



ENACTED project

European Network of Active Civil socieTy for Education and Diversity

MENTORING GUIDE

for teachers, formal and non-formal educators to implement
NAMS inclusive education in schools



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. ENACTED project

The ENACTED project was born to support educators in responding to the different needs of **newly arrived immigrant students (NAMS)** in order to strengthen their integration into the hosting educational and social system.

ENACTED steps in to fill a void by supporting European educational systems and particularly schools to respond adequately and effectively to the diverse needs of NAMS fostering their integration in both education and society.

Aim

- Create an online platform connecting civil society organisations (CSOs) and primary & secondary schools to provide quality and inclusive education.
- Support formal education providers to respond to the diverse needs of newly arrived migrant students (NAMS) in order to foster their integration into education and society.
- Incorporate governments and policy-makers as vital actors in the design of educational policies and initiatives.
- Produce a Charter of Common Values for Education and Diversity to contribute to non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all in Europe.

Capacity building sessions

ENACTED partners carried out several virtual and physical meetings during the project performance, among which the **capacity building sessions**.

Teachers, formal and non-formal education providers, mentors and key stakeholders took all part in the project meetings, which aimed to collectively evaluate the needs of education systems and policies on inclusive education towards NAMS and exchange ideas with CSOs on practices towards better inclusion and quality education for NAMS.

Besides that, one of the main goals was identifying, creating and sharing innovative and inclusive educational best practices and finding ways to integrate those within their educational environments.

Innovative Practices for Inclusive Education (IPIE) in the field of NAMS education are defined as ground-breaking practices regarding inclusive education that can enhance children's skills, support their personal and psychological well-being, promote social inclusion and strengthen their sense of belonging to their host societies. Furthermore, they increase educators' competences at all levels; technically, methodologically, personally and socially, and multi-culturally.

Partners involved

The partnership is made up of 6 organisations:

Oxfam Italia Onlus (Italy, coordinator)
STIMMULI for Social Change (Greece)
CESIE (Italy)
Solidarity Now (Greece)
CARDET LTD (Cyprus)
Magenta Consultoria Projects S.L.U. (Spain)

1.2. Mentoring Guide purpose

As a result of the capacity building activities, a short and practical [mentoring guide \(MG\)](#) for teachers and formal education providers, has been produced presenting in an easy and accessible format the Innovative Practices for Inclusive Education [IPIE](#) together with tips about their implementation.

The MG's purpose is to spread the results of the capacity building sessions carried out by all partner organisations, bringing together all the information collected in a single document.

All partner organisations contributed to the production of the mentoring guide, as it has been written out with all the outputs collected during the capacity building sessions, carried out during the 2021-2022 period.

As part of the dissemination plan, the MG will be uploaded on the ENACTED website, as well as on the websites of all involved partners.



2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

A context analysis regarding NAMS education is needed to find out which are the uncovered needs to determine the educational system's criticalities.

Although each partner country has a different background concerning the migrant population, state policies, cultural beliefs, etc, the main obstacles found concerning NAMS inclusion in the scholastic system were predominantly, making the project response in each of the countries a standard set of best practices.



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NAMS educational barriers were clustered in the following “super themes” or main topics:

2.1. Language barriers

All CSO partners agreed that the communication barrier is the **first and principal difficulty** faced by NAMS, as most of them do not possess a strong if any, local language knowledge when they arrive in the hosting country.

Language barriers can make migrants feel isolated, hopeless, and anti-social, which delays and render impossible **migrants' integration**. Besides, it has also a huge impact on their school performance, and hence it diminishes their educational opportunities. NAMS families also struggle in communicating with educators/teachers when it comes to understanding the children's needs and demands.

At the memento, there is a complete **lack of support by the educational institutions** regarding the linguistic inclusion of migrant students; often they are inserted into the scholar system without any mediator backing nor a planned educational program for such cases.

Therefore, it has been defined as the first challenge to be afforded in the path of NAMS inclusion. See section 3.1.

