



Professional capacity dealing with diversity in Antwerp

Report of the NAOS study visit May 2015

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Professional capacity on diversity



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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. (Inter)national 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 2.7 (as well as in the addendum) the questions that were used in the Study visit in Antwerp 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 Antwerp study visit

The study visit started with a presentation by the organizing partner (the University of Antwerp) on education in Belgium and Flanders and the diversity context of their city. They organized and participated in the visit to two schools. The visiting partners were Greece and the Netherlands. In total, a group of six visiting participants took part in the study visit, among which were teachers, teacher educators, educational consultants and researchers, all with expertise in the area of education and migration.

1.4 Content of this report

This report will describe the first Naos study visit that took place on 5, 6 and 7 May in 2015. Both the introduction as well the school visits will be described in separate chapters. The report will end with some general reflective notes.



2. Context

2.1 Belgium

Belgium is a trilingual (Dutch, French and German) country which is divided into three regions (communities), according to the languages spoken, each with its own governmental and political control. Flanders is the Dutch-speaking region. Antwerp is an important city in the Flemish Region.

Because of its regional system, Belgium does not have a national education policy and has three ministries of education. Belgium is a predominantly Catholic country. 75% of the schools have a Roman Catholic stamp. Schools are managed by governing bodies' or school boards.

There are three educational networks (so-called pillars):

- 'GO! onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap', on behalf of the Flemish community. Despite being financed by the government, it functions independently of the Flemish Ministry of Education;
- publicly funded, publicly-run education;
- publicly funded, privately-run education.

2.2 Flanders

The schools in Flanders have a lot of freedom to organise their education. Parents are free to send their children to the school of their choice, which they can also establish themselves. There is no general educational policy. Decisions are made by the 'pillars'. There are therefore significant differences between schools. Also among Catholic schools: 'right-wing' and 'left-wing' schools differ greatly.

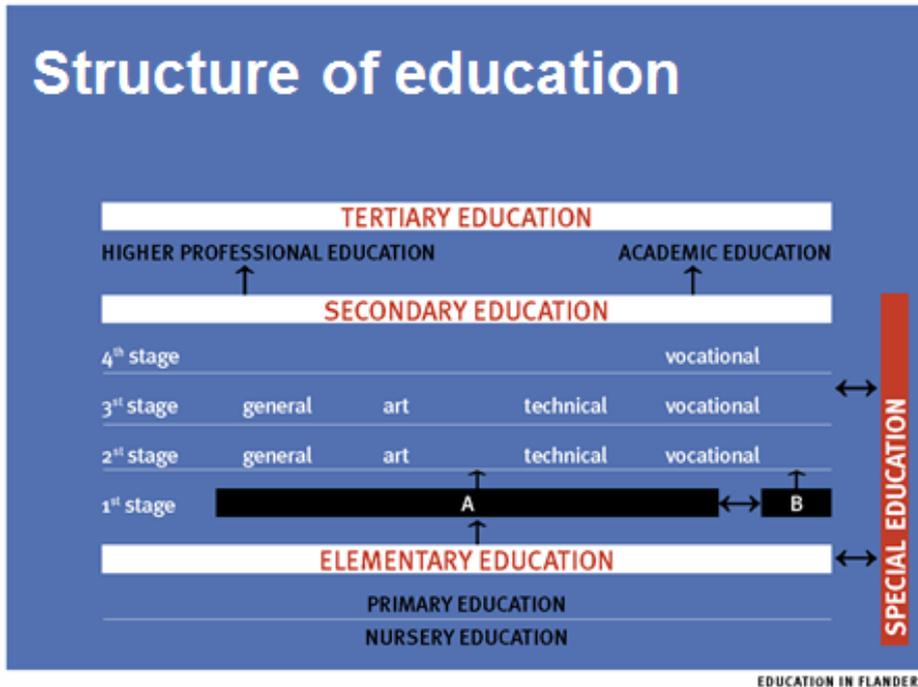
Schools/school boards are autonomous but are increasingly accountable to the community.

Education in Flanders has a good reputation. For instance, the PISA score in mathematics is high, despite the often low socio-economic status of the students.

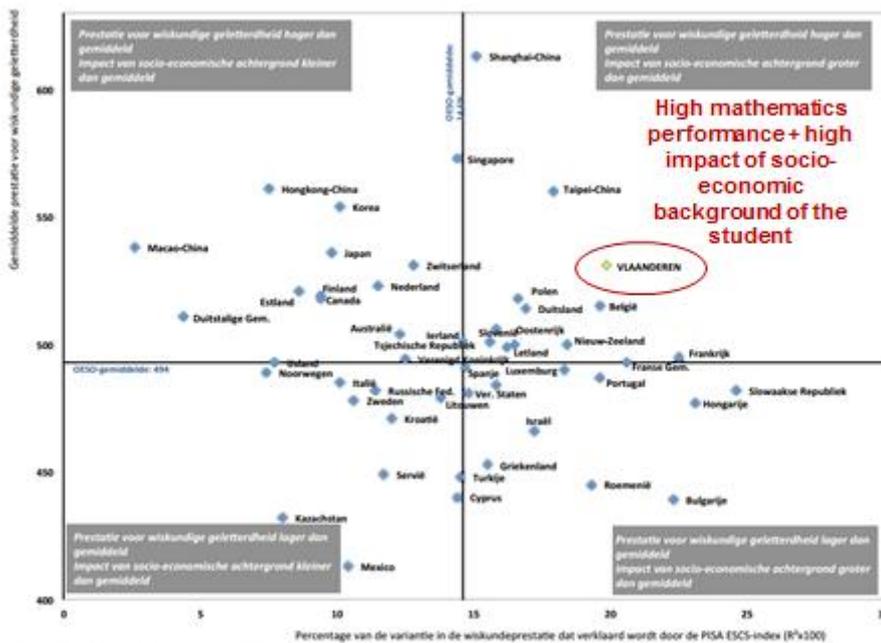
The education system in Flanders:

Elementary education is for children aged 2.5–5 (nursery education) and aged 6–12 (primary education). Pupils then move on to general education or vocational education. Finally, they can move on to higher education: higher professional education or university.

Flanders has both full-time and part-time education. The Centre for Work and Learning (Centrum voor Werken en Leren, CWL) offers part-time vocational training courses to workers aged 15–25.

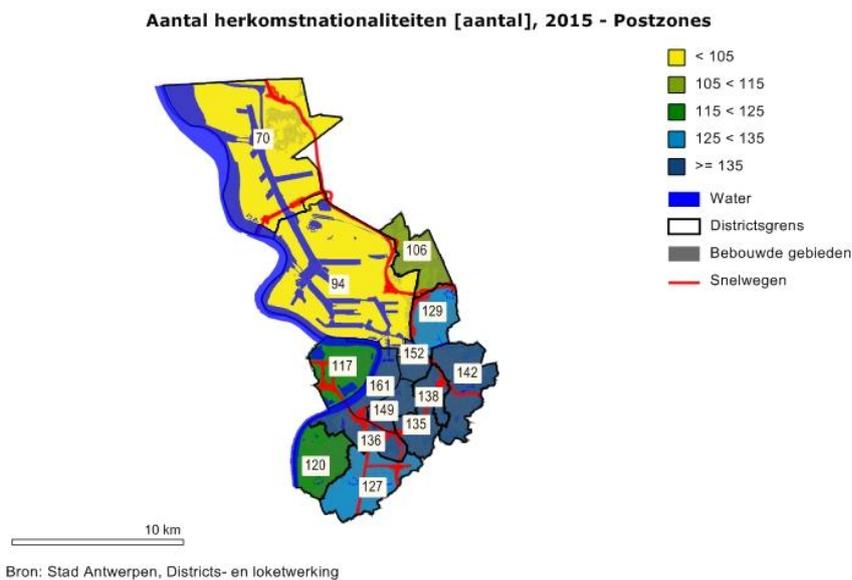
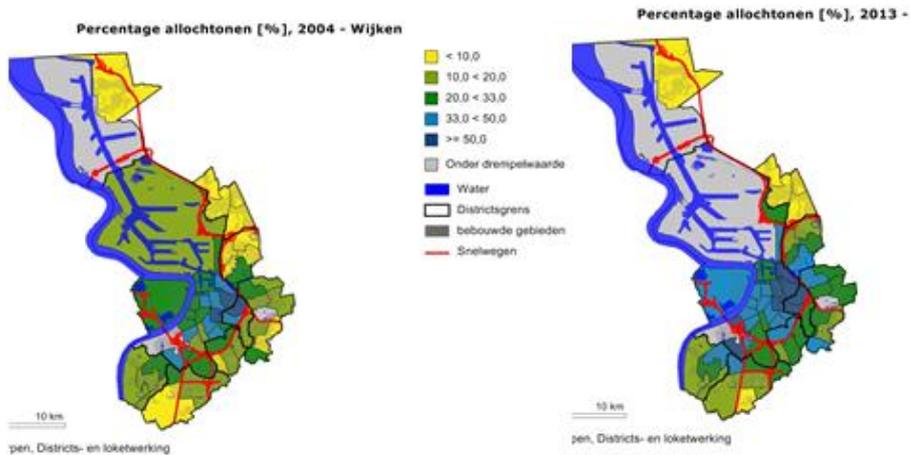


Despite the high impact of a low SES (socio-economic status) score, Flemish pupils perform better than average in maths (source: PISA 2009).



