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NAOS- Professional capacity on Diversity

Handbook of NAOS Study Visits: A Synthesis of Good Practices in Teachers' Professional Development in Primary and Secondary Schools

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Introduction to NAOS[1]

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

[1] This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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[2]:

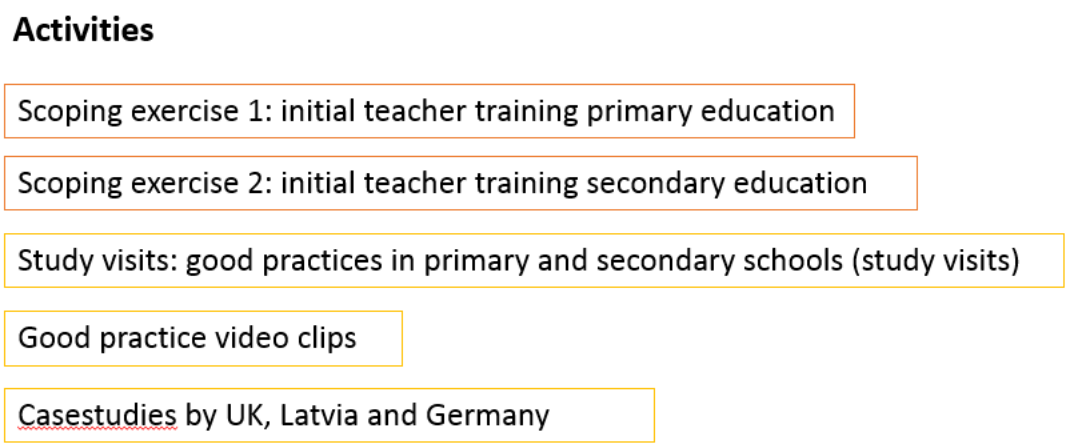
Name of the Organisation
Risbo B.V.
Forum za slobodu odgoja
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO
Public Policy and Management Institute
Tartu Rahvusvaheline Kool Tartu International School MTÜ
PAIDAGOGIKO INSTITOUTO KYPROU - CYPRUS PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE
University of Patras
UNIVERSITEIT ANTWERPEN
Algemeen Pedagogisch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

In the course of past three years (2014-2017), NAOS has conducted several activities and produced several outputs. Within these activities, a distinction was made between initial teacher training and professional development. In two separate scoping exercises, the partners collected good practices in initial teacher training for primary education and secondary education. As regards professional development, ten study visits in the nine partner countries were conducted. In the study visits, good practice schools were visited using methodology specifically developed for these visits (using a theoretical framework, a setup and an interview

[2] In the third project year, due to termination of Algemeen Pedagogisch Studiecentrum, this partner was substituted by Risbo.

instrument). Furthermore, all partners produced a video clip on an innovative project in the area of professional capacity building and, finally our three so-called collaborative partners from the UK, Latvia and Germany conducted case studies. In the figure below, the activities are summarized. More information on each of the activities can be found on the website http://naos.risbo.org/teacher-training-in-education/teacher-training-in-secondary-education/

Aside from the activities, NAOS convened in five transnational meetings and presented its findings in a final big meeting (the multiplier event).



Introduction to the current handbook

The primary activity of NAOS, and the one that is of relevance in this handbook, was"study visits" organized by the participating NAOS partners. Each partner hosted a study visit in their home country, choosing one primary school and one secondary school exemplifying good practice in teacher professionalization (two visiting partners joined in each visit). The principal of each school had the opportunity to present their school along with their vision, after which the partners were given the chance to interview teachers, principals, students, and in a few occasions, students' parents. The host cities of the visits were Antwerp, Patras, Zagreb, Nicosia, Fredrikstad, Tartu, Vilnius, Porto, Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The next section will describe how focus was placed on particular forms of teacher professionalization, which meant points of emphasis varied across schools and countries visited.