2.2. Cultural barriers

Aside from the language incomprehension, it was pointed out the importance of the **cultural aspects** and the **life background** NAMS students and their families carry with them, bearing in mind the need to have a psychosocial approach towards them. Besides that, NAMS often show some **psychological difficulties** as a result of their traumatic experiences in the past.

On the other hand, the **lack of empathy** of the educational actors towards NAMS was outlined. There is little attempt to understand the point of view of NAMS children in the school environment, which makes the children feel further excluded as their perspective is dismissed.

Both educators and CSOs expressed the necessity to upscale **teachers' intercultural competencies** and awareness to successfully implement innovative best practices, as these practices are beneficial only if teachers can consider intercultural approaches.

2.3. Parental engagement

The **absence of parent participation and engagement** on NAMS' educational path is another issue highlighted that worsens the situation. Despite purported efforts by the schools to engage parents, this often fails mainly due to communicative or cultural barriers.

Language barriers again play an important role in the lack of parents' participation in their child's education. It is quite common that **students act as an interlocutor** between the school and his/her parents, disrupting the parent's role. This situation commonly discourages the children and their parents from actively working on their inclusion.

2.4. School resources

Schools do **not have enough resources** or time to cover the needs of NAMS students, for instance, extra-curriculum sessions or 1-to-1 sessions for those who need after-school activities as educational support. Just as important are the digital tools increasingly used within educational environments, like laptops or tablets.

Concerning the lack of school resources, it is believed that challenges can be overcome but solutions don't rely on the schools themselves, rather, it is a matter of public funding.

2.5. Stigma

Racism and xenophobia are still unfortunately present within society, and therefore also in the school environment, turning out in **acts of racial discrimination**.

In some cases, there is some **teachers' reticence** when it comes to involving them in applying inclusive practices. Prejudices, or even compassion, lead to seeing and treating NAMS differently from those students that have grown up in the hosting country, making them feel further excluded.

On the other hand, the practice of setting up classrooms based on student's performance **-class-based systems-** in the school worsens and hinders a successful learning process. In many cases, NAMS students are **segregated** from their colleagues, jointly with other challenging students that have a lower curriculum performance. This practice has shown to deliver poor results, especially for the students which are put in the low performing classes. The label of less able stigmatizes the students who are then more likely to drop out of school.

3. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (IPIE)

The challenges identified during the capacity building sessions, described in the previous section, have been used as the starting point for designing new educational practices, centred on alleviating the shortcomings of the current system.

This section contains a brief description of the best educational practices already implemented, or simply collected, by each partner during the capacity building activities with teachers and formal education providers.

New practices, possible solutions or approaches towards NAMS school integration have been summarised and divided into main topics, as follows;

3.1. Language learning programs

As a first step, to help newly arrived students to overcome communication barriers, the main proposal was the implementation of linguistic programs aiming to acquire good communication skills in the local language.

Linguistic classes should **work by competencies**, giving priority to communicative needs in opposition to the standard programs focused on language grammar skills. That means, in other words, adapting the school program to the NAMS needs, and not vice-versa.

The **blended learning method** was also presented as a way of teaching that integrates technology and digital media with traditional instructor-led classroom activities, giving students more flexibility to customise their learning experiences. This method permits the parallel use of audio, image and text and includes interactive learning activities that could facilitate and accelerate the language acquisition process.

Magenta organisation already implemented a linguistic immersion program for migrant students with very low competencies in the local language. Grouped by linguistic competence, students attend local linguistic sessions during their teaching hours. Sometimes teachers do the lesson outside of the school atmosphere, so they could also learn other practical vocabulary related to their environment.

3.2. Interpretation and intercultural mediation services

Interpreters or mediators can be a **bridge** between migrant children or families, and the school or the local community. They can address the **particular needs** aroused from their culture, gender and/or age, to bring solutions to their challenges. In like manner, they also help ease the process of **social and academic integration**, making the educational path more attentive to their needs, addressing stereotypes and reducing tensions and **misunderstandings**.