2.3 Antwerp

At present, Antwerp has approx. 560,000 residents and a highly diverse population. The city has people of 170 different nationalities. The diversity within the migrant groups is on the increase, and ranges from newcomers to 4th-generation migrants. Although Antwerp isn't always easy-going as far as integration of newcomers is concerned, the city offers many opportunities for social emancipation.

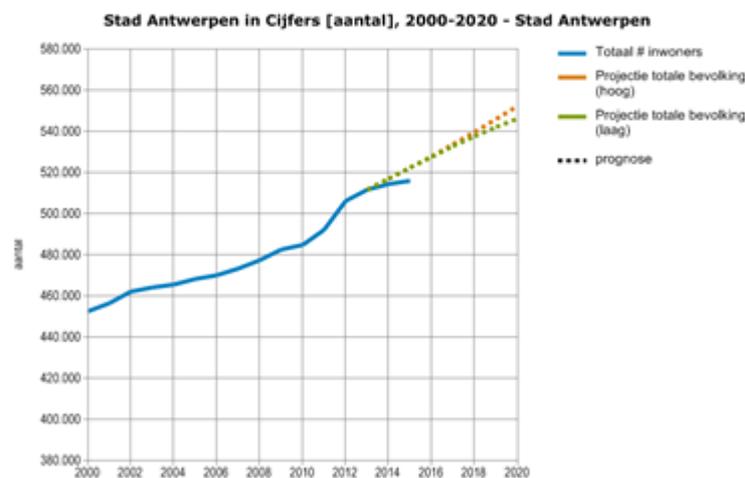




The population is growing rapidly: in addition to 7,000 births a year, approx. 7,000 newcomers come to the city. This creates a capacity problem for education. The educational policy therefore focuses on increasing the number of available places: an appropriate place for every student.

Expected growth of the population of Antwerp:

Projection population

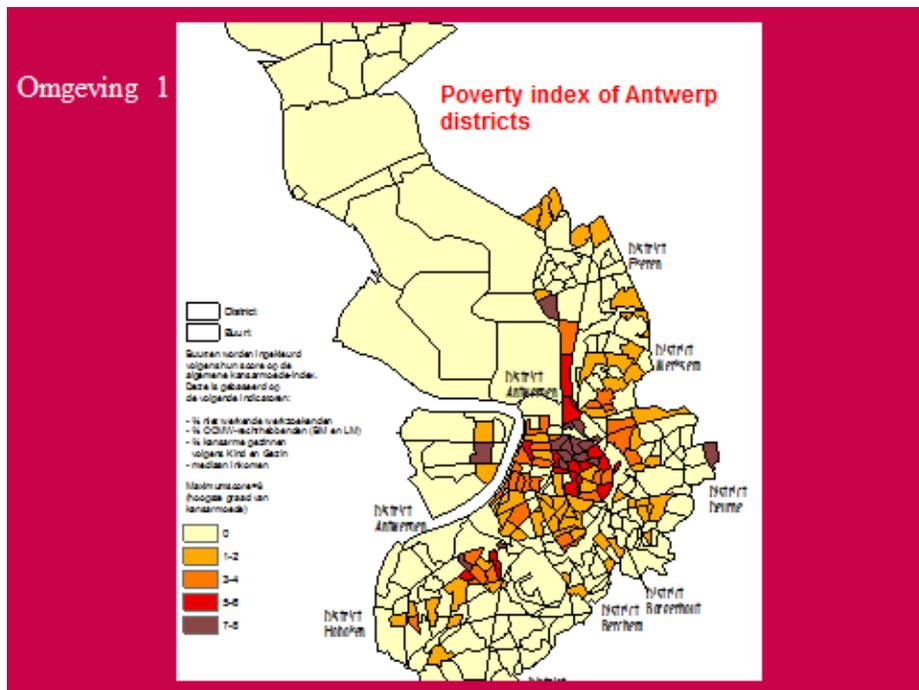
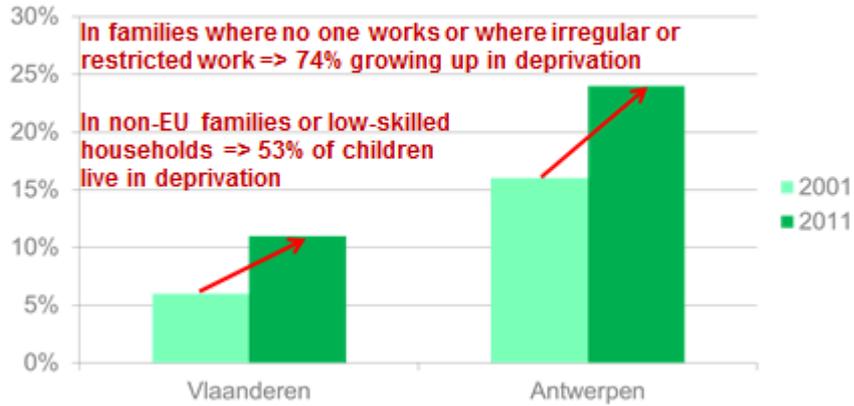


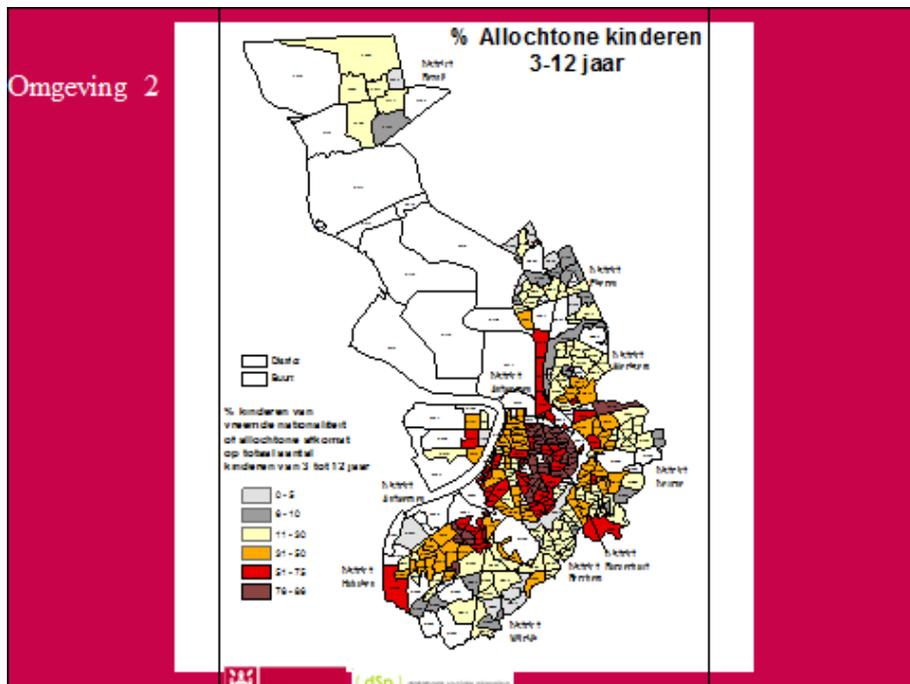
A major concern is the number of students who repeat, or otherwise encounter study completion delays. According to the PISA statistics, that's 17% for primary education in Flanders and 33% for secondary education in Flanders. However, these percentages are even higher for Antwerp: 28% (primary education) and 54% (secondary education). Indicators of the likelihood of study completion delays are: the level of education of the parents (particularly the mother), home language, family composition, family income, the neighbourhood where the child grows up, gender (boys).

Antwerp wants to offer its young residents optimal development opportunities by speeding up and enriching school careers. There is also an active policy to alleviate poverty by increasing toddler participation (education from the age of 2.5), reducing the number of unqualified school-leavers and combating youth unemployment.