Focus on Five Areas of expertise and Method of Analysis

Not all teachers face the same challenges in reaching ethnically diverse students. Depending on one's own experience or skills, the context and geopolitical trends of the country where they reside and teach, as well as the diverging necessities among neighborhoods within the same city, teachers and future teachers express different needs. This is certainly reflected in the framework which we have elected to use throughout the NAOS activities; Severiens, van Herpen, and Wolff (2014) advocate that to be an effective teacher in diverse classrooms, one needs expertise in five areas: a) language development, b) pedagogy/didactics, c) social interaction and identity, d) parental involvement and e) school community relationships. Prior to the scheduling of each study visit, one, two and in a few cases three of these areas were chosen as the overarching themes of emphasis throughout. This implied that the interviews of each visit, although similar in structure, diverged in scope (in the attachment we have included the general instrument that was used). As the culmination of each visit, one of the visiting partners was asked to write a study visit report, in which the educational system and the main issues surrounding diversity and migration are described, the findings are summarised regarding how the schools exemplified commendable practice in enhancing teachers' capacity to teach in diverse settings. Below a scheme is presented that shows all study visits, visiting partners and the areas of expertise that was focused on.

Organizing Partner	**Visiting partner 1 (writers)**	**Visiting partner 2**	**Area of expertise**
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 (Rotterdam)	Lithuania	Croatia	School-community relationships/parental involvement

Netherlands (Amsterdam)	Norway	Portugal	Pedagogy

This handbook is essentially a synthesis of all study-visit reports, where remarkable practices that seek to improve teachers' professional capacity across each area of expertise will be sequentially described briefly. Community relationships and parental involvement will be merged as one area due to their high overlap and similarity in efforts and outcomes.It is our hope that this handbook will prove to be interesting and of course beneficial to education stakeholders. Though not all examples may be replicable or generalizable to different countries' contexts, it is our belief that one of the ideas elucidated throughout this analysis is that meagre resources or the lack of a diversity agenda does not render schools unable to spark change and introduce innovative practices. For a more elaborate view on aspects/professionalization practices that you may want to delve deeper into, you can access all reports via the NAOS website:

http://naos.risbo.org/study-visits/

The picture below depicts the countries of all study visits.

Results, Interesting Initiatives & Practices:

Below, the study visit reports are summarized according to the five areas of expertise.

Language development

The choice of this area as the first one to discuss our findings highly reflects on its importance as language might very well be the gateway to integration. Especially when talking about refugee pupils, asylum seekers from ongoing wars, and other recently migrated students that have yet to become accustomed to a new place, a good grasp of the host country language goes a long way towards determining one's range of opportunities in a new society. Adequate language acquisition is perhaps the most vital step in the acclimatization, pursuit of work opportunities, and the more general social inclusion of migrants. Part of what makes teachers competent in their instruction of diverse students is then constituted by their ability to comprehend the different methods/strategies necessary for assisting pupils with acquiring the language.

An exemplary system regarding students' language development was found in *Vilnius Lithuanian House.* This school, which primarily caters to repatriating Lithuanians who have lived most of their lives abroad, has established numerous techniques and events with the priority to deliver high quality education through preventing the frequent lag in unfamiliar speakers with their acquisition of Lithuanian. One of the premium provisions of this school is the so-called "bridging year", which is an intensive program for these repatriating students to quickly master the language before commencing with the standard curriculum.The school has a special qualification department that is responsible for teachers' in service-training in teaching Lithuanian as a foreign language.The three people who have been appointed as heads of the department are in charge of inviting professionals who teach Lithuanian abroad for lectures, organizing teacher mentoring programs as well as frequent peer review sessions and classroom observations, and coordinating seminars which take place five times a year and award participating teachers with a qualification. *Vilnius Lithuanian House* is not only host to students of Lithuanian descent, but actually "houses" 34 different nationalities. As a result, their language teaching initiatives are not limited to the host language but often involves language training in combination with culture; they have introduced a concept of "cultural week" where every week is devoted to a different country, with food-culture-basic language presentations about that country all in the span of five days.

