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# MAINSTREAMING 2.0

## HOW EUROPE'S EDUCATION SYSTEMS CAN BOOST MIGRANT INCLUSION

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Integration Futures Working Group



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Integration Futures Working Group



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# CONTENTS

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 1
  
- I. INTRODUCTION ..... 4
  
- II. NEW TWISTS ON OLD CHALLENGES..... 5
  - A. *The demographic context* ..... 5
  - B. *The socioeconomic context*..... 7
  - C. *The political context* ..... 9
  - D. *The system context*.....10
  - E. *The governance context* ..... 11
  
- III. RESTRUCTURING EDUCATION SYSTEMS FOR INCLUSION .. 13
  - Lesson #1: Ensure the whole education workforce is equipped to support diverse learners* ..... 13
  - Lesson #2: Addressing students’ diverse educational, health, and socioemotional needs across the education trajectory* ..... 17
  - Lesson #3: Consider the broader role of schools as integration actors*..... 23
  - Lesson #4: Governance and crisis management*..... 27
  - Lesson #5: Adapting content and pedagogy to 21st century needs* ..... 30
  
- IV. CONCLUSIONS: MAINSTREAMING 2.0?..... 34
  
- WORKS CITED ..... 35
  
- ABOUT THE AUTHORS ..... 41

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children who are either migrants themselves or have immigrant parents face a number of barriers in European education systems. These can include a lack of proficiency in the language of mainstream instruction, limited or interrupted prior formal education, or patchy institutional knowledge among migrant-background students and parents about how schools and systems work in the country. The 2015–16 European migration crisis exacerbated many of these existing challenges, bringing more than 750,000 children who need to be integrated into EU Member State education systems and considerable diversity in the types and intensity of their academic, psychosocial, and other needs.

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*Whole systems of diagnosing and supporting learner needs merit re-evaluation with an eye to making them more individualised, flexible, and responsive to diverse learners and families.*

Although governments in Europe have been at work for decades trying to make their education systems more responsive to the learning strengths and needs of diverse learners, progress towards this goal has been uneven—even before the migration crisis created a further shock to these systems. In many European countries, efforts to serve diverse learners are part of a broader policy shift to ‘mainstream’ immigrant integration. Put simply, such policies aim to ensure that immigrant integration priorities are reflected across all policy areas. But while there has been a proliferation of educational initiatives targeted to migrant-background pupils, few countries have made the structural reforms at system, school, and classroom levels to create the conditions for all children to thrive. Moreover, it has become increasingly clear that managing diversity is about more than just meeting the needs of children with a migrant background, since bright lines between their needs and those of other underserved learners (e.g., those from families with lower incomes, or who belong to ethnic or racial minorities) are rare. Whole systems of diagnosing and supporting learner needs merit re-evaluation with an eye to making them more individualised, flexible, and responsive to diverse learners and families.

Five background factors help explain why this strategic thinking on migrant education has become particularly critical in postcrisis Europe:

- **The demographic driver.** With the first- or second-generation-immigrant share of children under age 15 rising steeply, it is predicted that by the early 2020s, more than one-quarter of the school-aged population in Europe will have a migrant background. This share is also likely to be much higher in some schools and areas. In addition to this growth in numbers, many of the most recent young arrivals—who include significant numbers of unaccompanied children—have experienced trauma and are in need of mental-health services. Meanwhile, increases in the number of newcomers from Muslim-majority countries have raised questions about the appropriate balance between accommodating difference and fostering a sense of common values in public spaces (e.g., schools). In some corners, longstanding debates around this balance have resurfaced or intensified, particularly following episodes of violent extremism.
- **The socioeconomic driver.** Persistent gaps between students with migrant backgrounds and their peers span a number of dimensions, from literacy levels to school dropout rates. Although some countries (such as Germany) have made dramatic progress since the first PISA survey in 2000 highlighted some of these disparities, educational inequalities are still cause for concern, especially when compared to analogous outcome measures in countries with a longer history of receiving and integrating immigrants, such as Canada and the United States. These gaps are also not distributed evenly across schools or between different groups of migrant-background students: students from some national-origin groups have thrived while others have struggled. While both international studies, such as PISA, and educator accounts note these gaps, granular data on how different student characteristics (e.g., gender, socioeconomic status, parental nativity) interact with one another to influence outcomes

are extremely limited. Looking ahead, there is a very real risk that socioeconomic inequalities may widen further if schools do not adequately foster in migrant-background students the skills needed to compete in the 21st-century job market; the rise of the ‘gig economy’ has raised concerns about the precarious nature of some new jobs, while more secure jobs with full benefits are increasingly knowledge and skill intensive, putting them out of reach for some.

- ***The political driver.*** In recent years, many European societies have experienced rising anxiety about immigration, alongside greater political fragmentation. A populist backlash, motivated in part by rapid social change and animosity to immigration, has left political elites on uncertain footing as they try to regain public trust. Meanwhile, the role of religion and culture in community life (and particularly in schools) has been a flashpoint for a number of high-profile and emotion-laden public debates, resulting in some places in bans on certain religious headwear in schools and court cases over whether students can opt out of mixed-gender swimming classes. Amidst this cultural and political fragmentation, many policymakers are looking to schools to take a more active role in integration, adopting new curricula and launching community initiatives that seek to heal social division and cultivate common values.
- ***The structural-inequality driver.*** The disadvantages that newcomers face can be compounded by education systems, which can inadvertently perpetuate inequalities. Schools largely design their offerings around research on what works for ‘traditional’ pupils, who broadly share the same skill levels and needs at the same age. Such systems also assume that parents will be able to carry a large portion of the responsibility for supporting their children’s learning outside of the classroom. Nontraditional learners—and especially those who are simultaneously learning a new language and catching up in subject-matter courses, who have a different legal status, whose families have more limited resources, or who currently reside in temporary housing—can encounter formal and informal barriers to accessing education. For instance, young asylum seekers who are unable to access education until their applications are approved may ‘age out’ of formal schooling by the time they receive approval, leaving them without secondary-school qualifications and the skills to progress to further education, should they wish to.
- ***The governance driver.*** Underpinning each of these challenges are questions about which actors are responsible for shouldering the costs and managing the implementation of reforms. The migration crisis revealed a lack of preparedness in multilevel governance structures to respond to fast-paced population change. This is particularly the case where localities and schools are charged with creating school places for new arrivals midyear without commensurate increases in the funding levels set at a higher level of government. Facing gaps in both infrastructure and workforce capacity, many localities were forced to dip into their own funding pots that might otherwise have financed more strategic investments in innovative education for diverse learners.

Against the backdrop of these broad contributing factors, European education systems are most likely to succeed in fostering the strengths and addressing the needs of diverse learners if changes are rooted in a structural and strategic rethink of the system as a whole. This means supporting educators, school leaders, and support staff as they expand their own repertoire of skills for supporting diverse populations; rigorously auditing and assessing whether education systems are achieving the goal of raising performance and reducing inequalities; and expanding the toolbox available so schools and teachers are able to make full use of the latest innovations.

The main policy lessons to be gleaned from both pedagogical research and recent experiences across EU Member States are as follows:

1. ***Ensure the whole workforce is equipped for diversity.*** There is a wealth of evidence for which classroom practices most effectively support newcomer students, such as integrating academic content with language instruction and tailoring lessons to fit and foster students’ abilities. And while newcomer education in many schools has long been considered the responsibility of designated language teachers, a significant shift is underway as a result of evidence of the benefits of training all teachers

and school staff in methods for supporting linguistically diverse classrooms. Because changes to the initial training teachers receive will take years to reach student populations as the next generation of educators enters the classroom, such reforms should be complemented with in-service training for current teachers. Hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds is another essential way for schools and districts to build cultural and linguistic responsiveness to the communities they serve.

2. ***Address students' diverse needs across the entire education trajectory.*** Although secondary schools are often the focus of initiatives to support children from migrant backgrounds, it is important to consider the full education trajectory. A wealth of evidence has demonstrated the many benefits of early childhood education and care (ECEC) to all children—and to migrant-background students even more than most. Coupled with data suggesting that some gaps between migrant-background students and their peers begin to emerge even before they enter primary school, the provision of high-quality ECEC services to all families should be a no-brainer. Yet many countries are still struggling with how to expand access to diverse and disadvantaged groups. Equally important is ensuring that newcomers who arrive in their mid- to late teenage years are not locked into dead-end pathways and can access 'second chance' systems within adult education.
3. ***Unlock the broader role of schools as integration actors.*** Schools are anything but neutral observers of the process of receiving, settling, and ultimately integrating newcomers in their communities. They can be amplifiers or even drivers of this process. Multigenerational services, parental education, and social events hosted by schools can boost access to much-needed services and nurture social ties between families from different backgrounds. While civic education has seen a revival in recent years as a way to create a sense of common values, it carries risks—not least of which is the danger that such initiatives are seen as stigmatising or patronising to minority students. Education that opens dialogue and encourages all children to develop the skills to live together in diverse societies holds greater promise than a curriculum that aims to inculcate a prescribed set of values (especially if overtly or implicitly targeted at those perceived as different).
4. ***Build governance structures that can withstand crisis.*** Multiple coordination structures on migrant integration have been established across Europe to centralise responses to what is often characterised as a 'wicked' problem (i.e., one that cannot be addressed by one policy portfolio alone). But without real powers, such coordination bodies risk becoming talking shops. To have value, governance structures should work to enable a real-time response to emerging challenges—including building out early warning systems to identify them and establishing processes for plugging gaps in funding or staffing as a result of rapid population change. Strategic thinking and foresight will also be required to prepare systems for the challenges around the corner.
5. ***Design content and pedagogy for 21st century challenges.*** Currently, children from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds are at risk of losing out in a rapidly changing labour market, where automation, the rise of the 'knowledge economy', and less traditional forms of work are reshaping the jobs they will compete for when they leave school. To help these learners weather future challenges, schools must become better at teaching soft skills—from creativity and collaborative problem-solving to entrepreneurship and critical thinking. Technological innovations hold some promise to help teachers create a more personalised learning experience and overcome certain barriers, such as language needs, but access to them is uneven and may exacerbate existing inequalities. Educators will need to be creative both in how they adapt these tools and in how they integrate them with better-established pedagogical principles.