50–75% of the children who grow up in a 'low-SES' family in Antwerp live below the poverty line.

Children in poverty situation (Kind & Gezin – index = multidimensioneel)





If we look at the map of non-native children aged 3–12, we see a strong similarity to the districts where poverty is highest.

There are several (government) projects for education which support the above-mentioned strategic goals:

- **Samen tot aan de meet:** a collaborative venture of the University of Leuven, teacher-training institutes and schools which aim to reduce the number of repeaters by increasing the quality of education. See Paul's slide.
- **Exclusive, inclusive (M decree (a decree regarding measures for pupils with special educational needs)):** striving towards a more inclusive society by admitting students with disabilities to mainstream education.
- **Collaboration with the city:** education aimed at broad personal development through (work) experience in the (school) environment.
- **The WIJ project:** for unqualified school-leavers, who receive intensive personal guidance during a 6-month period.
- **The School Bridge:** forms a bridge between schools and parents. More than twenty education welfare workers help parents to participate in their children's school.
- **PIEO:** The Innovation and Excellence in Education Project (PIEO) is an example of a professionalisation project inspired by the policies of the Flemish Ministry of Education. The project focuses on increasing the learning gains, better learning achievements and an increased well-being of the pupils. The results of the project are transferred to other schools with the same characteristics and to the partners concerned. Due to cuts, the project was shortened from 5 to 3 years and was then terminated in June 2014.
- **Statement of prevent (Alderman Marinower):** a European project aimed at expanding the capacity of schools, a central registration system and increasing parent involvement.



From the Gazet of Antwerp, 28 April 2015:

6388 extra plaatsen in scholen sinds 2010

Antwerpen

De stad Antwerpen diende sinds 2010 al 160 projecten in voor de capaciteitsuitbreiding in de scholen. Daarvan zijn er 100 gerealiseerd of meer dan 60 procent. Dit is goed voor 6388 extra plaatsen.

• De realisatiegraad ligt dus veel hoger dan het aantal dat Vlaams onderwijsminister Hilde Crevits (CD&V) eind vorige week bekendmaakte. Zij kwam voor Antwerpen op slechts 22 procent.

“Antwerpen kreeg sinds 2010 ongeveer tachtig miljoen euro van Vlaanderen om extra capaciteit te creëren in de scholen”, zegt onderwijsschepen Marinower (Open Vld). “Dat was voor 160 projecten, die samen goed waren voor 12.900 plaatsen in het basis-

onderwijs. Daarvan zijn er 100 klaar of 6388 extra plaatsen. 47 projecten zijn nog in uitvoering en 13 zijn nog niet opgestart. De voorbereidingen zijn wel bezig, maar de eerste steen ligt er nog niet. Het gaat hier om drie projecten uit 2012, vier uit 2013 en zeven uit vorig jaar. Ze zitten nog in ontwerpfase of in voorbereiding van de bouwaanvraag.”

Antwerpen krijgt dit jaar twaalf miljoen euro van Vlaanderen om het tekort weg te werken. Alleen had de stad 55 miljoen euro gevraagd voor twintig projecten. De taskforce, het netoverschrijdend overleg rond de capaciteitstekorten, zit deze week hierover samen met schepen Marinower.

“De capaciteitsdruk blijft hoog”, zegt de schepen. “Tegen 2020 komen er 11.000 kinderen in het secundair onderwijs bij.”

(svw)



2.4 Diversity policy in education in Flanders and Antwerp

There is a strong focus on equal opportunities in education:

- everyone has the right to education;
- local advisory platforms are responsible for the local implementation of the Flemish policy on educational opportunities;
- schools receive extra assistance (e.g. remedial teachers) and financial support on the basis of their social make-up.

(see also <http://www.ond.Flanders.be/gok/>):

The following indicators are used in primary education to obtain a picture of the socio-economic status of the students:

- the student's home language;
- receipt of an education allowance;
- the mother's highest level of education.

A few key indicators:

- At present, over 50% of infants speak another language at home;
- 43% have a less educated mother;
- 80% live in a neighbourhood which has a high level of study completion delays;
- 38% are entitled to an education allowance and have applied for one.

In mainstream secondary education, the range of support is determined on the basis of the following indicators:

- the student's home language;
- receipt of an education allowance;
- the mother's highest level of education;
- whether the student has been temporarily or permanently placed outside his or her family home;
- whether the parents are members of a travelling people.

In principle, access to nursery, primary and secondary education is free of charge. Students should be able to achieve their educational goals without incurring any costs. Schools sometimes charge additional costs for extras, such as school meals. Schools are obliged to inform parents about this and account for these costs. Very poor parents then receive an education allowance so that they can meet these costs.

In Belgium, children go to school from the time they're 2.5 years of age. This is not compulsory for the first six months: a child may also be taken to a day nursery. However, unlike the school, this is not free of charge. Migrant parents are not familiar with the school system, let alone the nursery school/kindergarten: this is an unfamiliar phenomenon in their country of origin; that is where the differences commence. Migrants more often choose a school in their own neighbourhood, where many more low-SES migrants live. Migrant students are more likely to enter vocational/professional education; 11% enter secondary and/or higher education, but their drop-out rate is twice as high.



In The School Bridge project, education welfare workers help (<http://www.deschoolbrug.be/>):

- parents to participate in their children's school;
- school teams to work together with parents;
- during the switch from nursery to primary education;
- during the switch from Year 6 (primary school) to secondary education.

2.5 Professional development of teachers in Flanders and Antwerp

Pre-service: teacher training

92% of the population of students at teacher-training institutes have had a general secondary education (GSE), 6% a technical education and 2% a vocational education.

Background checks¹ on the students show that:

- 92% are in GSE;
- 76% have a parent with higher qualifications;
- 75% of their parents have two cars;
- 34% have a parent-teacher;
- 20% live in the city.

This student profile contrasts sharply with the profile of the average pupil the students encounter in their work practice. This is one of the reasons why 15% of the primary school teachers and 30% of the GSE teachers stop teaching before their fifth year. (De Clercq (2015), *Gazet van Antwerpen*, p. 22, *Het Nieuwsblad*, p. 25)

Several migrant groups are represented amongst students at the Academy for Teacher Education (Pedagogische Academie Basisonderwijs, PABO).

Students from migrant groups have a major problem: they cannot teach at one of the predominantly Catholic primary schools (75%) since they would then have had to be baptised as a Catholic, or to convert. This would in fact mean a change in their religion. There are no Islamic schools in Flanders.

In-service training

The teachers at these schools are offered the following forms of support:

- mentorships for novice teachers;
- in-service training of teachers through external education and training agencies;
- guidance for schools: organised by 'pillars' (networks of boards).

The collective agreement does not specify a particular timeframe for professionalisation.

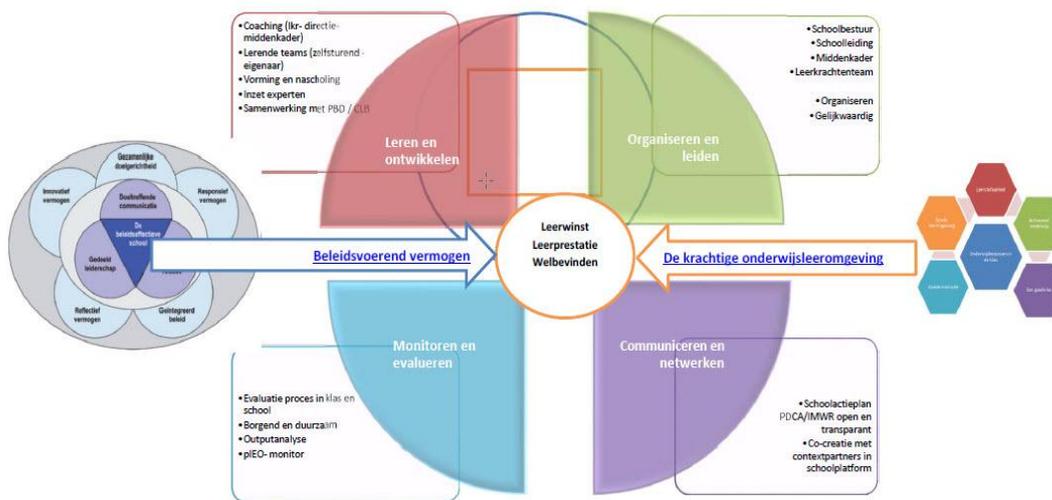
A form of networking in and between provincial schools is slowly getting underway in the shape of the organisation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which was initiated by some of the boards. There is increasing attention to this (albeit at a very slow pace), often from a shared sense of concern/urgency.