In the second school we visited in Lithuania, *Vilnius Santara High School,* a Russian-speaking student majority has brought forth the initiative of strong bilingual program. A renewed Lithuanian law on education (updated in 2011) stipulates that national minority schools have to teach the same number of hours of Lithuanian language as of the minority language, and some of the subjects related to Lithuanian society (such as Lithuanian history and geography, literature, citizenship education) have to be taught in Lithuanian. In *Vilnius Santara High School,* about half of the classes are in Russian, permitting students to maintain a high competence level in both languages, all the while preventing segregating practices prevalent in a number of schools across the country. Most teachers at the school master both languages, and have spent time teaching/ interning in both countries; they have "needs assessments" at the beginning of the year where they can set goals straight and advise each other through the year, as well as a methodological seminar in spring where teachers' methods are contrasted and expertise is shared. In addition, teachers are required to do workshops upon attending seminars where they offer suggestions for implementation by the school itself.

In Norway, we got to visit *Cicignon primary and lower secondary school*, a place where migrant students have recently risen in numbers. Similar to the bridge year in Vilnius, this school includes an introduction class/department for language, where students are free to stay for a year or two before moving to a school near their neighbourhood. The school has also started to utilize differentiation in their practice, noting that the teaching method employed by the schools need not change, so long as the materials are flexible and more culturally responsive (different worksheets, types of exercises).

In *Kvernhuset higher secondary* school, also in Fredrikstad, language learning differentiation is also used at the *group* level. During Norwegian class, students are split up based on high achievement, cognitive deficits (dyslexia), and non-mother tongue speakers. The school claims that this has not resulted in discriminatory behavior, but rather assisted in each student maximizing their potential through being better equipped to help each other. Moreover, the school will often provide "mother tongue teachers" (often from outside the school) for students with exceptional acquisition struggles.

We were also able to gather good examples within the language domain in visits where it was not one of the areas of emphasis. For instance, the Odysseus project in Greece, an interactive online program for teaching Greek as a second language to people of different ethnicities, competence level and learning profiles. *Diakopto Secondary School* near Patras includes a few teachers that have mastered the basics of the program and have made use of that in the context of helping Albanian students specifically with their reading skills. Another good example came from *Tartu*

*AnnelinnaGümnaasium*in Estonia, a bilingual Estonian-Russian School that includes an extensive mentor system where the exchange of teaching materials and day-day peer feedback is frequent. A nice initiative they have introduced is interdisciplinary co-teaching; for example, a Math-teacher whose first language is Russian teams up with an Estonian language teacher and teach a class together. This is doubly beneficial as they get the chance to (a) be inspired by each other's different didactic resources, and (b) better comprehend how to approach their bilingual students through observing native Estonian/Russian.

Pedagogy/Didactics

According to Severiens et al (2014), the expertise theme of pedagogy and didactics involves: i) enhancing the ideas held by teachers on diversity as well as ascertaining teachers' positive feelings towards it, ii) expertise regarding the cultural and historical background of their students, in addition to processes regarding educational equity, iii) about classroom teaching methods including differentiated instruction based on multiple competences and prior knowledge of students, and iv) creating discursive classrooms where all students are urged to contribute and participate.

A number of unique pedagogical approaches involving a clear-cut vision in terms of teachers' professionalization were demonstrated by secondary school *Lumion* in superdiverse West Amsterdam. Lumion invests a lot in their teachers, who go through a progressive evaluation of their skills throughout their appointment. They self-assess using a "levels" procedure on different domains, with personal pathways of learning achievement as the dominant objective through the help of continuous peer feedback and weekly coaching meetings. There is then a uniquely inspiring notion of continuous improvement, as well as change in goals setting which keeps teachers alert and motivated, all compounded by a feeling of support through feedback loops with colleagues. In relation to the students, a personalized flexible curriculum has been made available, and our interviews with them suggest that the teachers' thirst for constant learning appears to be contagious to their students.