Many of those involved in the design and implementation of education policy have found the language of mainstreaming jargonistic and conceptually unclear. But its guiding principles—being sensitive to integration needs without assuming they flow exclusively from membership of a particular group; considering how such needs arise in the context of different public services; and making structural adaptations—remain sound. Having a migrant background is not the only marker of inequality in European education systems, but it may amplify other well-recognised forms of disadvantage (e.g., a family's socioeconomic status) and interact with

emerging ones (e.g., digital divides, lack of legal status). Education systems must be deeply responsive to the needs of students from these varied groups without pigeonholing them.

As European policymakers consider what it truly means to ‘mainstream’ migrant integration across all public services, the guiding principle is one of continuous learning and skills development. Integration is not an outcome that European societies will one day achieve, but a muscle to be built through ongoing practice. Schools are the pre-eminent partner in such an endeavour, and efforts to assist them as they retrain staff and support students hold an important key to strengthening the diverse European societies of the future.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The unexpected arrival of more than 750,000 children in Europe during the 2015–16 migration crisis<sup>1</sup> wracked education systems, which found themselves ill-equipped to enrol and support large numbers of new students arriving throughout the school year. Many communities unused to large-scale diversity were forced to adapt quickly to the complex needs of children with different linguistic backgrounds and, often, very limited schooling. And even localities and schools accustomed to diversity faced severe capacity challenges, finding it necessary to rapidly expand infrastructure and create school places without associated budget increases.

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*Cracking the immigrant education puzzle is at the heart of Europe’s integration challenge.*

These pressures occurred against the backdrop of persistent challenges European societies are facing in supporting diverse learners. Children with a migrant background<sup>2</sup> in Europe tend to perform lower on international tests, are more likely to leave school before graduating, often encounter considerable difficulties gaining a foothold in labour markets, and are at risk of permanent wage scarring (when early un-/underemployment negatively affects future earnings).<sup>3</sup> This legacy of poor educational outcomes has ripple effects into the next generation and is linked to stagnant social mobility, intergenerational poverty, and social exclusion. Ultimately, these effects can feed into a vicious cycle in which public anxiety about immigration reduces policymakers’ willingness or ability to adopt policies that support immigrants. In other words, cracking the immigrant education puzzle is at the heart of Europe’s integration challenge.

Although this challenge is not new, it has taken on greater urgency in recent years. Improving education for migrant-background children has long been a priority in many European countries (and at the EU level). But while policymakers at all levels have signed up at least on paper to the principle of ‘mainstreaming’ migrant integration—the idea that all public services should be evaluated and adjusted to ensure they are fit to serve diverse populations—implementation of this approach remains a work in progress. Few countries have made the structural reforms necessary at district, school, and classroom levels to ensure that all learners have a chance to thrive. Meanwhile, the scope and purpose of mainstreaming policies are ever expanding. Policymakers and educators alike have come to recognise that managing diversity is about more than meeting the needs of migrant-background children. Because bright lines between their needs and those of other underserved student populations are rare, systems designed to diagnose and support such learners must be both individualised and flexible.

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1 Eurostat, ‘Asylum and First Time Asylum Applicants by Citizenship, Age and Sex. Annual Aggregated Data (Rounded) [migr\_asyappctza]’, updated 26 April 2017, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/migr\\_asyappctza](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/migr_asyappctza).

2 This report uses the term ‘children with a migrant background’ to mean children who arrive as immigrants or who have at least one immigrant parent.

3 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and European Union, *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: Settling In* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264234024-en>.

This report explores progress towards the long-term goal of ensuring that European education systems are attuned to diversity. It examines whether they are able to meet the twin challenges of responding to the 2015–16 crisis and of adapting to future changes—whether social, demographic, cultural, or economic. Its starting point is that adapting the full spectrum of preschool to tertiary education systems to diversity must be part of a broader, societal project that both re-evaluates existing processes and systems, and reshapes the role of educational institutions as integration actors. As such, the report is more than a collection of good practices; it explores the deeper lessons borne out by evidence from more than a decade of experimentation in the field of immigrant education as well as emerging trends from adjacent policy fields. It begins by taking stock of the state of European educational systems, pinpointing challenges that have emerged following the migration crisis. With these in mind, it then synthesises the main policy lessons for integration and education policymakers seeking to support diverse learners. It concludes by revisiting the concept of mainstreaming and evaluating whether it is a useful framing device as European societies work to progress in this area.

## II. NEW TWISTS ON OLD CHALLENGES

The 2015–16 refugee and migrant crisis placed additional strain on education systems already struggling to cope with diversity by increasing the volume, spectrum, and distribution of educational and other needs among students. To understand these challenges, it is important to consider factors that fall into five broad categories: demographic, socioeconomic, political, systemic, and governance.

### A. *The demographic context*

For many countries, the migration crisis precipitated an intense period of demographic, social, and cultural change. Germany received 800,000 asylum seekers in 2016, and other EU Member States less accustomed to immigration saw significant growth in their migrant populations. For example, the annual number of asylum applications in Finland rose by more than 800 per cent from 2014 to 2015, with 23 per cent coming from minors.<sup>4</sup> Across the European Union, unaccompanied children filed more than 88,000 asylum applications in 2015, accounting for almost one-quarter of the total 368,000 applications lodged by minors that year.<sup>5</sup> And between 2014 and 2016, two-thirds of all first-time asylum applications lodged by minors were made by children under the age of 14.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond these headline figures, Europe is in the midst of a slower yet nonetheless significant demographic change: namely, growth in the number of first- and second-generation migrants, alongside the ageing of the European population overall. In some cases, these trends have raised questions about the long-term sustainability of welfare systems, especially in countries struggling to bridge the gap between foreign- and native-born employment rates.<sup>7</sup>

Amidst this broader change, the main demographic factors influencing European education systems are:

- ***A rising share of students are children with a migrant background.*** Even before the migration crisis, the age group in which the migrant-background share was projected to see the steepest growth was children under the age of 15, among whom almost one-quarter were expected to fit this category by

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat, 'Asylum and First Time Asylum Applicants by Citizenship, Age and Sex'.

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat, 'Almost 90,000 Unaccompanied Minors among Asylum Seekers Registered in the EU in 2015' (press release, Luxembourg, 2 May 2016), <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7244677/3-02052016-AP-EN.pdf/>.

<sup>6</sup> Eurostat, 'Asylum and First Time Asylum Applicants by Citizenship, Age and Sex'.

<sup>7</sup> Grete Brochmann, 'The Survival of the Nordic Welfare Model: The Migration Challenge' in *Nordic Ways*, eds. András Simonyi and Debra Cagan (Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2016).

the early 2020s.<sup>8</sup> The migration trends of the past few years look set to accelerate this shift. Between 2014 and 2016, the number of children under the age of 15 in Europe without citizenship of an EU Member State increased by 8.7 per cent—and this does not account for children born in Europe to immigrant parents who acquired citizenship at birth or for foreign-born children who have naturalised.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, the number of children under the age of 15 with citizenship in the reporting country decreased by 0.3 per cent over the same period. These trends point to the fact that migrant-background learners are no longer a niche population, and that ensuring educators have the tools to meet their needs will only become more important as time goes on.

- ***Uneven distribution of immigrant pupils around Europe.*** While the migrant share of pupils is growing across Europe as a whole, this change has placed greater strain on some regions than others. In Greece, for example, the number of first-time asylum applications filed by children under the age of 14 in 2016 alone was equivalent to roughly 1 per cent of the under-15 population.<sup>10</sup> Beyond asylum seekers, non-EU nationals comprised almost 9 per cent of all children under age 15 in Greece.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, third-country nationals comprised about 5 per cent of children in the under 15 age group in Germany in 2016, and less than 1 per cent in Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.<sup>12</sup> However, the size of immigrant and asylum-seeking populations does not necessarily correlate to the magnitude of difficulties facing the education sector in any given country or locality. Compared to regions with larger and more established immigrant communities, rural areas and countries with smaller and more recent immigrant populations (e.g., those in Central and Eastern Europe) may struggle to cope with new arrivals even when they are relatively few in number.
- ***Diversification of academic and nonacademic needs.*** The ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of students in European schools is increasing, and so too is the range of student needs. While some newcomers have had uninterrupted schooling, others have spent extended periods out of school and may have limited literacy even in their native tongue. The heterogeneity of immigrant and refugee populations extends to their socioeconomic backgrounds, time spent in transit, current legal status, and exposure to traumatic events. Children escaping war and victims of trafficking often have greater psychological needs than other newcomers and, frequently, than school counsellors and psychologists are accustomed to treating, particularly when the use of a translator is necessary.<sup>13</sup>
- ***Increased numbers of unaccompanied minors.*** The number of children to arrive in Europe without a parent or guardian has increased steadily since 2010. Such children filed 24,000 asylum applications

8 There are four models in this projection, which considers both EU citizens from another Member State and third-country nationals to be foreign born. Model 1 treats third-generation migrants as native born; model 2 treats all descents of foreign-born mothers as being of migrant background; model 3 includes different fertility assumptions for native- and foreign-born groups; and model 4 adjusts population calculations based on estimates of the irregular population. Each of these models is now likely to be out of date given the shifting migration trends of recent years, as they are based on migration projections from 2008. See Giampaolo Lanzieri, 'Fewer, Older and Multicultural? Projections of the EU Populations by Foreign/National Background' (Eurostat working paper, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2011), <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3888793/5850217/KS-RA-11-019-EN.PDF>.

9 During the same time, the number of citizens under the age of 15 decreased by almost 250,000 children. See Eurostat, 'Population on 1 January by Age Group, Sex and Citizenship [migr\_pop1ctz]', updated 26 May 2017, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/migr\\_pop1ctz](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/migr_pop1ctz).

10 Precisely, 14,735 applications filed by children under age 14, compared to 1,556,763 children under age 15 in the country. See Eurostat, 'Asylum and First Time Asylum Applicants by Citizenship, Age and Sex'; Eurostat, 'Population on 1 January'.

11 In 2016, there were 136,689 third-country nationals under the age of 15 in Greece compared to 1,556,763 children in total of the same age. See Eurostat, 'Population on 1 January'.