Usually, the availability of a supportive teacher that acts as a mediator relies upon government funding. Hence, to navigate around these situations in absence of this role,

it is recommended the use of additional **supportive materials** and encourage **peer-to-peer support**.

Example of a partner to add?

3.3. Parents' guidance and family care services

The active participation of the parents in their child's education path is essential. Engaging families of refugee and migrant students in school activities as **equal partners, co-educators and beneficiaries**, integrating values and approaches of inclusive education horizontally has a huge positive impact on child scholastic success.

As we already faced in section 2.3, there is a set of conditions that hinder migrant family engagement. The following strategies were identified to improve the communication and collaboration between parents and the educational community:

Hosting evenings wherein the parents can meet the school staff, to encourage both parents and schools to increase their networking for the benefit of NAMS. At the same time, it promotes the creation of a family network through the possibility of establishing relationships within the parent community.

Implementing a program of **intercultural sensibilization activities** to bring the educational community closer to the culture of origin of each migrant family, highlighting the richness of diversity.

Availability of a **linguistic mediation** that facilitates a direct conversation between teachers and parents liberating the student from acting as interlocutor and the role-confusion it incurs. Ideally, it would be beneficial to have a family referent in each school as a supportive role. Furthermore, to progressively give parents long-term autonomy, they should have the possibility to attend **free local language courses**.

Example of a partner to add?

3.4. Reinforce teachers' intercultural competences

Teachers may lack understanding of pedagogical approaches to work with refugee and migrant children, hence, they need to go through a professional development in **intercultural and interreligious skills** in order to provide inclusive learning environments.

The main purpose is to bring inclusive values in the class, such as respect, cooperation, collaboration and empathy – among others. These are the main **human-relationship basis** and common values. Teachers have the opportunity to educate on pro-social behaviours, and avail themselves, the students, and the entire society. Intercultural and interfaith learning through ethics education can create spaces for dialogue that challenge stereotypes and prejudices and build trust.

In addition, focusing on **diversity** permits us to assume that each student has different cognitive and emotional capacities, but also a different socio-cultural context. **Equity** is the keyword to face those diversities: educational community should pursue the academical equity, by using teaching techniques to allow the involvement of all the students without leaving anyone behind, through **targeted learning content** adapted to the student's needs.

Example of a partner to add?

3.5. Peer-to-peer mentoring or Buddy system

A Peer Mentoring Programme is a valuable tool that can make the inclusion process of young migrant students easier by providing them with **guidance and support**. It is a practice which aims to promote the inclusion of newly arrived migrant students through the active involvement of peers. It is based on the creation of a couple of students:

- **a Mentee**, being a newly arrived migrant student, who expressed his/her need and will to be mentored;
- **a Mentor**, being a student more experienced in the school system, with migrant background or not, who wants to provide support to newly arrived students in their inclusion process within the school community, to help them face challenges related to the new education system, language, methodologies and so forth;

Oxfam is one of the partners that has already applied peer-to-peer methodologies. The mentoring mechanism, as per *Oxfam's* programme of excellence, is understood as an educational strategy capable of fostering the integration and learning of the most fragile individuals, counteracting the phenomena of school dropout and educational poverty.

Peer mentoring also enables **transversal action and capacity building** of the entire educating community. Peer learning between foreign students and students from the same class is a simple activity that requires only the commitment of teachers and management to carry out this activity in an ongoing and structured manner.

3.6. Alternative pedagogies to develop academic skills and promote social inclusion

Migrant and refugee children must be provided with access not only to formal education but also alternative pathways that are more **flexible**, where every child can learn and pursue their future.