Rozemarn primary school, also in an underprivileged area of Amsterdam, offers a nice example of current attempts to reconciliate theory and practice in the classroom. Rozemarn is an exceptionally dynamic school taking part in action research; they closely collaborate with the Education department from the university, and is one of a few highly experimental schools, part of a few diversity and equity longitudinal projects. This participation transfers to the school staff, who conduct sport and inclusion projects in the neighborhood themselves. Their involvement with this project is a prime example of the

aforementioned ascertainment that teachers develop positive feelings on diversity and conceive the advantages of highly diverse classes. In relation to creating discursive classrooms, we were positively surprised by how opinionated the extremely young students were in our interviews with them. We talked to young children who are already incisive about social justice, and feel free to discuss racial discrimination, inequality and state intervention with their teachers. We saw children that do not simply develop critical consciousness, but ones who perceive it to be the most vital of values they can learn from their teachers. On the week we were there, they happened to have lectures from state officials on cyber threats; we were then told that different contemporary topics of interest/youth danger take place on a frequent basis.

For the past decade or so, Portugal's school network is organized in "clusters". Each cluster is made up of schools that offer all education levels from pre-school to secondary education; schools within a cluster share similar pedagogical objectives, participate in the same projects, and often have autonomous management and administration bodies. In Porto we had the chance to visit a primary and a secondary school from the "*Cerco Cluster*". The area where these schools are based has a reputation of poverty, social exclusion, high school failure rates, and comprises a sizable Roma population. Through their involvement in a program called TEIP (Priority Intervention in Education Territories), CERCO has lately introduced a large number of praiseworthy initiatives of good pedagogical practice. The schools invest into projects that seek to promote three principles: inclusion, integration and diversity. Teachers at their schools are expected to have formal training on teaching diverse groups, and required to have a deep personal interest in colourful teaching with a willingness to experiment. Also significant is their propensity to collaborate with other teachers and use interactive-cooperative teaching materials. The CERCO schools have introduced 16 educational practices focused on reducing drop out; examples of these include activities after school with a vast availability of sports, potential to join an orchestra, and other musical or art ventures. Another experimental practice they have introduced is the "Nest class", an adaptive approach for students who have trouble with Math or Portuguese. Another project, the "10x10" explicitly teaches motivational practices and fosters collaboration in fun, engaging ways. "Class+"opens up apprenticeship opportunities through creating homogeneous groups of students with similar sets of skills. Moreover, a lot has been done to professionalize teachers to accommodate the Roma population within the school; they have unique classes for Roman girls (taught by female teachers) where they learn skills that are relevant and important in their culture such as cooking, beauty procedures. A praiseworthy differentiating technique they have utilized for Romans is teaching subjects

in integration with music, which (for example) has resulted in a number of bored or unengaged students actually writing lyrics to help them with their learning of fractions.

Finally, interesting ways of increasing professionalization in a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach were demonstrated by *Tartu Raatuse School* in Estonia. The school has recently received a number of refugee students, but training in reaching refugee children is lacking, especially considering problems in communication due to language. Teachers at this school like to look at themselves as autodidact and are proud of their recent efforts. They have been contacting other European teachers via Skype, asking for materials created for teaching migrant populations. Others have joined relevant informal online networks, and a few teachers have even traveled to Finland at their own time to personally experience how immigrants can be assisted in the school context. The school itself has offered its share of helping the teachers gain expertise through covering the expenses for four teachers to attend a number of courses on integration and inclusion of refugees.

Social psychology

This area of expertise concerns fostering healthy social relations between students and educational stakeholders of the host culture and migrant students, but importantly, also places emphasis on teachers' knowledge of social psychology issues such as stereotype threat, deficit thinking and more. It is particularly important that teachers are not influenced by cultural bias, but rather emphasize on cultural strengths to try and cultivate the best version of their students.