12 Ibid.

13 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 'Building the Workforce to Educate English Learners' in *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2017), [www.nap.edu/read/24677/chapter/14](http://www.nap.edu/read/24677/chapter/14).

in 2014,<sup>14</sup> and almost 90,000 applications in 2015.<sup>15</sup> Unaccompanied minors raise particular protection challenges, such as the need for specialised housing and reception centres, and individualised social and psychological support. For educators, integrating such students into the classroom often entails taking a holistic approach that stretches beyond meeting their educational needs. Moreover, the special situation of unaccompanied children (which can include a protracted housing placement process and lengthy age assessment) can delay access to education and result in missed chances to participate in normal schooling.

- ***A growing share of pupils who are Muslim.*** Precrisis predictions had already indicated significant growth in Europe’s Muslim population, from 43 million in 2010 to a projected 71 million in 2050.<sup>16</sup> The 2015–16 crisis, during which many arrivals came from Muslim-majority countries, introduced or intensified pressure on education policymakers to make often difficult decisions about how to accommodate religious practices, such as religious dress and dietary requirements, in schools. The large share of Muslims among newcomer students, and especially teenage boys, also raised concerns about their susceptibility to social exclusion and radicalisation.

While the diversification of student needs is often discussed in conjunction with immigration, such needs cannot be straightforwardly attributed to particular groups. Some children and youth who have grown up in a European country may share needs with newcomers, while other newcomers may face more limited challenges than some native-born groups. The recent cohort of child arrivals also raises the profile of certain pressing questions, including about how to fill gaps in formal education and at the same time help students without host-country language and literacy skills acquire them. Such challenges are especially pronounced among youth who arrive during secondary school and must race to catch up with their peers in the limited time before they must leave school. Moreover, the extreme vulnerability of some newcomers highlights the need to think about education in holistic terms—not just about educational access and outcomes, but overall student health and socioemotional wellbeing.

## ***B. The socioeconomic context***

Persistent gaps in educational attainment and labour-market outcomes between migrant-background individuals and their peers have long troubled European policymakers (see Box 1). However, the differences between and within these groups vary widely and are not universal. In the United Kingdom and Ireland, for instance, first-generation immigrants do not have higher drop-out rates than native-born students.<sup>17</sup> And in the United States, some evidence points to a so-called immigrant paradox, in which the children of immigrants tend to have better academic outcomes than would be expected of students with their socioeconomic status.<sup>18</sup>

14 European Migration Network, *Synthesis Report for the EMN Focussed Study 2014: Policies, Practices and Data on Unaccompanied Minors in the EU Member States and Norway* (Brussels: European Commission, 2015), [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/emn\\_study\\_2014\\_uams\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/emn_study_2014_uams_0.pdf).

15 Eurostat, 'Asylum and First Time Asylum Applicants'.

16 Higher birth rates among Muslims in Europe (2.5 for Muslims compared to 1.6 for Europeans as a whole) account for most of this increase, according to calculations by the Pew Research Center. These figures may underestimate the actual increase as they were based on historical migration patterns and do not account for the unprecedented level of arrivals during the 2015–16 European refugee and migration crisis. See Pew Research Center, 'The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050', updated 2 April 2015, [www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/europe/](http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/europe/).

17 European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), *Education and Training Monitor 2016* (Brussels: European Commission, 2016), [http://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2016\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2016_en.pdf).

18 Whether such a trend exists is the matter of some contention. For an overview, see Cynthia Feliciano and Yader R. Lanuza, 'An Immigrant Paradox? Contextual Attainment and Intergenerational Educational Mobility', *American Sociological Review* 82, no. 1 (2017): 211–41.

## Box 1. Gaps between pupils with a migrant background and their peers

Among the differences in outcomes observed between migrant-background students and other pupils, the following are some of the most pronounced and of the most concern:

- **Gaps in literacy levels.** When the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) collected the first Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) surveys in 2000, many countries were shocked to see how their students compared both internationally and domestically. The test scores revealed significant inequalities in the educational performance of students with and without a migrant background. Twelve years after the first PISA survey, an average of 30 per cent of foreign-born pupils across the European Union still lacked basic reading skills at age 15, compared to 14 per cent of native-born pupils with mixed or native-born parents.
- **Lower school performance.** Importantly, gaps in mastery of grade-level content are not limited to first-generation immigrant students. In contrast to the rest of the OECD, where most second-generation students reach parity with their peers, native-born pupils with immigrant parents in the European Union score below children with two native-born parents, though in some countries this difference is largely accounted for by lower socioeconomic status.
- **Higher drop-out rates.** Migrant-background children are more likely to drop out before graduating in all EU countries except Ireland and the United Kingdom. Early school leaving can have dramatic and lasting effects on opportunities beyond school, such as higher education and employability.
- **Widening inequalities outside the classroom.** The 2008 economic crisis made finding employment a challenge for young people across Europe. Uneven economic recovery between and within countries has deepened socioeconomic inequalities: the number of young people neither enrolled in education nor employed was higher in 2015 than 2007, but both the number and rate of increase was nearly twice as high for youth born outside the European Union than for EU nationals. Similarly, the number of young people ages 15 to 29 at risk of poverty or social exclusion increased after the recession, and the gap between non-EU nationals and their EU peers widened from 14.2 per cent in 2007 to 22.3 per cent in 2015.

*Note:* PISA tests are administered every three years and measure the performance of between 4,500 and 10,000 15-year-old students in reading, maths, and science, while also collecting information on students' family backgrounds and the characteristics of their schools.

*Sources:* OECD and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, *Literary Skills for the World of Tomorrow: Further Results from PISA 2000, Executive Summary* (Paris: OECD Publishing and UNESCO, 2003), [www.oecd.org/edu/school/2960581.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/2960581.pdf); European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), *Education and Training Monitor 2016* (Brussels: European Commission, 2016), [http://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2016\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2016_en.pdf); Eurostat, 'Young People Neither in Employment nor in Education and Training by Sex, Age and Country of Birth (NEET Rates) [edat\_ifse\_28]', updated 1 September 2017, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/edat\\_ifse\\_28](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/edat_ifse_28); Eurostat, 'People at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion by Broad Group of Country of Birth (Population Aged 18 and Over) [ilc\_peps06]', updated 10 August 2017, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/ilc\\_peps06](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/ilc_peps06).

Looking ahead, some of these gaps are at risk of widening further. Much has been made of the potential risk of job loss due to automation. Whether or not these predictions are borne out, the labour market is likely to see huge changes by the time the children entering school today finish secondary school.<sup>19</sup> While new jobs are also likely to be created, many economists predict it will become harder to sustain today's employment levels and that structural unemployment (resulting from a mismatch between the jobs on offer and the skills workers possess) will rise. Second, the jobs available are likely to be more and more skill intensive and to prioritise soft skills (e.g., critical thinking, communication, and creativity) that are culturally specific and may be difficult for workers who have grown up elsewhere to acquire.<sup>20</sup> Finally, jobs at all skill levels are likely to become more fragmented and unshackled from a linear career path. The rise of 'gig economy' jobs that are ultra-flexible (but often short term and unreliable) means that young people will have to navigate an increasingly dynamic and unpredictable labour market. The new face of the digital divide is likely to be based less on access to technology (particularly as smartphone use becomes ubiquitous) and more on proficiency in problem-solving in a technology-rich environment.<sup>21</sup>

### C. *The political context*

Many countries have experienced rising public anxiety about immigration in recent years, alongside greater political fragmentation. A populist backlash often characterised by the rejection of certain liberal democratic values that have formed the cornerstone of national values in Europe (e.g., pluralism and tolerance) has left political elites on uncertain footing as they try to regain public trust.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, the large-scale arrival of migrants and refugees has refocused attention on the rights and obligations of visibly and religiously different newcomers—and especially Muslims, given the main sending countries of new arrivals. Real or perceived social change in the wake of heightened immigration has in some cases exacerbated existing tensions over the role of religion and culture in community life. A number of countries have seen clashes over Muslim women wearing 'burqinis', new bans on religious headwear in public spaces, and court cases concerning the accommodation and/or toleration of religious practices in schools (e.g., the availability of halal food in cafeterias or the ability of parents to exempt their daughters from mixed-gender swimming lessons).<sup>23</sup>

While responding to such debates is not traditionally thought of as an educational issue, schools have come under greater scrutiny for how they shape future citizens—and how they might prevent such polarisation from

19 According to a 2013 estimate, almost half of jobs may be computerised or automated in the next decade or two as sophisticated algorithms learn to replace tasks following well defined procedures, especially in transport, logistics, services and sales, and office and administrative support. See Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, 'The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation?' (working paper, Oxford Martin School, Oxford University, 17 September 2013), [www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The\\_Future\\_of\\_Employment.pdf](http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The_Future_of_Employment.pdf).

20 An increasing share of jobs is also likely to require a high level of digital proficiency. As of 2017, 90 per cent of jobs were estimated to require some digital skills, and the pace of technological change is likely to continue to have a profound effect on European economies and societies. See European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions: School Development and Excellent Teaching for a Great Start in Life' (COM [2017] 248 final, 30 May 2017), [https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/school-com-2017-248\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/school-com-2017-248_en.pdf).

21 For an analysis of how changing labour-market trends may interact with integration challenges under different scenarios, see Meghan Benton and Liam Patuzzi, 'How Will the Changing Labour Market Affect Social and Economic Integration?' (paper produced for an Integration Futures Working Group meeting on the Economic and Social Integration in a Changing World of Work, Migration Policy Institute Europe, Barcelona, 18 September 2017).

22 Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan and Meghan Benton, *In Search of Common Values amid Large-Scale Immigrant Integration Pressures* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2017), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/search-common-values-amid-large-scale-immigrant-integration-pressures](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/search-common-values-amid-large-scale-immigrant-integration-pressures).

23 Ibid.

widening further. Many European policymakers are looking to schools to take a more active role in healing social division and cultivating a sense of common values. Meanwhile, questions have also been raised about how schools can maintain a welcoming environment amidst a political climate that may make immigrant children feel unwelcome.<sup>24</sup>

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#### *D. The system context*

School systems in Europe are largely designed around research into what works for ‘traditional’ pupils, who have broadly comparable skill levels and needs and the same age, and parents carry much of the responsibility for selecting the best schools for their children. For migrant-background children, especially those with temporary or no legal status, education systems may interact with immigration or asylum processes to widen or entrench inequalities. Newcomer students may also face more subtle barriers if, for instance, service providers and educators expect all parents to have a certain degree of institutional knowledge about educational choices and pathways. Some systems also put a lot of responsibility on parents to support and supplement their child’s education.