¹ PowerVote by 70 students (specific) teacher-training course, University of Antwerp, October 2014

The Innovation and Excellence in Education Project (PIEO) is an example of a professionalisation project inspired by the policies of the Flemish Minister of Education. The project aims to find a way to achieve greater learning gains, better learning achievements and a greater sense of well-being of the pupils in thirteen primary schools (i.a. in Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp and Limburg) with a high concentration of students from low-SES families. Eight innovation coaches support the schools.

The focus areas of PIEO are:

- focus on the educational learning process in the classroom;
- empowering the teachers to develop an effective learning environment;
- developing a learning team in the school;
- strengthening the facilitating role of the school management.





2.6 *Choise of schools*

1. Secondary school *Het Keerpunt*, School for Working & Learning

Prins Leopoldstraat 51, 2140 Borgerhout. Headmaster: Luc Lamote

Het Keerpunt was selected because of exceptional 'community interplay' and the founder's (Luc Lamote) strong views on diversity.

2. Basisschool [Primary School] De Schakel

Weerstandlaan 141, 2660 Hoboken. Headmaster: Lars van Santvoort

De Schakel was selected because of an effective learning process focused on the development of children from the neighbourhood, the involvement of parents and the school's involvement in various (external) projects (such as PIEO).

2.7 *Focus schools visit: Community and School relationships*

The theme of 'Relationship and collaboration between the school and its environment' is central during the study visits. The choice for this theme is based on the assumption that the development of the environment has a supporting effect on the development of the child. 'Collaboration' is understood to mean involving the neighbourhood in education and using the school facilities for the development of the neighbourhood. Parent involvement and participation are important focus areas here.

The two key questions that are central to every study visit are:

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

These questions have been elaborated in questions about the school context, the objectives in this specific theme, the activities, the results and the activities in respect of professional development:

The school's environment:

- Of what kind of population is the neighbourhood composed? The school? The class?
- What about parents/pupils from low SES?
- What is the culture/lifestyle of the community?
- Do they (the school teachers) really understand the community?
- Are there any intercultural tensions among students?
- Do they deal with them? How?
- What is the school's track record as far as collaboration with its environment is concerned?
- What forms of support are there (e.g. projects, social work, subsidies)? What influence do the residents and organisations have on the development of the neighbourhood?

Objectives:

- What are the objectives as far as collaboration at the classroom level is concerned? At the school level?
- Who sets these objectives?



- What is the balance between respecting a culture and encouragement to integrate?
- What does the school expect to achieve?
- To what extent are parents involved/do parents participate?
- What do parents expect from this collaboration?
- Activities:
- What sort of things are organised at the level of the class, the school, the community?
- Who sets the activities agenda?
- Are there any specific activities to manage intercultural tensions?
- Are community members used as interpreters for parents?

Results:

- What are good practices? What works?
- What is one proud of?
- What can be improved?
- How have the parents benefitted?

Professional development of teachers:

- Do the teachers follow the development of (government) policy? Developments in the neighbourhood?
- How does one respond to this?
- What should teachers/the school learn?
- How and where does one acquire the necessary competencies? Who supports this?
- How do they share knowledge and experience with others?
- How can the headmaster facilitate and support this?

(see Appendix 1 for the flow chart)

3. Observations at Het Keerpunt

Community School and Centre for Work and Learning Technicum (technical school) *Het Keerpunt*

School for part-time secondary vocational education

Prins Leopoldstraat 51, 2140 Borgerhout

Headmaster: Luc Lamote

Educational coordinator: Ann De Ceulaer

3.1 Context

The Centre for Work and Learning (Centrum voor Leren en Werken, CL&W) is part of the community school *Het Keerpunt*, where several activities are undertaken within the scope of the community school. These activities are focused on the residents of the district of Borgerhout.

The district of Borgerhout is the liveliest neighbourhood of Greater Antwerp, but also a poor one.

This often results in disturbances due to gangs of youths and drug rings. Borgerhout is also a district where shops and nightclubs are open till very late and many people can be seen out on the street. More than 100 different nationalities live together in the district.



The district in numbers:

- **Population:** 15,891 residents
- **Diversity:** 112 different nationalities (based on the country of origin)
- **Average age:** 40.9
- **Job-seekers (unemployed):** 1,028
- **Average net income:** EUR 19,705 p.a.
- **Public Social Welfare Centre (OCMW) benefit claimants:** 181
- **Eating-places:** 53
- **Pubs:** 5
- **Number of reports of illegal waste dumpings (in 2012):** 894

- **Number of council estates (in 2014): 699**
- **Number of condemned properties (in 2014): 13**

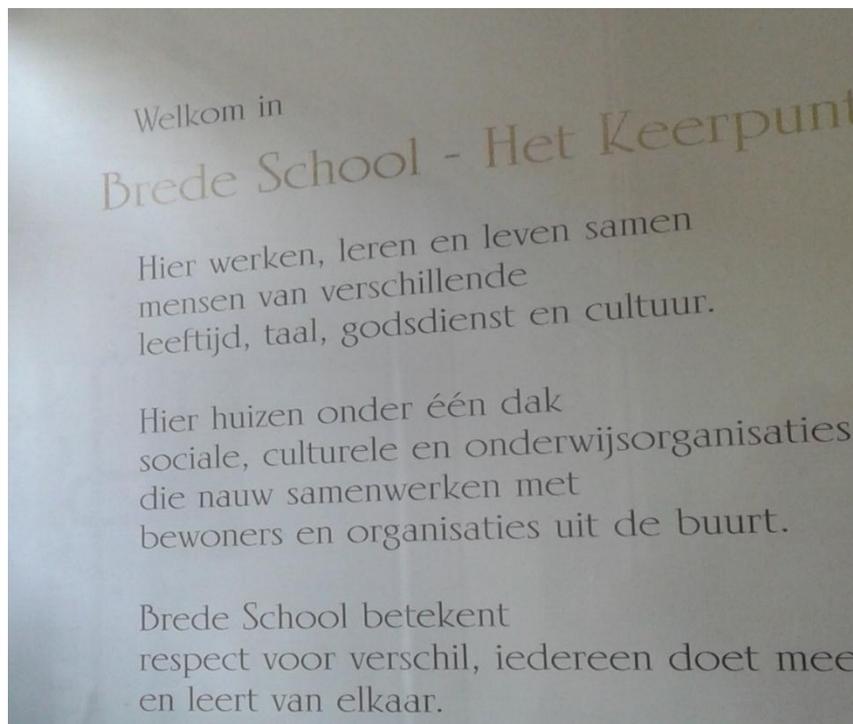
Source: http://www.gva.be/cnt/dmf20150327_01601930

Community School Het Keerpunt

The community school started in 2010 with the strong views of its (former) headmaster Luc Lamote. He wanted to make a difference in the district and identified the great demand for study programmes for people who don't go beyond primary school as a 'gap in the market'. In the current school system, the 'waterfall' (= transfer to a lower track)² works better than ever before. This weak target group does not have a network and is confined to its own culture. They must gain new experiences.

The question was how the 'white middle-class school' could embrace this target group. Lamote achieved this by offering a multiplicity of activities and introducing an 'open-door' policy. About 20,000 local residents now visit *Het Keerpunt* every year for one of its activities.

Community school *Het Keerpunt* is a collection of 15 partners under one roof in the centre of Borgerhout. The partners are small and medium-sized socio-cultural and educational institutions.



² The 'waterfall effect' is a reference to the common phenomenon that students start in a 'higher' track (read a more socially valued track (e.g. general secondary education, technical secondary education, vocational secondary education) and, after failing to achieve adequate study results, move progressively down to a 'lower' track.

The Centre for Work and Learning

The Centre for Work and Learning (Centrum voor Leren en Werken, CL&W) in Borgerhout is part of the community school *Het Keerpunt*.

The Centre for Work and Learning has two branches: *Het Keerpunt* in Borgerhout and *Het Leercentrum* in Merksem. Part-time secondary vocational education is offered here. Persons between 15 and 25 years of age who have completed the first stage of (vocational) education can take on a vocational programme, which consists in part of ‘learning’ and in part of ‘working’ in the workplace. The “working” component can be implemented in different ways: a regular job or—for those who have yet to find work—through a personal development programme, a transition (from school to the labour market) project or a preparatory study.

The Centre for Work and Learning offers study programmes in Catering, Administration, Trade, Maintenance, Nursery and Fashion. The study programmes are part-time and are open to working students aged 15–25.