The geographical location of Greece happens to place it at the intersection between Europe, Asia and Africa, rendering it inevitable that the last few decades have brought immense numbers of migrants within its borders. As one can understand, it is of crucial nature that part of the educational agenda has to focus on the prevention of discrimination and quick to form prejudice that is difficult to prevent when people of different nationalities come in such sudden contact. Both schools we visited take social inclusion of migrant students very seriously. At aforementioned *Diakopto Secondary School*, where 1/3 of the school population is comprised by Albanian students, recent tensions have been documented as part of friendly football matches or disagreements during school breaks. The first action undertaken to ameliorate relationships was the organization of a play (by the principal and some teachers) in which groups of Greeks and Albanians had to cooperate while themes of empathy and openness were highlighted as part of the recurring message. Following the play, three projects were introduced too. The first was the Odysseas project already mentioned; the second was an anti-racism months' long project facilitated by the teachers, the end of which found many Greek students

developing new relationships with non-locals. When students were asked about their main conclusion their group reply was that discrimination is simply "silly". The third project involved xenophobia and prejudice workshops, where teachers learned how to develop an activity of role-playing aiming to achieve self-reflection and empathy. *50th Primary School of Patras,* the second school we visited in Patras, has had a relatively easier path to integrating foreign students as they only constitute about 10% of the student body.This is a school committed to developing identities, and the outcomes sought for its students go beyond academic success; this is particularly difficult to achieve in a system as centralized as the Greek one, where emphasis is predominantly on a standardized curriculum. Most teachers' professional enhancement at this school came from personal initiatives and seeking seminars near the capital in their own time and on their own expenses.

Given its proximity not only in culture but also location, Cyprus is in a similar geographical predicament with Greece. *3rd Lakatameia Primary School* in the suburbs of Nicosia has introduced an excellent initiative in an effort to keep all parties accountable and explicitly condemn discrimination practices. Through their involvement with the Pedagogic Institute of Cyprus, they have been part of implementing the *Code of Good Behavior and Diversity Policy*. Among other policy measures, the Code includes a zero tolerance policy on racist-discrimination and activities for improving school-wide intercultural relationships. Teachers have been trained to guide all students to become individually self-reflective after a bullying incident, and each one is required to take a stance and express their personal values. The school describes the implementation of the Code as a journey of learning; the teachers have been trained to learn how manifestations of racism can at times also be prevalent in their own practice unconsciously, and they have further understood the importance of holding discursive classrooms and enhancing participation of seemingly marginalized students. At the second school we visited in Nicosia, Platy Secondary School, a number of policies have been introduced, in an effort to overcome the attention paid to traditional values in many Cypriot schools focusing on adaptation/assimilation rather than integration. A few of these have been religious-oriented (early Fridays for Muslim students, non-obligatory attendance in religious events or grading in courses on Catholic religion); others have been academic-oriented, with migrant-only after-school classes on students struggling with Maths or vocabulary. Generally, a difference in policies for fostering social adaptation was observed between the two schools; the primary school was primarily focused on integration-based pedagogy, while the secondary school seemed to employ a more assimilation-focused pedagogy. This idea and the implications of this dichotomy will be further expanded in the discussion section.

Last but definitely not least, *Kvernhuset* and *Cicignon,* previously noted for their language development inventiveness, are also examples of a Norwegian policy gathering a fair amount of praise and interest. Many schools in Norway include so-called *social teachers;* these are teachers who have received extensive additional training to deal with social psychology issues. Apart from being present for all relevant issues that may arise within the school, these teachers are also in charge of maintaining direct contact with parents on anything that may concern their children. They are meant to be omnipresent and stay aware of potential tensions that may arise, and teach students what constitutes acceptable behavior and what the best manner for resolving conflict is in different scenarios. The number of social teachers within a school often depend on its size and population; the two schools we visited had three each. The existence of social teachers reflects on another interesting concept within the Norwegian educational system, namely their principle of *unity* and emphasis towards *collective*, rather than individual performance. The unity approach is mirrored perfectly by the fact that no student within Norway can fail a class up until they have reached the age of 16. This is arguably largely beneficial for migrant populations too, as the lack of competition and cultural bias on learning should better promote the capacity to achieve despite potential lagging, unlike an often-seen predetermined basis that is established early in one's academic life.