- ***Barriers associated with residence and legal status.*** In some education systems, requirements that prospective students furnish certain documentation (e.g., proof of status or residence) can effectively exclude children without legal status from schooling entirely.<sup>25</sup> In other cases, a narrow focus on improving immigrant education may be of limited benefit if it does not address structural problems, such as the fact that large numbers of young asylum seekers arrive in their late teens and may ‘age out’ of the school system before they are in stable accommodation and thus qualify to enrol; at the same time, they may be unable to access adult education until they have recognised refugee status.<sup>26</sup> Some parents of young children may also find it difficult to access and enrol their child in early childhood

24 For example, according to the results of the 2012 OECD PISA survey, first-generation immigrant students in the United Kingdom have a stronger sense of belonging to their schools than nonimmigrant and second-generation immigrant students. By comparison, in Denmark, France, and Ireland second-generation immigrant students have a weaker sense of belonging than their peers, while in Italy, Spain, and Sweden second-generation immigrant students feel a similar level of belonging to nonimmigrant students and a higher level than first-generation immigrant students. Although students do not need to feel a strong sense of belonging to perform well and achieve socioeconomic success, it may help in some instances or evolve naturally as a result of academic success. When seeking to meet sociocultural objectives of social cohesion, school systems should carefully consider whether certain initiatives or expectations may be experienced as alienating by children with migrant backgrounds. See OECD, *PISA 2012 Results: Ready to Learn: Students’ Engagement, Drive, and Self-Beliefs (Volume III)* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2013), [www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/PISA-2012-results-volume-III.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/PISA-2012-results-volume-III.pdf).

25 John Bennett, *Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) for Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds: Findings from a European Literature Review and Two Case Studies* (Brussels: European Commission, DG EAC, 2012), <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/early-childhood-education-and-care-eccec-in-promoting-educational-attainment-including-social-development-of-children-from-disadvantaged-backgrounds-pbNC0213138/>.

26 For instance, in Gothenburg and Stockholm, education is available to all children and youth of compulsory school age, but not to all adults, meaning that some young people may age out of compulsory education but be unable to access the adult education needed to complete a degree programme. In some cases, civil-society actors have taken up the mantle of providing these young adults with formal education or vocational training. In others, governments has stepped in with remedial measures, as in Austria where colleges are being established for refugees between ages 15 and 21 to provide instruction in language, maths, and basic ICT skills. See Eurocities, *Cities’ Actions for the Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers* (Brussels: Eurocities, 2017), [http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Education%20report\\_Final%20Version.pdf](http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Education%20report_Final%20Version.pdf).

education and care (ECEC), depending on the age at which children ‘age in’ to compulsory schooling in a given country.<sup>27</sup>

- **Barriers associated with school choice.** Parents unfamiliar with national school systems or of lower socioeconomic backgrounds can find themselves at a disadvantage when it comes to making well-informed decisions about the educational path of their children. For example, where there is more school choice, well-educated parents may be more adept at securing enrolment for their children in the best-performing schools. In the Netherlands, some school districts have implemented fixed registration days or lottery-based registration procedures to minimise these inequalities and decrease segregation within the school system.<sup>28</sup> Without such equity-focused policies, better-informed parents may be able to swiftly enrol their children in the best schools, leaving few places for latecomers or children whose parents are less knowledgeable about the school system.
- **Barriers associated with parental responsibility.** Although full-day schools are growing in popularity and availability, where they are not offered, half-day schools carry an expectation that someone will be available to supervise and support children outside of school hours. Immigrant parents, and especially those with irregular working hours, lower wages, and more limited education, can find it difficult to meet this need. Preschool schedules may be out of sync with their working hours; they may be unaware of the availability and/or benefits of ECEC, particularly if such services are less common in their country of origin or information is unavailable in their mother tongue; or they may find the cost of transportation and other related expenses prohibitive.<sup>29</sup> Without compulsory preschool education, parents may instead choose whatever form of care is most familiar, convenient, and affordable to them, despite evidence that migrant-background children stand to benefit disproportionately from enrolment in high-quality ECEC programmes.<sup>30</sup>

The geographical distribution, limited resources, and complex legal statuses of many recent newcomers can therefore entrench inequalities in ways that may not be immediately visible. At the very least, the interdependence of these factors points to the need for greater coordination between educational institutions and other actors responsible for the design of immigration, asylum, and reception systems.

## E. The governance context

Addressing these interrelated and complex challenges requires a wholesale rethink of education systems, yet it also demands a strengthening of relationships with actors outside the education field and at different levels of government. The migration crisis revealed a lack of preparedness in governance structures to respond to fast-paced population changes—both the need for rapid expansion and for contraction later down the line as the effects of crisis abate. Adapting to these changes was especially challenging in rural areas that had limited experience with migrant communities, often because they had less flexibility to invest in specialised services.

Major governance challenges fall into three areas:

- **Complexity.** Governance of the education system (e.g., preschool, primary, lower secondary, secondary, and tertiary) is often split between a diverse constellation of actors, making it difficult to scale up

27 Ivana Katsarova, ‘Integration of Migrants: The Education Dimension’ (briefing paper, European Parliamentary Research Service, Brussels, June 2016), [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/583847/EPRS\\_BRI\(2016\)583847\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/583847/EPRS_BRI(2016)583847_EN.pdf).

28 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Together in the EU: Promoting the Participation of Migrants and Their Descendants* (Vienna: FRA, 2017), <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/migrant-participation>.

29 European Commission, DG EAC, *Education and Training Monitor 2016*.

30 Children with a migrant background are 21 per cent less likely than their peers to attend a preschool, despite of robust evidence that attendance can have a disproportionately positive and lasting effect on their future educational attainment. See Katsarova, ‘Integration of Migrants: The Education Dimension’.

good practices, harmonise requirements and data collection, and implement comprehensive reforms. One of the key challenges that education governance systems must address is how to build the financial, infrastructural, and human-resource capacity to withstand shocks, as experienced during the migration crisis.

- **Funding.** Budget-allocation processes and timelines can affect the ability of schools and school boards to finance programmes that benefit pupils with migrant backgrounds, such as dual-language instruction and initiatives to increase parents' host-country language proficiency and participation in the education of their children.<sup>31</sup> In the European Union, public spending on education began to grow in 2014 after three consecutive years of contraction.<sup>32</sup> About two-thirds of Member States recorded a rise, in some cases larger than 5 per cent. Almost three-quarters of school systems in the bloc provide additional resources from national and regional authorities to schools with a large number of disadvantaged students (including those with a migrant background or with lower socioeconomic status).<sup>33</sup> But this long-term, incremental growth was not accompanied by increased flexibility that would have improved response to migration flows: it did not prepare education systems for unprecedented levels of young arrivals, and schools were forced to create places for newcomers throughout the academic year without commensurate increases in funding.

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*Recruiting and training teachers through the traditional channels can also take many years and is something many countries are already struggling to do.*

- **Infrastructure and workforce capacity pressures.** The task of predicting the capacity needs for upcoming school years is always a challenge, whether deciding the number of teachers needed per school or the resources to allocate to a wide range of programmes. The migration crisis highlighted anew, and with fresh urgency, the need for governance systems that can facilitate adaptation to change in the form of infrastructure and human-capacity building. Placing newcomer children into classes with appropriate resources requires communication between school boards. For example, the Swedish city of Gothenburg was forced to place students in other municipal areas in order to find enough places for all newcomers.<sup>34</sup> Apart from the coordination challenges associated with allocating students to schools with sufficient places, localities also face infrastructural challenges where there is a need to create additional classroom space—prefabricated classrooms were used by some schools in Stockholm that had reached capacity in their brick-and-mortar buildings<sup>35</sup>—and to expand schools' human resources to fill those classrooms with qualified teachers and support staff. Building new schools and classrooms is time and resource intensive, and can lead to waste if new arrivals only stay for a short while and/or if the student population declines in future school years. Recruiting and training teachers through the traditional channels can also take many years and is something many countries are already struggling to do. Walking the line between quickly scaling up in response to change and avoiding future waste is thus a key challenge for many education systems.

Altogether, these challenges point to the need for education systems able to diagnose and address individual needs, but that undertake change efforts in a structural and strategic way with a keen eye to strengthening the system as a whole.

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31 Eurocities, *Cities' Actions for the Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*.

32 European Commission, DG EAC, *Education and Training Monitor 2016*.

33 Ibid.

34 Eurocities, *Cities' Actions for the Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*.

35 Ibid.

### III. RESTRUCTURING EDUCATION SYSTEMS FOR INCLUSION

In responding to the range of challenges already present and amplified by the 2015–16 migration crisis, policymakers and school administrators need not start from scratch. There is a well-developed body of good practice when it comes to improving the educational outcomes of migrant-background students. The literature points to five key lessons of which policymakers across all portfolios should be aware: a need for workforce training to broaden the share of educators equipped to support diverse classrooms; the importance of attending to a broad range of student needs in preschool all the way through secondary school; the promising role schools can play as integration actors; the importance of ‘crisis-proofing’ governance structures; and the value of forward-looking content and pedagogical methods that can prepare learners to meet future challenges.

#### *Lesson #1: Ensure the whole education workforce is equipped to support diverse learners*

Amid current and rising levels of student diversity, *all* teachers and school staff should be equipped to support diverse learners. This marks a shift from the previous *modus operandi*, which saw efforts to adapt to changes in the student population focus on small-scale initiatives in schools or districts with a high concentration of migrant-background learners. Often, the responsibility of meeting individual students’ needs is similarly concentrated with designated language teachers. Although systemic change can’t happen overnight—it will take a generation to train an entire workforce from scratch—governments are exploring a range of interim steps.