**VOORSTELLING CL&W TNA
HET KEERPUNT**

- ⊕ Centrum Leren & Werken Technicum Noord-Antwerpen
 - CL&W TNA, Het Leercentrum te Merksem
 - 230 leerlingen, 30 medewerkers
 - horeca, handel, administr., bouw, transport, metaal
 - CL&W TNA, Het Keerpunt te Borgerhout
 - 270 leerlingen, 33 medewerkers
 - horeca, handel, administr., onderhoud, mode, personenzorg
 - CL&W TNA, De Brede School
 - 20.000 bezoekers
 - 15-tal kleine en middelgrote instellingen

There are 271 students of 25 different nationalities³ registered with *Het Keerpunt's* Centre for Work and Learning for this school year. 184 are Belgian and 87 have another nationality. Four of these have obtained refugee status. There are 95 boys and 176 girls.

Most of the teachers are of Belgian/Flemish descent. A few teachers are of another nationality, such as Polish and Moroccan.

³The nationality is registered on the basis of the passport. You will therefore find students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds among the native Belgian students.



Diversity

The Centre for Work and Learning has broad views on diversity; this concerns more than ethnic and cultural differences. Every student deserves personal attention, but this does not rule out a diversity policy in respect of groups in the school. There are certainly differences between groups which result in an inequality in opportunities and which need special attention.

For instance, there is a special-needs policy. Following the implementation of the so-called M decree (a decree regarding measures for students with special educational needs), this policy should be carefully re-examined.

The language level of a student is determined by means of a screening test. Language-deficient students receive additional support from a NodO (Dutch for vocational training purposes) coach and NT2 (Dutch as a second language) expert, who also support the 'BGV' (vocational training) teachers. The coaches take care of adjusting teaching methods, methodologies and materials. All the teachers pay attention to language use, and to spelling and grammar in assignments. Work is done in heterogeneous groups, and students who do not meet the entry-level and exit-level qualifications also work in ability groups.

The headmaster pointed out that there is a high level of inter-ethnic collaboration, but admits that there are sometimes tensions between students from different cultural backgrounds, although there is little physical violence. The students often lack the social skills to properly deal with diversity, and are driven by fear of 'the unknown'. For instance, there are conflicts about toilet use, smoking and outward expressions of religious belief.

Following expulsion from *Het Keerpunt*, one of the students left for Syria. The parents of the student held the school responsible for this. Lamote understands the parents' reaction. It feels like a 'personal failure'. At the same time he points out: 'We have to accept these things—we can't solve everything'.

The diversity of nationalities sometimes also causes tensions among the teachers. 'BGV' (vocational training) teachers find discussions about cultural and ethnic conflicts difficult. They think this should be reserved for the so-called PAV (Project General Subjects) lessons. Conflicts between students can arise about wearing a headscarf. This school was the only school in Antwerp where a headscarf could be worn. The head coverings became increasingly more facial. This resulted in a tightening of the rules. There are also conflicts among students about lifestyle (e.g. smoking) and in the wake of events such as the Charlie Hebdo attack. One student was known to a counterterrorism organisation.

Thanks to a subsidy and support, they were able to write a diversity plan. There is also a protocol in place for reporting radicalism. These students have been reported to the LOB (a centre of expertise outside the school), where they receive guidance. Radicalisation can happen very quickly. It often starts with a change in clothes. One student changed from a Western appearance to a full-body covering and left for Syria within the space of three months.

Staff members of *Het Keerpunt* do not pay extra attention to 'safety'. Safety is more of an issue in the perception of outsiders: a visitor immediately associated damage to the hall door (caused by a clumsy manoeuvre with a pram) with lack of safety and tensions.



3.2 Goals

During our reception at *Het Keerpunt*, the headmaster summarised his vision in a few statements:

The door is always open; the building can be accessed 7/7, so that it is in use 66% of the time (the normal usage rate of the school building: 33%). Every staff member plays an educational role. Students are clients: 'no care'. Our school is an elite school (this 'reverse dialectic' will turn up several times).

- The community school wants to assume its social role, in the first place in the neighbourhood where it is embedded.
- The community school wishes to strengthen the competencies of its students, teachers, staff members, clients and visitors in real-life situations
- The community school aims to be a permanent meeting-place, and thus reflect diversity.
- The community school is a dynamic whole.
- We encourage meetings between our different target groups and cultures.
- We work together on socio-cultural projects.

The vision of Lamote, the founder and (former) headmaster of *Het Keerpunt*, is that students from this district grow up without culture. The middle class is 'their enemy'. *Het Keerpunt* would like to bring them into contact with Western culture, with other environments, so that the students develop social skills and build a network. It is therefore important that the students work on assignments from real clients. The standard is high. In Lamote's vision: *'The pitfall of working with weak target groups is that you lower the standard. These types of schools are often regarded as the 'low point' of society. We turn this around: we are excellent. Two-thirds of the reason why students fail is that the course material is too easy. The students are not being challenged. You shouldn't care for the low-achievers. This target group is isolated; care will only further isolate them. If they're not up to scratch, we send them away.'* The school's motto 'we are excellent, we are elite' makes students want to belong. This vision goes so far as to deny community workers access to *Het Keerpunt*.

The headmaster applies a 'business model', i.e. all services are charged on the premise that students/parents are clients. The buildings are leased out. They create an added value of EUR 300,000.

The mission and goals of *Het Keerpunt* and the Centre for Work and Learning are geared towards the well-being of the students and giving them a taste of success. The students are the primary focus. This is reflected in the individual, tailor-made learning pathways. Many students have had difficult school careers. By paying attention to their personal development, the schools hope to be able to offer these students a new perspective and help them to obtain an official qualification, varying from a school certificate to a secondary education diploma.

The schools undertake a range of activities aimed at developing a professional attitude and social skills, to help students in the world of work. Many of the counselling sessions are one-on-one. During work, students come into contact with other cultures, mores and manners and learn to relate to these cultures.

Everyone is involved in student counselling, including the teachers. Learning-track supervisors support their personal development, and staff members of the Pupil Guidance Centre (Centrum voor leerlingenbegeleiding, CLB, an external organisation) provide further assistance in the areas of course selection, health problems and acute emergencies. They also support the teachers with counselling issues.



Het Keerpunt works on social training. Collaboration is a condition in all aspects of work and learning. The students are supervised by staff members, each playing a different role: the teachers give instruction, the trainee supervisors are employed by the company, the care coordinators provide support when necessary. Not everybody can play all the roles. The headmaster: *'It's a good thing the roles are divided. The students would otherwise receive care everywhere, and it wouldn't be possible to properly play the role when necessary.'* The management makes the difficult decisions, for example, when a student is performing below par and will have to go. Students are given quite a bit of leeway for a long time. Lamote has twice had to expel a student who had a disruptive effect on group bonding.

The groups are small: 8–12 students per workshop. Only boys work in the technical workshop. Work is done in heterogeneous groups (experienced students and beginners). However, people of the same nationality tend to stick together. There are no barriers to entry—students are put to work from the very start, even if this only concerns degreasing, filing, etc. The schools take a development-oriented approach.

Het Keerpunt has adopted the 'attitude of the Foreign Legion'. Students are not asked many questions. Everyone is welcome. If a team does not understand a student's behaviour, the matter is looked into, the student is spoken to and appropriate counselling measures are taken.

3.3 Activities

The school is a 'community' school, i.e. there is a high level of integration with the (disadvantaged) neighbourhood and forty organisations (e.g. the Federation of Moroccan Associations and the school of music) are housed there. Some organisations have a direct and functional connection with the school for part-time vocational education, such as the day nursery.

Het Keerpunt's Centre for Work and Learning works with dozens of external partners in the area of diversity, such as:

- secondary student counselling;
- psycho-social support;
- youth coaches;
- migrant organisations;
- Centre for Part-time Training (Centrum voor Deeltijdse Vorming, CDV)—e.g. for a personal development programme by building a boat with young people.

The objective of the collaboration with these organisations is to prepare a tailor-made programme for every young person: what fits whom? And to be responsible for 'the street'. There is a relationship with the neighbourhood and the parents of students. Some parents take courses at *Het Keerpunt*.

The success of the technical workshop can be attributed to the appointment of a project manager who has a unique network in the construction and cultural sectors. The school makes a profit by acquiring technical projects. For instance, *Het Keerpunt* works with cultural organisations (e.g. the opera, the theatre, museums) that set high quality standards. Students develop a professional attitude by working with on-site technology professionals. They work with modern machines that are also used by companies.



