools etc to address that diversity?</p> <p>-How are you as a teacher supported to develop your knowledge and skills in dealing with diversity?</p>	<p>-What kind of preparation does the school offer to the teachers?</p> <p>-How do you support teachers to develop their knowledge and skills in dealing with diversity?</p> <p>-How do teachers influence decision making in daily work?</p> <p>- How do school leaders open up for teachers to influence?</p>

6.2 Questionnaire No 2

Questionnaire No 2. Used for the second school visit.

	TEACHERS	PRINCIPAL
CONTEXT	<p>-What is the diversity context of your school/classroom in terms of ethnic/cultural backgrounds?</p> <p>-What is the diversity context of your school/classroom in terms of home languages?</p> <p>-How are these two types of diversity related to each other?</p> <p>-In what ways do you consider minority students to be “teachable”?</p>	<p>-What type of school is this, what are the characteristics?</p> <p>-How would you describe the school’s student population?</p> <p>-Who are described as minority students?</p> <p>-How would you describe the local context of the school, such as the quality of living, employment/unemployment, among the students’ parents, socio-economic conditions for parents and students?</p> <p>-What are the school’s basic values (e.g. visions of the school)?</p> <p>-How may I recognize those values?</p> <p>-What is the general school approach/ vision to diversity?</p> <p>-How may I recognize those values?</p> <p>-What is the history of the school concerning (projects in the area of) language diversity?</p>
ACTIVITIES	<p>-What kind activities, learning materials etc do you use to address the language diversity?</p>	<p>What practices/projects does the school have on language diversity?</p>

<p>GOALS</p>	<p>-What do you aim for, given the language diversity in your classroom? And given the activities you undertake?</p> <p>-Is the way you teach in accordance with the school vision on diversity? Please describe.</p>	<p>-What are the goals of these practices?</p> <p>-Focus on process or progress?</p>
<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>-To what extent do you reach the goals?</p> <p>-Do you feel satisfied with the activities? (teacher's perceptions).</p> <p>-Why/Why not?</p>	<p>-To what extent do you reach the goals?</p> <p>-Do you feel satisfied with the activities? (principal's perceptions)</p> <p>-Why/Why not?</p> <p>- In what ways do you consider minority students to be included?</p> <p>-Does school keep data of students' language development?</p> <p>-Does school keep data of students' perspectives/attitudes about "otherness" (racism, acceptance, tolerance, diversity)?</p>
<p>PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION</p>	<p>-How did you learn about the teaching in language diverse classrooms?</p> <p>-How are you as a teacher supported to develop your knowledge and skills in dealing with diversity?</p>	<p>-What kind of preparation does the school offer to the teachers?</p> <p>-How do you support teachers to develop their knowledge and skills in dealing with language diversity?</p> <p>-How do teachers influence decision making in daily work?</p> <p>- How do school leaders open up for teachers to influence?</p>