Education should go beyond literacy and numeracy to include alternative pedagogies that make room for socio-emotional, spiritual and ethical learning. The old way of teaching using unidirectional and non-participative methodologies is an anachronic and outdated learning system. In recent times there has been a huge **paradigm shift in**

education, moving from teaching-focused education to **competency-focused education**. For instance, some **non-formal teaching methodologies** include undertaking activities such as theatre workshops, intercultural events/festivals within the school environment, guided city visits for students, creative art workshops, museum visits, making short documentaries, do creative writing activities, among others.

Example of a partner to add?

3.7. Other initiatives

Assessment of prior knowledge Sometimes there is the assumption that NAMS are beginning from 0 their educational path, but in many cases, they are not. The availability of the previous education history, and/or the evaluation of their prior knowledge helps to understand the student's needs, and allows the school to have an overall picture of the educational background to fill the gaps and enhance their knowledge through personalised learning content.

Psychosocial support for NAMS and their families. Schools are natural environments in which to enhance young people's social and emotional skills, mental health, and contact between diverse groups, including students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds. Psychosocial support focuses on reducing psychological distress and increasing resilience mitigating the toxic stress among young refugee children and their parents [1]

Flexible grouping is an inclusion strategy that uses data to constantly change student groups. Only grouping by ability level becomes exclusionary and stigmatising. By changing small groups regularly, inclusion thrives and students have opportunities to learn from and instruct each other.

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4. IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

Which are the implementation tips for achieving a successful integration of NAMS students in the school system?

Find out the summarised key strategies and opportunities for an effective application of good inclusive practices, regardless of the context where they will be applied. Rather than concrete actions, tips for inclusive practices replication are more like a list of **basic commandments**:

- ★ Educate on **ethics and common values**, emphasising the importance of respecting diversity and differences and having zero tolerance for stigma and discrimination. Highlight the importance of empathy, kindness, respect and responsibility within the class.
- ★ Embrace **diversity and interculturality**, as a positive attribute and resource, rather than a challenge or detriment. **Culturally responsive teaching** is a tool and style of pedagogy that takes into account the different perspectives and references in each student's own culture. Use **inclusive** language.



Photography by [Raissa Lara Lütolf \(-Fasel\)](#) in [Unsplash](#)

- ★ Work on student **equity** rather than equality. Equity pedagogies recognize the impact of a student's circumstances - like personality, competencies, culture, lived experiences, etc - on their response to the instruction, to identify strategies

and instructional techniques that address achievement gaps, intending to reach an **equal educational outcome**.

Teachers and educators should put the spotlight on students' **abilities and needs** by using a personalised learning program adapted to each student.

- ★ **Holistic education** is a comprehensive approach that cultivates a developing student's physical, emotional, moral, psychological, and spiritual attributes by providing opportunities that are personalised to a child's skills and feelings. [2]

The **Whole Child approach** focuses on *positive school environments by providing whole-child support (services that support academic and **nonacademic needs**) to students* [3].

The **Whole School approach**: all members of the school community (school leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, learners, parents and families) feel responsible and play an active role promoting a culture that has been chosen by the **same**. This could be **inclusion, intercultural values, well-being of all students, etc.**

- ★ **Shared responsibility** of all involved actors. Migrant-background students live within multiple and interconnected environments including **home, school, and community**. True inclusion involves all adults in the school community, from families and teachers to everyone in between. Teachers, formal and non-formal educators, and stakeholder collaboration is a must to reach the objective.