The projects should be of sufficient scale. All the designs are made by architects. If special constructional components are required, external experts are called in. Examples of projects are: a revolving podium, the seating arrangement for an arena, a pavilion in Auschwitz, 9-metre-high towers for the décor of *Romeo and Juliet*, a production of the Flemish opera.

The projects (see also transition projects of the Centre for Work and Learning) form an effective learning environment. *'It's serious, we play to win!'* There is a real deadline which acts as an incentive during the learning process. There is publicity upon completion, students share in and gain self-confidence from the success: 'If they are successful the first time round, they will also be successful the next time.' By, for example, attending the opening day at a museum following the completion of a project, students enter new environments.

Students are assessed in cooperation with the employer. This phenomenon also strengthens the relationship with the companies.

These projects have also made it clear that students sometimes have special talents. This has led to the development of a theatrical agency, a costume workshop and a theatrical course.



Students with children can make use of the day nursery in the building, which is also a learning environment for students from the Centre for Work and Learning. ‘Children are no excuse for being late.’ The parents pay for the crèche, according to their ability: ‘Even if it is just half a euro.’



The relationships with the neighbourhood and the parents of the students are also strengthened through the presence of a day nursery in *Het Keerpunt*. Some parents start to take courses as a result. Learning-track counsellors have contact with parents.

3.4 Results

The approach of *Het Keerpunt* and the Centre for Work and Learning may be called successful. They are satisfied with the results.

There are close ties with the district and there is intensive collaboration with various authorities. Family members of students come to *Het Keerpunt* to take courses.

Teacher-training institutes (Karel de Grote College) consider *Het Keerpunt* and the Centre for Work and Learning to be an interesting case. They regularly pay a visit. Most of the students move on to work in the care or construction sector or in the catering industry. The staff members and school management are under the impression that the results are good.

Some of the students move on to mainstream higher professional or vocational education, one or two to general education.

People are proud of the high quality of the transition projects and the success of the technical workshop.

The collaboration with the environment is characterised by reciprocity: the school makes use of support organizations and companies that provide learning environments but offers its facilities and services to the neighbourhood and city, as a result of which the bond is strengthened and disadvantaged local residents are offered a new perspective.

Professional development



Staff members of *Het Keerpunt* and the Centre for Work and Learning are not specially selected. Natural selection occurs by confronting them with the school's approach and vision during job interviews. Job applicants are presented with cases. People who feel a connection with this target group and approach will stay. Many of the pioneers (the teachers who have been involved with the Centre for Work and Learning from its establishment) still work at the Centre for Work and



Learning. De Ceulaer is eager to take on young teachers who can introduce new teaching methods and activities. Teachers do not differ in competencies and passions, but they do differ in authenticity.

All the staff members of the Centre for Work and Learning have a teaching qualification. This includes the supervisors of the transition projects in the technical workshop.

The main professionalisation activities regarding diversity for all the teaching staff are:

Dealing with diversity is difficult for teachers, especially where ethnic and cultural differences and radicalising young persons are concerned. In peer-consultation groups, the teachers discuss how they can take a preventive approach to identify incipient radicalisation and prevent escalation by entering into a dialogue with students. There are differences which require particular attention, on the basis of the principles of equality and equal opportunity. Other questions are discussed by the council of teachers and headmaster. Teachers do not have many tools for dealing with this.

'Modelling' is a professionalisation technique that works: setting the right example in, for example, dealing with students and having discussions with them. For example, De Ceulaer asks young colleagues to sit in on the meetings she has with students. She also thinks it's useful to use a trainee who, by means of creative ideas, can show a teacher that it's possible to get students to talk about difficult issues.

Teachers do not support each other systematically in the form of peer teaching. This is a goal for the future. The practical teacher told us that he regularly asks his colleagues how they deal with certain situations with students. He indicated that he finds this very useful. He said that he and his colleagues hold many informal consultations.

External Support

Another successful professionalisation programme is language coaching. The teachers receive on-the-job training from two NodO coaches in giving instruction with greater emphasis on language development. They entered into a collaboration with the public employment service of Flanders (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding, VDAB) and the Dutch Language House (Huis van het Nederlands) for these NodO coaches.

The school is working out a diversity plan with the Regional Socio-economic Committee (Regionaal Economisch Sociaal Overlegcomité, RESOC). Teachers also receive in-service training, such as:

- communication training in dealing with radical statements and ultra-right ideas by Sultan Balli, a psychologist who supports schools in diversity matters;
- a 'dealing-with-diversity game' developed by a bachelor student: which methodologies can you use in the classroom?
- a practical behavioural training at Slim, which is given using actors.

Training courses are sometimes one-on-one, but—preferably—as a group so that the likelihood of transfer is greater.

Ambition

The school continues to look for good professionalisation opportunities that will help the teachers in the sometimes difficult interactions with migrant youngsters regarding ethnic and cultural issues.

The school aims to develop peer teaching.



Professional development (results):

The school management is satisfied with the large number of professionalisation interventions. It sees above all successes in 'modelling', peer consultations and 'coaching on the job' (language).

3.5 Summary:

Het Keerpunt is in the thick of the Antwerp community. The school has an open-minded attitude towards the school environment, which is of a dual nature:

- some of the activities for the local residents are of an educational, service-oriented and emancipatory nature;
- for some of the activities, the services and expertise of the school environment are used for the development of *Het Keerpunt* in general and that of young people in particular.

4. Observations De Schakel

Basisschool [Primary School] De Schakel: <http://www.bsgo-deschakel.be>, Weerstandlaan 141, 2660 Hoboken. Headmaster: Lars van Santvoort

Discussion partners:

- Headmaster: Lars Van Santvoort
- Care coordinator: Ria Moesen
- SES teacher : Amal Belgharbi
- Dutch as a second language teacher : Nadia Loopmans
- 2 teachers of primary school Sint-Norbertus: care coordinator Nicole Thielemans and teacher (first year) Tine Kuylen
- PIEO staff members: Jan Blondeel - King Baudouin Foundation, Ronny Vanderspikken - process manager/coach, Sanne Ramaekers - coach, Katharina Piskora - coach
- School community worker of The School Bridge: Ingrid De Ceuster
- Staff members of the Saint Norbertus Institute: <http://www.sint-norbertus.be/>

4.1 Context

The school *De Schakel* is located in a multicultural neighbourhood in the district of Hoboken. Children live in small houses where they can scarcely play. 95% of the students are Muslim, and most of them are of Moroccan descent.

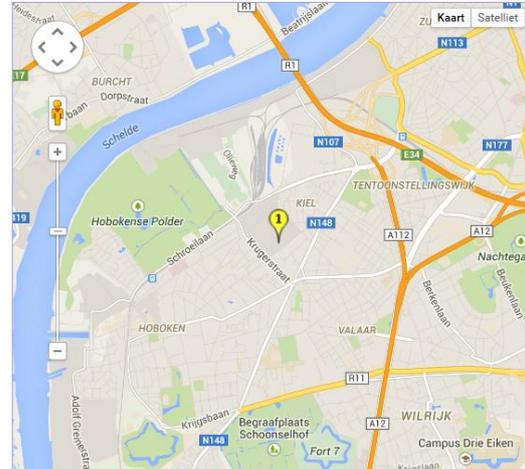


- **Population:** 37,805 residents
- **Diversity:** 88 different nationalities (based on the country of origin)
- **Average age:** 40
- **Job-seekers (unemployed):** 2,059
- **Average net income:** EUR 21,000 p.a. (in the centre of Hoboken, this is EUR 18,784)
- **Public Social Welfare Centre (OCMW) benefit claimants:** 335
- **Eating-places:** 117
- **Pubs:** 29
- **Number of reports of illegal waste dumpings** (in 2012): 1,231
- **Number of council estates** (in 2014): 1,715
- **Number of condemned properties** (in 2014): 57

Source: http://www.gva.be/cnt/dmf20150327_01601935

Inlichtingen over de school

naam	GO! basisschool De Schakel Hoboken
adres	Weerstandlaan 141 2660 HOBOKEN
telefoon	03-827.62.58
fax	03-825.04.11
e-mail	directie.deschakel@antigon.be
website	http://www.bsgo-deschakel.be
net	Gemeenschapsonderwijs
bestuur	Scholengroep 1 Antwerpen Antigon
directeur	Lars VAN SANTVOORT
CLB	GO! CLB Antwerpen
verslagen	schooljaar 2011-2012: - doorlichtingsverslag (bao) - verslag bewoonbaarheid, veiligheid en hygiëne (bao)
instellingsnummer	44602



Students have a significant learning disadvantage compared to the 'average' student. This led to frustration among teachers and a negative assessment by the Education Inspectorate in the past. A few targeted measures were then taken to improve the level of education and the relationship with the school environment, such as:

- a targeted and active recruitment policy: 15 teachers have non-Belgian roots;
- collaboration with all kinds of organisations, such as the national orchestra (2 hours of music every week);
- projects, such as: 'everything on wheels', the circus school, the climbing wall, football with professional sportsmen and sportswomen);
- a targeted policy towards parents: the headmaster stands at the school gates every day; they are able to reach 95% of the parents during teacher-parent contacts;

In the week following our visit, the school received a visit from the Education Inspectorate, which commented very positively on the progress that had been made.