School-community relationships and parental involvement

Fostering contact between a school and the parents of migrant students is often difficult due to either i) parents' weak familiarity with the local language when they have only been in the host country for a brief time, or ii) the fact that these parents often work long hours to make ends meet meaning they have minimal time to devote to their children's education, much less getting to know their teachers. Similarly, establishing connections between the students' school environment, home environment and the community/neighborhood they reside in is often neglected as managing the school environment itself is already a complex task on its own.

In our visit to Antwerp we did not simply get to see two schools committed to teacher and pupil development, but essentially two "cultural hubs" in the middle of two super-diverse neighborhoods. Primary school *De Schakel (*95% of student body is of Muslim background) is currently participating in the Innovation in Excellence and Education Project (PIEO). The project involves thirteen primary schools in a number of low SES areas across Belgium, with the objective to better learning gains and reduce school failure. PIEO communicates with a number of initiatives and organizations within the neighbourhood near the school and seeks to empower teachers to develop an effective learning

environment. The school has implemented an open-door policy for all parents: they approach them by viewing them as child-rearing experts, with the hope that the confidence instilled in the parents will make it more possible that they themselves come to the school with suggestions for improvement. They have made parents part of the school party, and brought them to contact with care coordinators. Since a large number of them are illiterate, they even assist them with every-day chores like filling tax papers. The teachers' role throughout this contact is vital, and they are continuously professionalizing in developing rapport with parents.

The secondary school we visited in Antwerp, *Het Keerpunt,* is quite literally a cultural center in the district of Borgerhout. A collection of 15 partners are housed under the same roof: all these partners are small and medium-sized sociocultural-educational institutions. It is estimated that approximately 20,000 people visit *Het Keerpunt* yearly for one of its offered services. Students can often complete their internships in one of these institutions within the same building. The selection of teachers within this school is particularly strict: they must have a profound interest in working in diversity, if not be from a migrant background themselves. They follow a variety of professional development activities, and are required-not simply encouraged to be in touch with inclusion projects within the neighbourhood. A network of teachers, trainee supervisors and care-coordinators participate in group workshops helping students with their social and professional skills, often culminating in one-on-one counselling sessions. The school makes a profit by acquiring technical projects in which students participate. 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 idea of reciprocity is highly prominent here: the school makes use of support organizations and companies which provide learning environments, while at the same time offering its facilities to the city (more specifically the district). This is all meant to strengthen the bond between the two, showing disadvantaged students a novel perspective where success is expected rather than surprising.

Moving to Croatia, despite the smaller numbers of diverse ethnic groups within the country, a great effort is made to ascertain that schools and the community around them become great spots for promoting inclusion. In *Ivan Supek* Secondary School, cooperation between school and community is highly mediated through a strong network of NGO partners, the Ministry, Culture and Sports, hospitals, schools, cultural museums and many more. Even if an effort does not explicitly mention diversity as its core objective, teachers have come to understand that the topic will soon constitute a priority in their agenda. The next school we saw, *Nikola Tesla* Elementary, is a highly prominent school in the city of

Zagreb. The school has special programs for students from neighboring Macedonia, and has become involved with a large range of Erasmus+, Comenius, Globetime and more European Union reputable organizations. Teachers have special expertise in dealing with both Macedonian students, as well as special-needs pupils. They strongly believe that successful community efforts begin and end with parents, and incorporate them in all decisions; each class has parent as well as student representatives who are present in meetings. It is significant to note that most parents within this school are middle-high class, and approaching them in an effort to make a difference seems easier than with parents from minority backgrounds. Both schools expressed the general sentiment that they are not fully equipped to work with diversity, but small, punctual initiatives are slowly taking place. For example, the Forum of Freedom in Education has offered the school a number of workshops in approaching conflict resolution with migrants, and has explained how to talk to children about sensitive topics such as the refugee crisis.