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*Often, the responsibility of meeting individual students’ needs is similarly concentrated with designated language teachers.*

Where a wider segment of a schools’ staff is able to support linguistically diverse classrooms, the benefits can be considerable. Instead of drawing a clear line between language learners and their peers, as is done when newcomers are taught in separate, language-focused classes until they reach a certain level of proficiency, dynamic teaching models can support a spectrum of abilities (see Box 2). Such methods can help newcomers catch up or stay at pace with grade-level subject matter, avoiding delays often inherent to language-first models. For instance, one promising model trains teachers in methods that can make academic content more accessible to students with different levels of language proficiency (from visual aids and games to varying their rate of speech).<sup>36</sup>

36 The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model is used by many school districts in the United States. It aims to enable English Learner (EL) students to access grade-level academic content even before they have achieved full English proficiency, either in newcomer-only or mixed classes. Teachers are encouraged to develop strategies that make content more accessible, such as using visual aids and an appropriate rate of speech. See Margie McHugh and Julie Sugarman, *Transatlantic Symposium Report: Improving Instruction for Immigrant and Refugee Students in Secondary Schools* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2015), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/transatlantic-symposium-report-improving-instruction-immigrant-and-refugee-students](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/transatlantic-symposium-report-improving-instruction-immigrant-and-refugee-students); Center for Applied Linguistics, ‘Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol’, accessed 13 December 2017, [www.cal.org/siop/](http://www.cal.org/siop/).

## Box 2. Supporting mixed-ability classrooms in the Internationals Network for Public Schools

Within the 27 schools and academies that make up the U.S.-based Internationals Network for Public Schools, students come from 119 countries and speak more than 90 languages. All have been in the country for four years or fewer and have limited English proficiency at the time of their admission. Unlike other programmes for newly arrived students—which often place them in orientation classes until they reach a certain level of language proficiency, after which they graduate to mainstream classes—Internationals schools treat every class as a language class, and children can stay in the schools for the duration of their secondary school career. Schools within the network have heterogeneous classrooms comprised of students with a range of native languages, levels of English proficiency, academic backgrounds, ages, and grade levels (in grades 9 and 10).

The network's educational model emphasises collaboration and experimental learning, and teachers are trained on how to integrate language and content instruction with the aim of helping students demonstrate age-appropriate subject-matter knowledge in English. They are also trained to recognise socioemotional needs among their students, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Compared to English Learners in New York City public schools, more Internationals students were able to graduate within four years as of 2016.

Sources: Margie McHugh and Julie Sugarman, *Transatlantic Symposium Report: Improving Instruction for Immigrant and Refugee Students in Secondary Schools* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2015), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/transatlantic-symposium-report-improving-instruction-immigrant-and-refugee-students](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/transatlantic-symposium-report-improving-instruction-immigrant-and-refugee-students); Internationals Network for Public Schools, 'Student Results', accessed 13 June 2017, <http://internationalsnps.org/results/student-results/>.

To foster both development of new methods among existing teachers and to bring about more systemic change, European governments have taken a number of different approaches:

- **Reforming initial teacher training.** While there are numerous examples of efforts to build intercultural awareness among teachers, some of these initiatives have been overly narrow, focusing on diversity awareness instead of on practical tools all teachers can use to handle the pedagogical challenges of linguistically diverse classrooms. One of the more successful examples is in Germany, where the Mercator Institute for Literacy and Language Education has been a driver of research and structural change to how would-be teachers are trained.<sup>37</sup> While it has improved the availability of language and diversity training to those who want it, the process of overhauling teacher training across the country remains a work in progress. For example, only six out of 16 German states require future teachers to complete one or more courses on literacy and language development.<sup>38</sup> Change management in the realm of teacher training also depends on strong partnerships. In Norway, for example, the National Centre for Multiculturalism Education works closely with the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences teacher training college to develop programmes and exchange information on how to support children with migrant backgrounds.<sup>39</sup>

37 Mercator Institut für Sprachförderung und Deutsch als Zweitsprache, 'Who We Are', accessed 12 June 2017, [www.mercator-institut-sprachfoerderung.de/institut/english-information/](http://www.mercator-institut-sprachfoerderung.de/institut/english-information/).

38 The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR), Research Unit, 'Teacher Training in Germany: Preparing Educators for Increasingly Diverse Classrooms' (policy brief, SVR, Berlin, September 2016), [www.svr-migration.de/en/publications/teacher-training-in-germany/](http://www.svr-migration.de/en/publications/teacher-training-in-germany/).

39 Sabine Severiens, *Building Professional Capacity Concerning the Educational Position of Migrant Children Report* (N.p.: Sirius, 2013), [www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/WP2.4-Report-with-recommendations.pdf](http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/WP2.4-Report-with-recommendations.pdf).

- **Increasing and improving in-service training options.** Since it can take a generation to reap the benefits of changes to initial teacher training, options to plug gaps or retrofit the current teacher workforce to meet present needs are vital. In Europe as a whole, only one-third of teachers are under the age of 40, meaning many veteran teachers were trained decades ago and could benefit from in-service training to update their skills to meet new challenges.<sup>40</sup> And while 38 per cent of teachers in Europe in lower secondary education felt a moderate or high level of need for training in teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting, only 13 per cent had professional development activities in this area.<sup>41</sup> The quality of in-service training can, however, be a problem. Current in-service training opportunities on managing diversity in classrooms are sparse and, when found, often follow an ineffective format, such as a one-off session or sporadic short lecture-style seminars.<sup>42</sup> Ensuring that these training activities are regular and compulsory (or tied to incentives, such as promotions, bonuses, and paid study leave) could offer greater promise for ensuring the whole workforce is equipped to support diverse populations.
- **Fostering peer-to-peer learning.** Where formal training is scarce and/or ineffective, peer-to-peer learning can help teachers support one another. Within Europe, Erasmus+ offers teachers the opportunity to visit schools in other Member States, with the potential benefit of allowing them to learn from schools with more experience supporting diverse pupils. For instance, the Berlin municipal department of education had an exchange with the school administration in Vienna for the purpose of sharing innovative teaching and online training methods.<sup>43</sup> It should not be taken for granted, however, that an effective teacher will be a good mentor to other teachers without any guidance on how to do so. There is also a risk that teachers or school administrators may attempt to transplant practices that have succeeded elsewhere to their schools without sufficient regard for factors within the local context that make adjustments necessary. Such peer-to-peer learning should therefore be undertaken thoughtfully and with recognition of the differences between education systems and the communities they serve.
- **Exploring alternative recruitment models.** While many European education systems have taken steps to combat future workforce shortages, efforts to recruit teachers among children of diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly notable as such student populations are often most affected by staffing shortfalls.<sup>44</sup> During the migration crisis, the acute need for teachers led to flexible arrangements—including the use of volunteers and retired teachers—to boost short-term capacity.<sup>45</sup> More broadly, a number of countries offer alternative pathways for accreditation and licensing, such as Teach First models that aim to attract bright college graduates to underserved schools.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Grow Your Own Teacher programmes aim to recruit students, paraprofessionals, parents, and community members to be trained as teachers in order to unlock new capacity within communities.<sup>47</sup> Some studies have found that teachers in these alternative pathways are more likely to stay in their positions for at least five years and can even be more effective at improving students' performance

40 European Commission, the Education, Audiovisual, and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), and Eurydice, *The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions, and Policies* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015), [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic\\_reports/184EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/184EN.pdf).

41 Ibid.

42 SVR, Research Unit, 'Teacher Training in Germany'.

43 Eurocities, *Cities' Actions for the Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*.

44 OECD, *Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students: Policies, Practice and Performance* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2010), [www.oecd.org/edu/school/oecdreviews/migranteducation-closingthegapforimmigrantstudentspoliciespracticeandperformance.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/oecdreviews/migranteducation-closingthegapforimmigrantstudentspoliciespracticeandperformance.htm).

45 Eurocities, *Cities' Actions for the Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*.

46 The Teach First model has a presence in countries around the world, including in Europe, where there are programmes in Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. For more information, see Teach for All, 'Network Partners', accessed 13 December 2017, <https://teachforall.org/network-partners>.

47 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2017), [www.nap.edu/read/24677/chapter/1](http://www.nap.edu/read/24677/chapter/1).

than teachers who completed traditional training.<sup>48</sup> And while such alternative pathways have also sparked concerns that lowering the barriers to entry into the field may dilute the quality of teaching,<sup>49</sup> some evidence suggests that the number of years of classroom experience a teacher has is a stronger predictor of student performance than their formal qualifications.<sup>50</sup>

- ***Hiring teachers and teaching aids with diverse backgrounds.*** Some countries have responded to teacher shortages by offering scholarships that specifically target minority pupils. For example, in Norway, the National Centre for Multiculturalism Education gives teacher-training scholarships to students with a migrant background.<sup>51</sup> Above and beyond filling numerical gaps in teaching capacity, having teachers and teaching assistants that reflect the migrant communities they serve can provide much-needed linguistic and cultural-competency skills and boost student outcomes. Yet it is important that policymakers don't promote the idea that the challenge of teaching in a linguistically diverse classroom can be 'solved' by employing a small number of people with a migrant background, a narrative that risks allowing other teachers to see the issue as someone else's problem. Review of hiring processes should also extend to other aspects of the field; for example, policies that raise the level of education required of teachers (which are often thought to improve quality) can create new barriers to access and reduce diversity within the teaching workforce if achieving the required qualifications is prohibitively costly and time intensive.<sup>52</sup> In addition to offering scholarships, other options for making the teaching profession more accessible and attractive to people with migrant backgrounds is to offer extra pay for additional language skills.

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*It requires a fundamental change in how many teachers think about their role in schools, encouraging them to see themselves as language as well as content teachers*

Bringing an entire workforce up to speed with a new approach to teaching amid diversity so that all students have access to instruction suited to their needs is a massive societal undertaking. It requires a fundamental change in how many teachers think about their role in schools, encouraging them to see themselves as language as well as content teachers and support for language learners as a staff-wide rather than niche activity. Only nine EU Member States currently give teachers allowances on top of their basic salary in exchange for continuing professional development qualifications,<sup>53</sup> making this an underutilised tool that could incentivise established teachers to update their skills for diverse classrooms. Efforts to encourage in-service training should be balanced with those to train and hire new teachers to make the best of both the present and future educational workforce.

School leadership lies at the heart of changing schools' cultures to support diversity, and evidence suggests that the background and training of school leaders set the tone for the entire school.<sup>54</sup> Diversity awareness and

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48 Ibid.

49 Victoria Rietig, *Moving Beyond Crisis: Germany's New Approaches to Integrating Refugees into the Labor Market* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2016), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/moving-beyond-crisis-germany-new-approaches-integrating-refugees-labor-market](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/moving-beyond-crisis-germany-new-approaches-integrating-refugees-labor-market).