A team of senior teachers works closely with a group of support teachers. Some of the teachers speak Arabic and can easily communicate with the parents of the students. They try to work as much as possible with parents in order to provide wide-ranging basic care.

The home situation of the children is 'linguistically deprived':

- o they don't speak Dutch at home;
- o students do not speak Dutch outside of school;
- o the parents do not talk very much to their children;
- o almost no one speaks proper Dutch;
- o Berbers do not have a written language.

4.2 Goals

De Schakel is part of the 'GO! Onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap' (GO!) network, one of the three main educational networks (<http://www.g-o.be>). The network includes 1,000 schools and has 300,000 students and 34,000 staff members. As the organiser of education of the Flemish community, GO! has its own unique teaching and learning project. GO! strives for maximum equal educational opportunities. Every student is a unique individual, with particular interests and



ambitions. (S)he should be able to develop intellectually and creatively. GO! educates tolerant, respectful, constructively critical, articulate, responsible, involved, creative, independent, social and inquisitive individuals.

The school pursues a prevention policy in identity development so that it does not have to pursue an 'anti-radicalization policy'. The desire to take a preventive approach calls for a different attitude of the teachers: to want to get to know the other person on the basis of trust. This is a matter of trial and error and takes time. The school receives assistance here from external organisations, such as The School Bridge (<http://www.deschoolbrug.be/>). This organisation strengthens schools (primary, secondary and higher (professional) education) in their contacts with parents and young people. Together with parents, teachers, students, volunteers and partners, students are given the opportunity to achieve a successful academic track record.

De Schakel prioritises reading: the more you read, the smarter you will become. The school takes part in a 'reading intervention project'.

In addition to teaching, the school provides a range of additional activities in order to be more than just a school where you learn to read, do sums and write. Many of the children have, i.a. for financial and cultural reasons, few opportunities to explore and get to know the wider environment in which they live. There are collaborative ventures with all kinds of support organisations, such as the circus school, the climbing wall and the school of music.

4.3 Activities

4.3.1 Participation of parents

Over half the parents are illiterate, since they received limited education in their homeland and as a result of deprivation. They are therefore not—or only to a very limited extent—aware of the 'school culture'. *De Schakel* wants to be both a school and a social community for the parents and offers all kinds of low-threshold activities in order to get the parents into the school.

The care coordinator is the key figure in the policy on parent participation. She was a primary school teacher of this school for many years, was trained as a care coordinator and followed several training courses with external partners, such as in-service training at The School Bridge, where she practised role-playing realistic situations. She is now an important confidant for parents and children. She is part of the school's policy team. She and the headmaster stand at the school gates every day. The barrier for parents to see the care coordinator or headmaster is therefore low.

The school carried out several surveys in which the respondents were asked: 'How can the school support parents to guide and raise their children?' So not 'What can parents do for the school?', but 'What can the school do for the parents?'

This has resulted in barrier-lowering measures, such as:

- parents are welcome throughout the day (open school);
- in addition to parenting support and child counselling, teachers offer help in practical matters, such as filling in tax forms;



- approaching parents as child-raising partners and treat them as child-raising experts (reverse thinking, i.e. when the school requests assistance instead of offering assistance, this inspires confidence and leads to requests for assistance from the parents);
- a group of mothers meets once a month to discuss any matters pertaining to the school, on the basis of minor or larger substantive issues. This prevents an 'undercurrent' of sentiment resulting from school-yard conversations;
- colleagues who act as interpreters;
- support from external organisations:
 - The School Bridge: schools that support each other;
 - The *Kaap* project: language courses for parents with childcare facilities;
 - Arktos⁴: parents are taught how to react to their children's extreme ideas (radicalisation) and make them aware of the risks of being influenced by the internet.
- involve parents in the school party, e.g. by selling biscuits;
- give parents easily acceptable ideas and suggestions as to how they can support their children to learn at home, e.g. reading to their children in their home language, counting when they set the table. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children in their native language;
- there is also a quiet place in the school where students can do their homework. This is also communicated to the parents;
- written communications to the parents in a clearly legible text and accompanied by pictograms;
- the care coordinator sometimes makes home visits. She makes clear agreements with the parents and helps them to solve practical matters that prevent children from going to school.

Parent involvement (results):

Almost all the parents attend the teacher-parent meetings. A large number of parents go to the Open Door Day and actively contribute to the school party. The parents also appear in the playground every day and approach the management, care coordinator and teachers.

4.3.2 Language, language development and identity development

The starting point is that *De Schakel* operates in an environment where multilingualism is the standard. Multilingualism also adds value to the school. However, the school believes that a common language (i.c. Standard Dutch) is not only important for talking amongst themselves, but also, at a later stage, in the labour market and everyday city life.

The problem is that their target groups usually enter the school with a learning disadvantage. They do not speak their native tongue properly. The objective is to have every child use a lot of language so that (s)he can properly function in the school and its environment. Their disadvantages therefore have to be overcome.

A few years ago, the Inspectorate of Education advised the school to take a different approach to language. Language is not only regarded as an end, but also as a means (to an end). It adds value to the school climate, creates better understanding for the school's duties and supports

⁴Arktos is a guidance and training centre which works with **children and young persons aged 6–25**. Arktos has 3 main goals: **organise training, provide support and give signals to society**. <http://www.arktos.be/>



student interactions. For instance, the school uses the LICT (Language-Integrated Content Teaching) approach.

The school works with a special reading project (the so-called LIST (Reading is fun!) project⁵), which is supervised by the HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (Hogeschool van Utrecht). LIST is a comprehensive school project which aims to improve the reading scores of students. Its comprehensive nature means that instruction is given at school, teacher and student level. The project starts in the nursery school, with the youngest toddlers. Language is tackled at team level, with a special person leading the way.

Reading lessons are given throughout the school. At specific times during the week, all the students engage in silent reading at the same time. They write 'reviews' of the books they have read in a logbook. They are challenged to read books that are at a slightly higher level of difficulty than their current level. Every child can borrow books from the library, and every child (in sixth form) is expected to carry about seven books, so that (s)he will always have a book to read and can put away the books (s)he doesn't like. Because 95% of the students are Muslim, the content of the reading lessons or books is an important item for consideration. The school schedules in-class reading times during which children can read as they please (sitting down, lying down, etc.). The children sometimes also read in pairs. This enables them to help each other. The class teachers differentiate on the basis of reading level. Further instruction (tailor-made) is possible.

The principles of language instruction:

- the reading materials come in different forms and shapes;
- the reading materials are presented in a context-rich manner;
- because of the wide variety of reading materials, students can absorb the materials in a manner of their choosing;
- the switch from words to language comprehension and texts is made quickly;
- links to other subjects, such as world orientation;
- students work with a list of instructions and assignments, encouraging them to work on their own.

Language (results):

- 80% of the students are in group 4 (final stage), level E4;
- more students at a higher level;
- larger vocabulary;
- more students want to move to academic higher education.

The school also does a lot to stimulate talent and identity development, although the teachers have expressed concern that there is often not enough time for the latter. Children receive messages from two different worlds: 'Be a Muslim' and 'Be a Belgian'. This can create inner conflicts and eventually result in radicalisation. Arktos (<http://www.arktos.be/>) helps teachers to interact—without fear—with students and parents, also in difficult situations. Teachers are taught to regard 'diversity' differently. If there is a conflict about child-raising situations, the imam is consulted/called in.

⁵ LIST is a comprehensive school improvement project aimed at improving reading scores.
<http://www.onderzoek.hu.nl/Projecten/LIST.aspx>





Celebrate and harvest: students, teachers, the school management and parents can present their successes in the atrium's trees.



4.4 Professional development

The headmaster incorporates the views on parent participation in his recruitment policy. During job interviews for new teachers, the required competency profile for this school and these students is a deliberate topic of discussion. Teachers should be able to give differentiated instruction, on the basis of the talent potential of their students. Teachers who cannot, or do not want to, work according to the school's vision usually leave of their own accord. The way of working (from the perspective of the students) and the comprehensive approach demands more than an eight-to-five mentality.