Our very last study visit took place in Rotterdam. The schools we got to see are especially unique in that their student population is almost exclusively made up of first or second generation migrant pupils. Seeing as the district where the schools are located includes a large minority-low SES population, it has been particularly difficult to control the out-of-school environment of students, or manage to attract long-hour working parents to contribute with their participation. Secondary school *De Hef* has embraced a philosophy termed "The Triangle Approach", advocated by a local academic. The approach seeks to unite and reconcile children's a) school environment, b) neighborhood environment, and c) home environment. As a result, they have approached a large number of stakeholders within the community, and established a number of events throughout the year where parents can come and, for example, share food made from their country and observe their children attend in talent shows and plays. Due to past safety concerns, however, they are very careful about making the students stay in the school grounds during school time, and the open door policy applies strictly to students and their parents. They do their best to limit the extracurricular interaction of their students to trustworthy individuals from the familiar environment. Similarly with the Lithuanian and the Norwegian school, they have a course where newly-arrived pupils start their journey with before they can move into the vocational department of the school.

In Rotterdam we also visited special-education primary school *De Heldring*. A large part of how the teachers are operating is based on an initiative in teacher professionalization, termed *Leerkracht*. At the beginning of the academic year, together with the principal and the students' parents, they get together and establish goals to be met throughout the next months. All sides monitor progress systematically; though the principal noted it is difficult to keep the parents committed and engaged with

regards to their participation, the year-to-year improvement has been notable. For this school, it is of primary importance that parents and children get to learn together, in what constitutes a form of pedagogical partnerships. They are currently making huge efforts to include the community and cooperate with a number of arts initiatives, sports, hospitals and more stakeholders but it is a process that they state will take time.

Overall conclusions

In this final chapter of the synthesis of the ten study visits that were conducted in the NAOS project, we would like to share some observations that result from comparing all study visits. These include the professional capacity activities that we observed, as well as contextual factors supporting or hindering teachers learning about how to teach in classrooms that are sometimes rapidly changing in terms of pupils' backgrounds.

One observation resulting from comparing all study visits is that about half the schools participates in professional development on diversity, from stand-alone courses to peer learning to integral programs and collaboration with universities. Often, these schools also participate in international networks on this topic, and they frequently have their teachers attend European projects and seminars. In the other half of the schools, teachers seem to mostly develop in terms of "learning by doing". Many teachers we spoke to go out of their way to better themselves and their colleagues by putting in extra hours. School or district wide professional development on diversity in these schools are generally lacking. It is important to note here that we did not visit a representative sample of schools in each of the countries. The NAOS partners chose schools on the basis of their good practices regarding diversity and professional capacity building. This means that our half/half observation can by no means be transferred to schools in our partner countries, or Europe for that matter. It also means, and this is our main recommendation, that there is a clear need to develop more expertise and a larger array of structural support of developing teacher capacity in the areas of diversity.

Another overall observation is that there seems to be a rapid change with many novel courses serving teachers surfacing in the last few years. Schools are utilizing new strategies and approaches such as co-teaching, adaptive personalized learning for students of diverging competences, as well as experiments with local initiatives and projects that seek to tackle exclusion. Cooperation among teachers, both within schools, within countries as well within global networks, is rapidly evolving.