50 Jonah E. Rockoff, Brian A. Jacob, Thomas J. Kane, and Douglas O. Staiger, 'Can You Recognize and Effective Teacher When You Recruit One?' (working paper no. 14485, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, November 2008), [www.nber.org/papers/w14485](http://www.nber.org/papers/w14485).

51 Severiens, *Building Professional Capacity Concerning the Educational Position of Migrant Children Report*.

52 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English*.

53 These countries are Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Malta, Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden. See European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice, *Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe, 2015/16* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016), <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8b7fc491-9aea-11e6-868c-01aa75ed71a1>.

54 For example, studies in the United States have found that principals with limited training in bilingual education are more likely to close their schools' bilingual programmes than those with such training. See National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English*.

understanding of how to support students of different backgrounds is thus critical at all levels of staff, from school heads to teachers and support staff. For example, the prevalence of mental-health challenges among recent arrivals in Europe points to the importance of school psychologists who are able to speak with students of diverse backgrounds (or use interpreters to do so).<sup>55</sup> Efforts to improve the responsiveness of the educational workforce to diverse populations must also be evaluated across the field and in ways that go well beyond classroom instruction.

## *Lesson #2: Addressing students' diverse educational, health, and socioemotional needs across the education trajectory*

Although secondary schools attract most of the attention in discussions of how to support children of migrant background, it is important to consider how their needs emerge and can be best met across the full education trajectory. High-quality early childhood education and care can create a solid foundation for future learning, with evidence suggesting that by the time primary school starts gaps have already appeared between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, it is important that children who arrive in their mid- to late teens have access to 'second chance' systems if they are unable to complete mainstream secondary school before aging out of the system. The subsections that follow explore some of the key ways European educational systems are taking steps to span this trajectory.

### 1. Provide early childhood education and care

Enrolment in early childhood education and care (ECEC) has the potential to positively influence the long-term educational outcomes for children with migrant backgrounds. By addressing diverse learning strengths and needs from an early age, ECEC programmes can provide a strong educational foundation. Among the wide-reaching benefits associated with ECEC are higher academic performance, reduced school dropout rates, and higher earnings after entering the workforce.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, when the quality and availability of preschools are high, parents spend less time out of the workforce, which may improve the entire family's socioeconomic position and reduce exposure to poverty and social exclusion.

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*Among the wide-reaching benefits associated with ECEC are higher academic performance, reduced school dropout rates, and higher earnings after entering the workforce.*

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those with a lower socioeconomic status and/or with a migrant background, have been shown to benefit even more than their peers from quality ECEC.<sup>58</sup> Some Member States have been more active than others in seeking to make the most of this critical period in young children's development. Only seven EU Member States guarantee every child's legal right to access ECEC

<sup>55</sup> For example, a study in the United States found that nearly 80 per cent of school psychologist respondents used an interpreter to assess English learners, but that only 52 per cent had received training in how to do so. See *ibid*.

<sup>56</sup> European Commission, DG EAC, *Education and Training Monitor 2016*.

<sup>57</sup> European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice, and Eurostat, *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe, 2014 Edition* (Luxembourg: Office of Publications of the European Union, 2014), [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key\\_data\\_series/166EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/166EN.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> European Commission, DG EAC, *Education and Training Monitor 2016*.

services shortly after their birth.<sup>59</sup> In some of these countries, special attention is paid to linguistic development. Denmark, for example, has a system for diagnosing language needs in children outside day care as young as age 3 or at any time for those who are enrolled. The screening tools can be used to identify the linguistic support needs of any child, but often have the largest impact on children with migrant backgrounds.<sup>60</sup>

But despite strong EU leadership in promoting the importance of ECEC,<sup>61</sup> its provision varies significantly among Member States, with different funding, staff requirements, attendance, provisions for paid parental leave, and entitlements.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, where entitlements exist, they are not always at the level recommended; the greatest developmental gains are associated with more than one year of enrolment in full-day, 11-month-per-year, quality ECEC, yet many Member States guarantee access to a more limited level service.<sup>63</sup> The cost and limited availability of preschools can be a major barrier to enrolment for children with migrant backgrounds, as can their parents' limited access to information about ECEC services and their potential benefits. Moreover, parents with irregular working hours may need to find care arrangements for their children that have flexible hours, something rarely provided in publicly funded ECEC systems.<sup>64</sup> Unemployed parents may be unable to afford the supplementary expenses associated with sending children to preschool, such as transportation fees, clothing, and school supplies.<sup>65</sup>

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*The cost and limited availability of preschools can be a major barrier to enrolment for children with migrant backgrounds.*

Several countries have been trying to improve the take-up of ECEC by migrant families. In 2015, Hungary, for instance, lowered the compulsory schooling age from age 5 to age 3.<sup>66</sup> That same year, Finland introduced a compulsory 'zero year' preparatory class children are to attend the year before they enter primary school.<sup>67</sup> In some Austrian provinces, mothers of kindergarten and compulsory school age children can attend

59 European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice, *Structural Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe – 2016* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016), [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/images/2/26/Early\\_Childhood\\_Education\\_and\\_Care.pdf](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/images/2/26/Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care.pdf).

60 KL, 'Introduktion til sprogvurdering af 3-årige, inden skolestart og i børnehaveklassen', accessed 22 January 2018, [www.kl.dk/Kommunale-opgaver/Born-og-unge/Dagtilbud/Sprogvurdering-af-3-arige-inden-skolestart-og-i-bornehaveklassen/Introduktion-til-Sprogvurderings-af-3-arig/](http://www.kl.dk/Kommunale-opgaver/Born-og-unge/Dagtilbud/Sprogvurdering-af-3-arige-inden-skolestart-og-i-bornehaveklassen/Introduktion-til-Sprogvurderings-af-3-arig/).

61 The 2016 European Semester made specific recommendations to countries on how to further the inclusion in educational systems of disadvantaged groups, many of which entailed increasing participation in early childhood education and care (ECEC). As of 2016, only ten Member States had met the 2002 Barcelona European Council meeting's target of 33 per cent enrolment among children ages 0 to 3, though within those Member States, attendance reached as high as 90 per cent. See European Commission, DG EAC, *Education and Training Monitor, 2016*.

62 In Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain, all children are theoretically enrolled in ECEC from age 4 until they start primary school. In several other countries, such as Austria, Germany, Finland, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden, participation in ECEC has increased significantly since the Barcelona conclusions were made in 2002, though progress has not been universal. See Bennett, *Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) for Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds*; Maki Park and Ankie Vandekerckhove, *Early Childhood Education and Services for All! Policy Recommendations Derived from the Forum* (Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation, 2016), [www.kbs-frb.be/en/Activities/Publications/2016/20161107AD](http://www.kbs-frb.be/en/Activities/Publications/2016/20161107AD).

63 For example, PISA surveys have found that 15-year-old EU students who did not have at least one year of preschool scored on average 35 points lower in maths than their peers who attended a year or more of preschool. See European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice, and Eurostat, *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*. See also Bennett, *Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) for Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds*.

64 Michel Vandenbroeck, Arianna Lazzari, Wim Van Lancker, and Sara Willems, 'Accessibility of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) for Children from Ethnic Minority and Low-Income Families' (paper presented at the Transatlantic Forum on Inclusive Early Years, Ghent, January 2013), [www.researchgate.net/publication/236347188\\_Accessibility\\_of\\_Early\\_Childhood\\_Education\\_and\\_Care\\_ECEC\\_for\\_children\\_from\\_ethnic\\_minority\\_and\\_low-income\\_families](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/236347188_Accessibility_of_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care_ECEC_for_children_from_ethnic_minority_and_low-income_families).

65 Bennett, *Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) for Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds*.

66 European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice, *Structural Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*.

67 Ibid.

German-language classes during the school day, with child care provided for younger siblings to encourage both the mothers' participation and the younger children's enrolment in early education.<sup>68</sup>

Nearly all European countries have systems of evaluation and accreditation for ECEC services.<sup>69</sup> However, these measures typically cover a limited set of criteria, such as the ratio of students to employees, health and safety requirements, and the number of years of professional experience required for ECEC heads. In six Member States, specific training is compulsory for ECEC staff who work with children with additional needs, including in terms of language development.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, further research is needed on what kinds of qualification and training ECEC practitioners should have and what kinds of curriculum best serve young children from a range of backgrounds. In the absence of such guidance, scaling up ECEC may fall short of its massive potential to deliver long-term educational gains to Europe's young learners.

## 2. Offer support and instruction in students' mother tongue

Finding ways to support students in their mother tongue can serve a number of purposes. Enrolment assessments conducted in the language with which children are most familiar can more accurately assess their knowledge, while ongoing support can boost students' self-confidence and help personalise their learning trajectories. There is also evidence that students who lack proficiency in a school's primary language of instruction can learn to speak it more quickly when their mother tongues are used to supplement instruction.<sup>71</sup>

Many of the most common models for mother-tongue instruction fall into two categories:

- **Use of mother-tongue assessment.** Tests of language and literacy in students' first language are used in a range of European school systems to gauge newcomers' prior educational experience and to place them on an appropriate course of study. In Malmö, for example, around 3,000 newly arrived students received study advice in their mother tongue.<sup>72</sup> And Stockholm's START project allows city schools to organise a meeting between city staff and a refugee family, together with an interpreter and mother-tongue teacher, at the point of a child's enrolment.<sup>73</sup> Through the translator, the teacher is able to assess the incoming pupil's literacy in their mother tongue in addition to subject-area knowledge in maths and English. Such assessments are most valuable where schools have the resources and curriculum flexibility to offer students a mix of classes tailored to their needs. For example, a newcomer student may require intensive instruction in the host-country language but have the skills to immediately join a mainstream English or maths class with minimal additional language support.
- **Welcoming classes tailored to individual needs.** Different students will benefit from different lengths of time spent in welcoming classes after arrival, often depending on their prior educational experience and rate of progress. In The Hague, asylum-seeking children who are learning Dutch can stay in a welcoming classes for up to two years, depending on their progress, before entering the mainstream Dutch education system.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, in Oslo, children are placed in different welcoming classes based on their language needs.<sup>75</sup> Such flexibility can help ensure that students receive as much or as little language support as they need while settling into their new education system—though considerable debate persists over whether this initial period of targeted learning is helpful or harmful in the long run (see Box 3).

