

European Policy Network on the Education of Children
and Young People with a Migrant Background



ALFIRK – empowering migrant parents

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Outline of presentation



- Introduction & Background
- Empowerment and engagement of migrant parents – international research
- ALFIRK project – overview
- Results of the pilot
- Concluding comments



Introduction & Background



- Increased diversity in contemporary European societies; impact of migration
- Increased attention on how migrants fare in the receiving countries
- Importance of education in migrant outcomes
- Growing research on academic and social outcomes of migrant children; less is known about engagement of migrant parents
- Shift from involvement to empowerment of migrant parents



Factors impacting on parental engagement



- The new arrivals are often viewed through a ‘deficit’ lens, i.e. lacking certain cultural attributes that are valued by the majority culture (Dwyer et al. 2006)
- Barriers to involvement serve as another source of disadvantage for ethnic minority parents and their children
 - Time spent in the receiving country and majority language proficiency (Turney and Kao 2009)
 - Social class and education of the parent
 - Cultural differences/ distance – ‘teacher as an expert’
 - Time and resources available



Types of engagement

- **School-based engagement** strategies include volunteering at school, communication between parents and teachers, involvement in school governance, participating in the activities and events in school
- **Home-based engagement** strategies include parental reinforcement of learning at home, exposing children to intellectually stimulating activities e.g. going to the library etc., attitudes and expectations with regard to education, and keeping informed about child's school life (see Epstein 1987, Comer 1995, Grolnick et al. 2000, Sui-Chu and Willms 1996, Desforges and Abouchaar 2003).

An international Erasmus+ research project ALFIRK



- Aims to support schools to tackle early school leaving (ESL) among migrant youth by creating migrant parent empowerment networks, thereby improving collaboration between parents, schools, community organizations and local education authorities.
- Promotes networking of schools, enables the networking of a variety of stakeholders who are committed to empowering migrant parents and decreasing ESL among migrant learners.
- This improved collaboration and increased parent empowerment will ultimately help to reduce disparities in learning outcomes affecting migrant youth throughout European school systems.



ALFIRK (cont.)



- Participating countries:
- Germany (project leaders)
 - UK; Ireland; Bulgaria; the Netherlands; Spain; Belgium



ALFIRK (cont.)



- The migrant parent empowerment networks in participating countries will work to empower migrant parents at three levels:
 - the family level (parents' ability to manage day-to-day situations within the home),
 - the service system level (the degree to which parents are able to effectively work with the school system), and
 - The community/political level (parents' advocacy for improved services for migrant youth in general).



Research questions

- What are the necessary conditions for the interaction between schools and parents to facilitate migrant parents' engagement in the school-based education of their children in the host country?
 - How engaged migrant parents are in the school-based education of their children in the host country?
 - How informed migrant parents are about their rights in being involved in the school-based education of their children?
 - How informed migrant parents are about the opportunities in being involved in the community of the school in which their children attend?
 - How interested migrant parents are in being involved in the school-based education of their children?
 - How interested migrant parents are in being involved in the community of the school which their children attend?
 - How do schools encourage migrant parents to be involved in the school-based education of their children and in the community of the school which their children attend?

Methodology



- Case studies in each participating country:
 - One primary school
 - One secondary school
 - Migrant parents identified by either school authorities or immigrant organisations, NGOs
 - Voluntary participation in focus groups (4-6 per school; 4-5 people in group); short questionnaire about background
 - Interviews with Head Teacher(s) and school staff who hold relevant responsibilities
 - Interviews recorded and analysed in each country
- Data analysis: January 2017 – June 2017



Establishing networks of migrant parents



- Initially target the case-study schools in participating countries
- Dissemination of findings on schools, good practices, strategies of involving parents
- Include relevant associations, migrant parent associations
- Feed into events organized by migrant community or possibly have parents in case study schools organize their own event
- Time frame: March/April 2018



Online Platform



- Identify and record good practice;
- Connections with other ethnic parent associations across countries and;
- Feasibility to be established: April/May 2017
- Establishment of the platform: June 2017



International Handbook



- Literature review on migrant parent empowerment
- Two parts:
 - Part1: focus on national good practices and guidelines, mainly national resources
 - Part2: focus on international good practice
- Time frame: Draft: March/April 2018



Pilot –Leeds Beckett University, UK



- Interviews with school staff (2 HTs, 2 member of staff with relevant responsibilities)
 - 1 Head teacher from primary school
 - 1 Head Teacher from secondary school
 - 1 Teacher/ Inclusion manager from secondary school
 - 1 Teaching assistant from secondary school with responsibility to support new students with English as Additional Language (EAL)
- Interviews with 3 parents
 - 1 from Secondary school
 - 2 from Primary schools
- 8 parents' questionnaires
- 2 group interviews with students (not included in initial plan)



Next steps in 2016



- Preparation for fieldwork
- Data collection
- Groundwork for establishing parent networks