Small and large schools differ in their approach to professionalisation. Large schools are more likely to translate this into a systematic, structured approach, while small schools are more likely to solve it internally by means of staff meetings.

Professionalisation is established jointly, on the basis of the insights of Feuerstein: 'believe in pupils. In-service training is organised in close consultation with dozens of partners and projects (such as PIEO). They seize every opportunity offered by an external party, such as the collaboration with the imam and organisations such as Arktos.

The main professionalisation activities regarding diversity for all the teaching staff are:

Two hours of peer consultations are scheduled every month, and multidisciplinary consultations are held three times a year. Here specific cases are discussed that revolve around 'dealing with parents' and concrete agreements are made with the entire team. For example, it was agreed during such team consultations that teachers should never complain to pupils about unpaid accounts. These matters are taken up with the parents.

Modelling: when the care coordinator holds a meeting with parents, she ensures that the class teacher is present at the meeting.

The diversity policy centres on a multidisciplinary approach. A Diversity Day is organised in cooperation with the board.

Teachers also learn from each other:

- The teachers have four 'child-free' hours per week, during which there is time for personal attention. Two colleagues have child-free hours simultaneously. This time can be used for work meetings, staff meetings or for mutual classroom observations using an observation list.
- The classroom doors open are more and more. This used to be informal, but is now more systematic.
- The teachers work with heterogeneous learning groups, which change composition. Teachers are selected on the basis of talent.
- Good practices are exchanged via the intranet and the successes of students, parents, teachers and the school management hang visibly in the atrium's trees.

External support:

Together with the PIEO coaches, a number of activities have been set up to support teachers. PIEO makes use of (coaching) methodologies to tackle together with the teachers—in a group or individually—predetermined themes, such as the 'activating direct instruction model' (activerend direct instructiemodel, ADI), the effect of lists of instructions and assignments (intra-class differentiation), policy-making capacities (beleidsvoerend vermogen, BVV), ameliorative effect (PDCA).



The objective of the external support is to increase the learning gains and learning achievements and promote the well-being of the students.

The principles of the support provided by PIEO:

- the school is regarded as a whole, the school's policy-making capacities are carefully examined;
 - o learning to develop at all levels (student, teacher, team and school management);
 - o capacity for change, educational innovation and leadership;
 - o attention to communication with various stakeholders and networks;
 - o monitoring, assessment and reflection and the use of standardised tests;
- the classroom assistants participate in the classroom (coaching on the job);
- the focus is largely on the ability and desire to learn to differentiate;
- attention is paid to learning from mistakes. It's OK to make mistakes. It required a different mindset to be able to discuss this with each other;
- the educational assistant is an expert. (S)he first gives a demonstration, for example by means of mini-lessons;
- teachers can (voluntarily) sign up for video-based coaching by the PIEO coach. The teacher is the owner of the video; it is up to him/her to do something with the learning experience. The video images are only shared with the people the teacher has designated. That could therefore be the educational assistant or the PIEO coach, but could just as well be a fellow-teacher or simply a friend;
- they work according to the principles of appreciative coaching:
 - o the support ties in with the level of the teachers;
 - o the focus is mainly on what is going well;
 - o an important point for attention is the translation of diversity into classroom management.

There is no link between professional development and the performance reviews. The management plays an evaluative role, the role of the expert is development-oriented. The management carries out two observations every year, which are linked to a teacher's performance.

Ambitions:

For a *long-lasting approach*, they want more time for consultations, the teachers, team and school to draw up their own long-term plan, and professionalisation to feature more explicitly in the policy.

Working systematically: application of the PDCA cycle.

A coach-the-coach training programme, so that teachers can carry out video-based coaching.

Professional development (results):

The prime motivator for the class teachers to become more professional in parent participation is 'seeing that it works'. Teachers see their students achieve more since there is a good relationship with the parents.

The best motivator for 'reluctant' teachers was the word-of-mouth of colleagues who had felt video-based coaching to be very useful.

Teachers see more for themselves 'what can be improved'.

The readiness to share increases: teachers from other schools are coming to take a look. A cultural shift is taking place: 'You want to get it right for your colleague.'

4.5 Summary

De Schakel is open-minded towards the school's environment. Every activity is geared towards improving education for the children and increasing the learning gains. This is done by supporting the home environment in the form of parenting advice, language courses for mothers and strengthening the contacts with parents.

External expertise is also used for this purpose.

5. Reflection of the study visit Antwerp

Area of expertise 5: Collaboration with the school environment and parent participation

- Both schools we visited invest in their relationship with the external (school) environment and the parents of the students.
- Both schools have a two-way relationship with their environment:
 - they use their environment to achieve their objectives. They call in a large number of experts and support organisations, seize opportunities to learn from others, use external expertise for assistance and support;
 - they use their own facilities, services and expertise for the development of (people in) the neighbourhood and city. Because of the vocational/professional education component in community school *Het Keerpunt*, this component is slightly stronger and more comprehensive.
- Both schools are committed to dealing with diversity: by undertaking a large number of activities, the school culture (don't look the other way, face up to diversity without fear, learn from situations), by reflecting on and consulting peers about their own (pre)conceptions, by learning from external professionals, by interacting with parents.
- Both schools have strong views on dealing with diversity: an awareness of emancipation inspires a focus on a broad education, identity development, social training and talent development. To this, *Het Keerpunt* adds the 'no care' principle in the conviction that care is more likely to weaken than strengthen the target group. The school acts accordingly.
- Both schools harness the power of 'flip-thinking'. *Het Keerpunt* does so by taking excellence as its starting point and guaranteeing and delivering the highest level of quality. This enables the school to elicit the desired behaviour from the student (delivering quality, a sense of pride) and the environment (quality standards, high-level assignments). At *De Schakel*, this is reflected in the approach to parents; as child-raising experts, and not as persons requesting assistance. The school also applies the following principle to its strategy for change: 'If we want to bring the parents into our school, we will have to lower the threshold, change the way we interact.'
- Both schools are 'open-minded' towards their environment, in a literal and figurative sense. Partly due to the large number of activities/courses on offer, the doors of *Het Keerpunt* are always open, also for parents. The school shares its building with the neighbourhood.
- Both schools pay a lot of attention to the personal development of students, thereby hoping to prevent radicalisation. They try to unite the two worlds of the children (being a Muslim, being a Belgian) by using role models. The imam is consulted, if this is considered to be important.



- Both schools have sought assistance for the professional development of teachers in terms of dealing with diversity and the cultural issues and difficult interactions arising therefrom. Successful professionalisation activities are: training courses, peer coaching and modelling, video interaction and the use of younger colleagues with fresh ideas.
- Both schools consider language to be an important means of communication. De Schakel undertakes a large number of language activities. Het Keerpunt works with ability groups. Parents take language courses at the school. De Schakel encourages parents to talk a lot to their children and to read to them in the home language. The schools use pictograms for parents who have not yet mastered the Dutch language.
- Both schools have teachers/staff members of non-Belgian origin, De Schakel having more such teachers/staff members than Het Keerpunt. These teachers also interpret for parents.
- Both schools provide for professional development. There is no direct link between professionalisation activities and personnel assessments.

In conclusion:

We have been able to take a behind-the-scenes look—with great pleasure and respect—in two of Antwerp’s many schools. We saw and felt that the schools work with heart and soul on the development of children and young persons (and their parents), helping them to advance from a bleak existence to one with bright prospects.

We thank all our discussion partners!



6. References

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Appendix

Antwerp Questionnaire

Community- School relationships

	TEACHERS	PRINCIPAL	PARENTS/PUPILS	COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
CONTEXT	What is the context of your school/classroom?	What is the history of the school concerning community involvement?		What is the context of your organization?
GOALS	What are the goals of these practices?	What are the goals of these practices?	What do you expect from these practices?	What are the goals of these practices? (in organization's level)
ACTIVITIES	How do you reach these goals? What are the main activities?	How do you reach these goals? What are the main activities?		How do you reach these goals?
RESULTS	Do you feel satisfied with these practices?(teacher's perceptions). Why/Why not?	Do you feel satisfied with these practices?(principal's perceptions) Why/Why not?	Do you feel that you gain benefits from these practices? Why/Why not?	Do you feel that you gain benefits from your involvement in the school context? Why/Why not?
PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION	How do you get prepared for these practices?	What kind of preparation does the school offer to the teachers?		