68 FRA, *Together in the EU*.

69 European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice, and Eurostat, *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*.

70 Ibid.

71 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English*.

72 Eurocities, *Cities' Actions for the Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

### Box 3. The targeted vs. mainstream debate revisited

European countries have taken considerably different approaches to how newcomer and migrant-background students are placed in schools and to the courses of study advocated as in their best interest. In some countries, it is considered unacceptable to have a school exclusively for newly arrived immigrant and refugees or for children with migrant backgrounds, whereas in others the composition of the classroom is less important than the educational achievement of pupils.

For example, when the Swedish city of Malmö created a school for refugees in 2012, it was greeted by mass disapproval and was quickly abandoned. Italy and Denmark have laws limiting the proportion of pupils within any school who are foreign born to avoid ‘ghettoisation’—although, in reality, there are gaps in implementation, and the policy does not address segregation among second- and third-generation migrants. On the other hand, a school exclusively for young adult refugees in Germany has had promising results. SchlaU School in Munich aims to fill the gap in the German asylum system by offering education to refugees over the age of 16. Ninety-six per cent of its students graduate from secondary school within two years—as opposed to the typical nine years—and have better exam grades than the average German pupil. Moreover, those who start vocational training programmes have a much lower dropout rate than their German counterparts. One of its strengths is thought to be its approach to personalised learning, which allows students to proceed at their own pace.

Helping students and their parents make an informed choice between targeted and mainstream instructional settings could help enable students to attend the schools best suited to their needs. School systems that allow this sort of informed choice may also tap into the benefits of both models, and spread the responsibility of integrating newcomer students across a larger set of actors.

Sources: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Together in the EU: Promoting the Participation of Migrants and Their Descendants* (Vienna: FRA, 2017), <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/migrant-participation>; Cities of Migration, ‘Giving Young Refugees a Shot at Success: SchlaU-Schule’, updated 29 September 2015, [http://citiesofmigration.ca/good\\_idea/giving-young-refugees-a-shot-at-success/](http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/giving-young-refugees-a-shot-at-success/); Anja Kittlitz and Christian Stegmüller, ‘Creating Second Chances: What the Example of SchlaU School Teaches Us about Schooling Young Adult Refugees’ (paper prepared for a meeting of the Integration Futures Working Group entitled Future Schools for Future Citizens, Berlin, 19 June 2017).

Yet designing individualised classes and courses of study can be costly and depends on considerable training of mainstream teachers. When students hail from a range of countries, it can also be difficult to accommodate every child’s mother tongue. With little consensus around the best way to integrate migrant students into mainstream classes, EU countries are deeply split with some favouring catch-up classes and intense language training, while others promote linguistically diverse classrooms as part of a commitment to encouraging foreign-language proficiency.<sup>76</sup> But regardless of the model, policymakers may find it helpful to think creatively about how newcomers’ mother tongues can be used to ease their transition into a new education system.

76 For instance, the 2002 conclusions of the Barcelona European Council, which recognised both the linguistic diversity of European societies and the economic advantages of multilingualism, committed Member States to improving students’ foreign-language proficiency by teaching at least two foreign languages from an early age. See European Commission, DG EAC, *Education and Training Monitor 2016*; Barcelona European Council, ‘Presidency Conclusions’ (conclusions document SN 100/1/02 REV 1, 15–16 March 2002), [http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download\\_en/barcelona\\_european\\_council.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download_en/barcelona_european_council.pdf).

### 3. Design flexible learning trajectories

Building flexibility into education systems is crucial if they are to adapt to the learning strengths, experiences, and needs of diverse student populations. This can range from making changes to the timing of the school day or the academic calendar, to ensuring that tracking and streaming policies do not disadvantage migrant-background children, or even more radical changes, such as introducing multi-age classrooms.

- **Creating multi-age classrooms.** While cohort groupings in most school systems are based on age, this works off the assumption that all children will have hit the same educational benchmarks at the same rate; grouping students based on their ability level may thus have a positive impact on learners who have completed prior education in a significantly different system or whose education has been interrupted. This approach has been most systematically evaluated in India, where experiments in grouping children based on learning gaps (instead of expected level) resulted in significant improvements in students' reading and maths scores.<sup>77</sup> More schools in Europe and North America have also begun allowing classrooms to group together children within a 3- to 4-year range of ages, particularly in preschool and early primary school (see Box 4). This practice has been shown to facilitate better peer learning, which is beneficial both for the learner, who has things explained in a way that is more easily grasped, and for the peer, who gains confidence from helping others.

#### Box 4. New Hampshire's No Grades, No Grades programme

Another example of multi-age classrooms comes from the U.S. state of New Hampshire, where seven elementary schools have embarked on a competency-based, multi-age schooling programme called 'no grades, no grades' (NG2). Based on their abilities, children may be with one group of peers for maths and another for English. Teachers provide regular feedback reports to enable children to move to the most appropriate cohort as they progress. So far, the schools have noticed improvements in reading levels and a decrease in referrals to special education. The longer-term effects of this model remain to be seen. However, students may face potential compatibility issues when transferring either into or out of an NG2 school. In order to assess the differences that the NG2 programme is making on students' performance, the schools still use the status quo system of giving marks to assess outcomes and view a complete switch to NG2 as a longer-term endeavour.

Source: Sydney Johnson, 'Goodbye ABCs: How One State is Moving Beyond Grade Levels and Grade Assessments', EdSurge, 16 May 2017, [www.edsurge.com/news/2017-05-16-goodbye-abcs-how-one-state-is-moving-beyond-grade-levels-and-graded-assessments](http://www.edsurge.com/news/2017-05-16-goodbye-abcs-how-one-state-is-moving-beyond-grade-levels-and-graded-assessments).

- **De-tracking and introducing flexibility into pathway systems.** In addition to adaptive ability-based classrooms, students also stand to benefit from other forms of flexibility, including in tracking and the ability to move between streams. Placing student on a fixed educational track is generally thought to negatively affect disadvantaged students.<sup>78</sup> It may have a particularly negative impact on children with migrant backgrounds—especially those who arrive as teenagers and may have no real chance to develop the language proficiency and to catch up on academic content in time to place into a more prestigious track. Where pupils face discrimination, they may also be unable to secure the neces-

<sup>77</sup> Abhijit Banerjee et al., 'Mainstreaming an Effective Intervention: Evidence from Randomized Evaluations of "Teaching at the Right Level" in India' (working paper no. 22746, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, October 2016), [www.nber.org/papers/w22746](http://www.nber.org/papers/w22746).

<sup>78</sup> Education Endowment Foundation. 'Teaching and Learning Toolkit', accessed 1 June 2017, <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit>.

sary teacher recommendations needed for such a placement.<sup>79</sup> Tracking was thought to be one factor behind the poor 2000 PISA scores of migrant children in Germany. Their PISA results in 2012 were a considerable improvement, and the widespread abandonment of the lower-level *Hauptschule* stream into which migrant-background students were often placed was identified as a possible contributing factor.<sup>80</sup> Almost every Member State now has policies to offer alternative educational pathways, making it possible to switch between general and vocational programmes, for example.<sup>81</sup> This ensures that students have multiple opportunities to step onto a path that will lead to their desired qualification.

Eliminating tracking completely could be an equaliser, but it could also lead to a mismatch between needs and abilities in the classroom and stymie students' academic potential in situations where teachers are not adept at managing diversity. Even without scrapping tracking entirely, education systems have a variety of options to make themselves less rigid and more responsive to newcomer needs.

#### 4. Creating second-chance systems for late-arriving teens

Refugees who arrive as teenagers or young adults often fall through the gaps of traditional schooling systems. Those with limited or interrupted prior education are at particular risk as many lack the basic literacy and academic knowledge to complete a course of study before they 'age out' of their entitlement to formal schooling, leaving them without the skills or qualifications to transition into further or higher education. There are even more limited places on offer for young asylum seekers, and these are often oversubscribed or difficult to access from reception centres, which can be in rural areas with limited transport. Some programmes also give preference to asylum seekers from certain countries, further limiting the options available to those from elsewhere and delaying access to education services at a critical time in their lives.

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*Those with limited or interrupted prior education are at particular risk as many lack the basic literacy and academic knowledge to complete a course of study before they 'age out'.*

Nongovernmental organisations have stepped in to plug some of these gaps by offering language and job-specific training to young adult immigrants and refugees. The SchlaU School in Munich is one such model, which offers an interconnected set of initiatives: the school proper, which provides a fast-track to the Certificate of Secondary Education or Certificate of Intermediate Education; the Transition from School to Work programme, which provides educational and social assistance to participants in vocational training; and the

<sup>79</sup> Katsarova, 'Integration of Migrants'.

<sup>80</sup> For example, as of 2000, 30 per cent of students with two German parents were on the academic track, compared to 15 per cent for students with two foreign-born parents. This ratio was inverted for the vocational track, in which 50 per cent of students with two foreign-born parents were enrolled compared to 25 per cent of those with two German parents. By the 2012 PISA survey, and after reforming the vocation-oriented *Hauptschule*, Germany had dramatically increased its mean PISA test scores and risen above the OECD average. See Petra Stanat et al., *PISA 2000 Overview of the Study: Design, Method, and Results* (Berlin: Max Plank Institute for Human Development, 2002), [www.mpib-berlin.mpg.de/Pisa/PISA-2000\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.mpib-berlin.mpg.de/Pisa/PISA-2000_Overview.pdf); OECD, *PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity*.

<sup>81</sup> European Commission, DG EAC, *Education and Training Monitor 2016*.

Workshop for Migration Pedagogy, a teacher-training programme that provides research, learning materials, and training with the aim of incorporating SchlaU principles into mainstream schools.<sup>82</sup>

The SchlaU Model is both personalised and holistic: there are no financial, asylum status, or language requirements, and students are placed into classes based on their abilities and can transition between levels based on performance. Students can thus proceed at their own pace. All receive extensive personal support, including with their asylum applications, and educators and staff seek to address a range of psychological and social issues, such as psychological stress, vulnerability to deportation, and even public animosity to refugees. Results are highly promising, with a 95 per cent completion rate in the last four years.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, the chances of scaling up or replicating such a model are limited by the availability of funding and human resources, and potentially legal restrictions in other countries and localities.