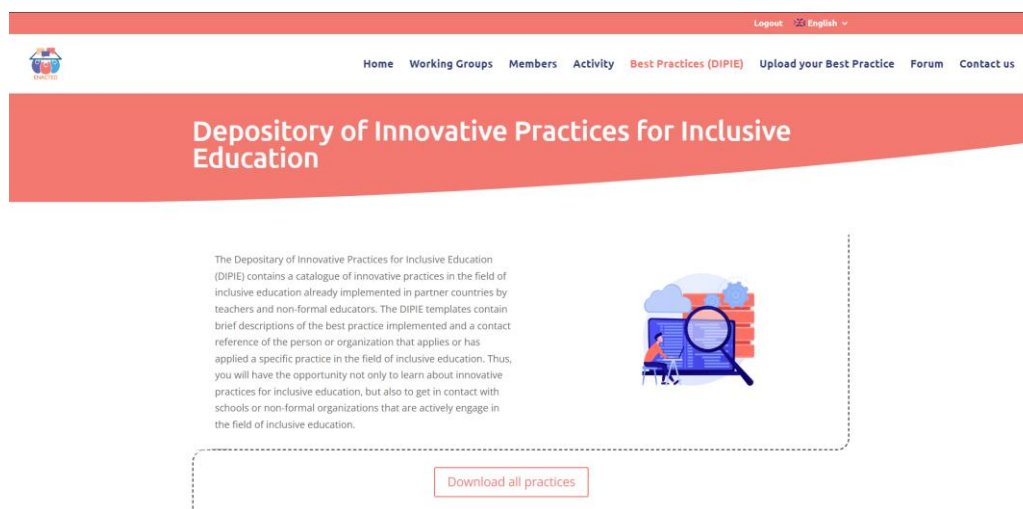
5. AVAILABLE RESOURCES

5.1. European network: ENACTED project platform

[Web page: <https://enacted.eu/en/>]

Expertise knowledge, good practices and implemented innovative methods become consolidated in an interactive, multilateral platform which can connect CSOs with schools and vice versa, and enable them to exchange best practices and lessons learnt to build a solid **knowledge base for inclusive education**.

The ENACTED platform aims to give visibility to several innovative practices in the field of inclusive education in Europe and properly classified according to specific criteria that make your research fast, precise and intuitive on our **‘Depository of Innovative Practices for Inclusive Education’ (DIPIE)**.



<https://enacted.eu/elearning/depository-of-innovative-practices-for-inclusive-education/>

Promoting cooperation between civil society organisations and schools through an innovative European network of active civil society for education and diversity, a digital platform that facilitates:

- the exchange of good practices and synergies between formal and non-formal education providers;
- mutual support;
- the development of common practices and values to enhance the effectiveness of educational interventions.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the experiences and information gathered by partner organisations in the capacity building sessions, it can be summarised what are the main considerations for an effective inclusion of NAMS students in the European school system.

Key players on migrant and refugee school integration agreed on which are the main challenges to be faced when implementing an effective inclusive education program.

To this day, **language barriers** are part of the primary obstacles of refugee and migrant children to reach a full incorporation in the school system. The ability to communicate in the local language is the **first step for social integration** - seeing schools as a small social system too.

Besides local language skills, student's **cultural background** should also be taken into consideration by all the educational community. There is a tendency to assume our own culture is universal, or indeed the right one, discriminating, marginating and cancelling what is foreign or different.

Not least, we can not forget the **psychosocial impact** NAMS and their families often carry with them, considering that a migration process may not be easy to accept, nor overcoming tough experiences. So it is not just about being open-minded and welcoming, but also about backing them up by giving them psychological support.

Under this scenario, **collaboration** is an essential word for achieving a real impact in NAMS education. There is a need to work in partnership, based on a strong commitment between **peer students, NAMS families, the educational community** and local, national and international **institutions**.

Student peers play an important part in the inclusion process. An inclusive practice tool that achieved a really good positive outcome is based on the peer-to-peer methodology, highlighting how important colleagues' support is.

Teachers' predisposition and involvement through consciously assuming their crucial role in the implementation of inclusive practices, starting from using an inclusive language, including the willingness to know in depth the student's background to adapt the school program to their needs, and up to develop professional, but also personal, intercultural competences.

Regarding all those actions depending on **institutions, public financing** and system structure, Policy makers' responsibility.



Bearing in mind that **education is not neutral** serves to underscore *teaching* goes much more beyond giving lessons based on a standard curriculum, instead, it is far more about being a reference figure for students and thus, being responsible for ethics and moral values transmission.

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