One particularly pertinent contextual factor playing a role in how schools develop policies is the extent to which an educational system is centralized. Countries efforts in Southern Europe and the Balkans (Greece, Portugal, Cyprus, Croatia) are significantly compromised by their inability to operate distinctly from the state. Countries in the Baltics and Northern Europe (Estonia, Lithuania, Belgium, Norway, the Netherlands) are less susceptible to state intervention and school leaders along with visionaries enjoy much more freedom in the degree to which they can experiment and encourage involvement in professionalization programs. Schools that fit the latter category are usually more or less free to choose their own teachers, facilitating the choice of a group of teachers whose instructing philosophies fits the schools' vision on good quality teaching. For centralized schools and systems, it is conceivably more difficult enforce a local new policy with regards to professional capacity. On the other hand, with the example of Cyprus in the back of our minds, a centralized system can also facilitate the implementation of diversity policy nationwide, possibly expanding the reach and impact of diversity policy.

An overall observation at school-level concerned the different styles of leadership employed by school leaders. We have seen hierarchical, top-down approaches vs. more distributed, bottom-up structures. The outcomes of each are not necessarily very different, as tending to diversity can be tackled both ways. Bottom-up is thought to be characterized by more focus on team-learning, peer feedback loops and strong cooperation systems. However, as displayed in the case of Antwerp, a strong leadership does not necessarily mean fewer chances at elaborate networks, co-teaching and unified teacher learning.

Using the five areas of expertise as an overarching framework has helped us place unique focus throughout the visits. It did bring forth the question of the theory-practice gap in education as schools generally implement policies that involve more than one area of expertise. In other words, the distinction in five areas could be made on a conceptual level, but often not in practice. Part of tackling the theory-practice issue involves alignment between mission on diversity and its practical manifestations in classes. Some schools exemplified an extremely strong alignment, with a clear mission on diversity and good quality education combined with a translation to the curriculum. Other schools have a clear vision but this is only translated in extracurricular projects and efforts rather than through the curriculum. Even though alignment is generally thought to be a good idea considering school effectiveness (see eg, OECD, 2010), organizing extracurricular projects may help schools to remain experimental and active despite an apparent inability to because of centralized educational systems or strict regulations.

If we are to draw specific conclusions assisted by the areas of expertise, it would be that efforts are differentially placed based on country needs. Countries with newly-arrived large numbers of migrants generally focus on helping with language acquisition and promoting anti-discrimination programs, whereas countries with longer term experience are attempting to differentiate and utilize culturally relevant materials. The one area of apparent struggle, highlighted by nearly all the teachers and principals we interviewed, is parent and community participation. Everyone wishes for more involvement from the side of the parents and communities, and many are trying to find ways to keep them involved beyond the yearly established meetings. This is going to be a challenge in the years to come, and we hope that pointing out the issue will bring forth targeted initiatives.

We have observed some remarkable good practices throughout our NAOS journey. All schools we visited demonstrated a commitment to diversity, which is not seen as a problem but as an asset. Most schools attempt to unite the worlds of children, combining cultures of sending and receiving countries. With teacher capacity on approaching diversity varying according to individual expertise, a country's agenda and priorities, and a range of other factors, we can at least safely proclaim that we have spoken with engaged teachers who genuinely care about the future of the profession, and who acknowledge that the success of this future will largely be based around the ability to cater to the differing needs of students from diverse ethnic migrant and minority backgrounds. Having said this, we would like to end this report by repeating our main recommendation. Given the large number of teachers who are putting in their own time and are learning by doing, it is necessary to start approaching teachers' professional development in the area of diversity in a more structural way at all relevant school, state and national levels. The NAOS study visit reports and other outputs provide a rich source for this much needed structural approach to professional capacity in dealing with diversity.

References

OECD (2010). *Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons from PISA for the United States*. Paris: OECD.

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Attachment Interview instrument

NAOS basic questionnaire for study visits

	TEACHERS	PRINCIPAL	PARENTS/PUPILS	COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
CONTEXT	What is the context of your school/classroom?	What is the history of the school concerning the area of expertise addressed?		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 cooperating with the school?
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?		