Within the formal education system, several governments are turning to vocational education programmes as a pipeline to employment for teenage migrants. Yet eligibility for these schemes may depend on whether an individual is granted a work permit, which can be an obstacle for asylum seekers. Language proficiency is another major challenge. In Helsinki, a skills centre combines vocational education with employment and language training, primarily for refugees ages 17 and older, as well as for other migrants who have language needs.<sup>84</sup>

Such second-chance schemes that aim to improve young migrants' labour-market integration are laudable. Yet they should not be viewed as a one-size-fits-all fix, foreclosing the possibility that other paths may better suit some newcomers. Employment rates and long-term earnings generally rise with educational attainment; even within tertiary education, employment rates for those with doctoral degrees are higher than for those who complete bachelor's degrees and short professional courses.<sup>85</sup> Initiatives must balance the need to prepare young newcomers for realistic routes to economic independence, without underestimating their potential to complete more academically challenging programmes and obtain more valuable tertiary qualifications.

### *Lesson #3: Consider the broader role of schools as integration actors*

Through an integration lens, the objectives of education policies largely fall into two categories: socioeconomic and sociocultural. These objectives can sometimes complement and sometimes contradict one another. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, conceptions of successful integration were dominated by socioeconomic objectives. Improving education outcomes, such as higher test scores, school completion, and participation in tertiary education were considered the surest strategies towards successful integration, understood to mean successful insertion into the labour market.

The sociocultural side of integration-minded education policies gained momentum in more recent years, sparked by increases in radicalisation and terrorist attacks (often perpetrated by men born and raised in Europe), growing political polarisation, and support for far-right and populist parties. Following the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, EU ministers of education and the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth,

82 SchlaU School first opened its doors to young adult refugees 17 years ago and began by offering a few German classes for unaccompanied minors ages 16 to 17. Today, it has become a complex organisation with 72 employees and more than 250 volunteers that prepares young refugees ages 16 to 21 (and, in exceptional cases, up to 25 years old) to attain German secondary education certificates. See Anja Kittlitz and Christian Stegmüller, 'Creating Second Chances: What the Example of SchlaU School Teaches Us about Schooling Young Adult Refugees' (paper prepared for a meeting of the Integration Futures Working Group entitled Future Schools for Future Citizens, Berlin, 19 June 2017).

83 Ibid.

84 Eurocities, *Cities' Actions for the Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*.

85 European Commission, DG EAC, *Education and Training Monitor 2016*.

and Sport issued a declaration on ‘Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance, and nondiscrimination through education’. This statement reflects a growing trend towards using education as a defence against failures—or perceived failures—of integration. Yet the evidence of what works when it comes to civic education is mixed, and explicitly tying a discussion about values to integration concerns can have unintended consequences.

## 1. Methods for teaching citizenship

In the past 15 to 20 years, many European governments have ‘rediscovered’ civic education in response to a perceived decline in community cohesion. Others have seen greater emphasis on social and emotional learning or character education. More recently, these practices have taken on an explicitly antiradicalisation hue. Following the Paris Declaration, more than half of EU Member States introduced or revamped their policies on fostering social, cultural, and intercultural skills within schools. In some countries, such as France and the United Kingdom, this has included national policies aimed at strengthening critical thinking and media literacy to help young people navigate online propaganda and avoid radicalisation.

Civic education can involve a number of different elements: values (such as equality of opportunity, gender equality, and secularism); virtues (such as tolerance, altruism, and resilience); shared identity (such as history and culture or multicultural pride in diversity); and cognitive aspects (such as knowledge of political and administrative institutions). These four pillars are emphasised to different extents by different countries, and their precise configuration in curricula and programming often depends on the context in which they were introduced.<sup>86</sup>

Divergent approaches to civic education and the particular national context for which it is planned create a number of tradeoffs for policymakers designing curricula. For instance, civic education that focuses on encyclopaedic knowledge of political institutions may do little to encourage student participation and debate. Similarly, the individualistic themes of self-sufficiency and resilience (which are common in civics classes in Denmark and the United Kingdom) can distract from more explicitly moral qualities and how to live together in political communities.<sup>87</sup>

A further challenge is the way in which civic education is introduced. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the Prevent Agenda has long been criticised as imposing conflicting and burdensome duties on teachers. Although civic education was initially introduced in the United Kingdom in response to concerns about dwindling cohesion, it has been more recently framed as part of schools’ duty to ‘build pupils’ resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views’.<sup>88</sup> Some reports have suggested that teachers find it difficult to balance what they see as their pedagogical responsibility to foster open dialogue and their ‘safeguarding’ responsibility to report children at risk of radicalisation.<sup>89</sup> Despite official efforts to word the policy in a way that avoids stigmatising Muslims, research studies have found that the training teachers receive is explicitly aimed at tackling Muslim extremism and that teachers in

86 Per Mouritsen and Astrid Jaeger, *Designing Civic Education for Diverse Societies: Models, Tradeoffs, and Outcomes* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2018), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/designing-civic-education-diverse-societies-models-tradeoffs-and-outcomes](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/designing-civic-education-diverse-societies-models-tradeoffs-and-outcomes).

87 Ibid.

88 Expert Subject Advisory Group for Citizenship, *The Prevent Duty and Teaching Controversial Issues: Creating a Curriculum Response through Citizenship* (London: Association for Citizenship Teaching, 2015), 2, [www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/sites/teachingcitizenship.org.uk/files/downloads/HEADTEACHER%20SUMMARY%20Prevent%20and%20controversial%20issues%20guidance.pdf](http://www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/sites/teachingcitizenship.org.uk/files/downloads/HEADTEACHER%20SUMMARY%20Prevent%20and%20controversial%20issues%20guidance.pdf).

89 UK Department for Education, *The Prevent Duty: Departmental Advice for Schools and Childcare Providers* (London: UK Department for Education, 2015), [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf).

schools with fewer Muslim students receive less training on this initiative.<sup>90</sup> Such elements, even if not part of the official narrative, creates a risk that teachers and students come to see civic and resilience education solely as antiradicalisation programmes, rather than as efforts to encourage youth to develop a sense of shared values and capacity to coexist.<sup>91</sup>

Policymakers seeking to use civic education as a tool to foster community cohesion must therefore attend to the ‘body language’ of the policy, as well as its plain text. Timing is incredibly important. If renewed efforts to build civic capacity directly follow an (Islamic extremist) terrorist attack, it will be even more difficult to ensure that these are seen as serving and involving everyone. Education that opens dialogue and encourages all children to develop the skills to live in diverse societies holds greater promise than a curriculum that doles out a prescribed set of values (especially if overtly or implicitly targeted at those perceived as different).

## 2. Schools as a hub for immigrant communities and parents

Parental engagement in children’s education is thought to be a strong factor able to support their success. While immigrant parents may have different parenting styles and educational preferences, limited engagement as advocates for their children’s education is often the result of cultural, language, and systems-knowledge barriers. Schools can help address these by providing information in translation or through an interpreter, offering language and literacy classes for parents, or offering more informal opportunities for immigrant parents to build networks with each other and with other parents.

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*For parents, these initiatives can provide a place for social interaction and language development, as well as a chance for educators to encourage their participation in their child’s education.*

Schools and communities across Europe have developed a number of such programmes. These include Mama Lernt Deutsch (Mum Learns German) in Vienna; a language café for parents in St. Denis, France; and an annual one-day open house event in France aimed at migrant parents called *Dispositif Ouvrir l’École aux parents pour la réussite des enfants au titre de l’année scolaire 2017* (Opening the School to Parents for Children’s Success for the 2017 School Year).<sup>92</sup> For parents, these initiatives can provide a place for social interaction and language development, as well as a chance for educators to encourage their participation in their child’s education. In an even more built-out scheme, the 132nd Primary School in Athens, Greece developed an action plan through consultation with parents, students, and teachers to address the specific learning needs of its student body, the majority of whom which was migrant-background children. The plan, which included after-hours Greek language classes for parents and mother-tongue instruction for migrant pupils, led to improved student performance and even improvements in school cohesion, as measured by a reduction in racist bullying.<sup>93</sup> However, most programmes are small in scale, and few rival their international counterparts, such as the National Center for Family Literacy in the United States, which has served more than one million families by helping parents and children build skills together. The centre’s specialised curriculum for parents

90 Katy Pal Sian, ‘Spies, Surveillance, and Stakeouts: Monitoring Muslim Moves in British Schools’, *Race, Ethnicity, and Education* 18, no. 2 (2015): 183–201.

91 Ibid.

92 City of Vienna, ‘Basisbildungskurse für Mütter: “Mama lernt Deutsch!”’, accessed 1 June 2017, [www.wien.gv.at/menschen/integration/deutsch-lernen/mama-lernt-deutsch/](http://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/integration/deutsch-lernen/mama-lernt-deutsch/). Author study visit to a school in St. Denis, organised by the UPSTREAM project, 27 March 2015. See also French National Ministry of Education, ‘Dispositif Ouvrir l’École aux parents pour la réussite des enfants au titre de l’année scolaire 2017’, updated 3 April 2017, [www.education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin\\_officiel.html?cid\\_bo=115286](http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=115286).

93 FRA, *Together in the EU*.

with limited English proficiency is an especially promising model, as it helps build parents' language skills while they in turn help their children develop literacy.<sup>94</sup>

Yet while learning the host-country language can be an undeniable asset to parents, educators should be careful to also emphasise the importance of building skills in *any* language. Dual-generation programmes should thus also encourage parents to read and speak to their children in their home language(s), a message not to be overshadowed by a narrow focus on learning German, French, etc. Promising practices therefore combine a focus on adult education with support for child literacy through a variety of avenues.

Multigenerational services such as those provided at one-stop shops where parents can access ECEC programmes, language training, employment support, information about benefits, and health services under one roof are an especially promising model. However, one-stop-shop models can be difficult to fund as they draw funding from different departments and services. And because some parents hold a different legal status to their children, family members may not all qualify for the same services.<sup>95</sup> As one of the few institutions that are broadly trusted and reach communities untouched by other public entities, immigrant parents already turn to schools for help with migration matters, even though they are generally not considered key partners within migration services. Leveraging this unique position, schools can play an important role in integration by connecting parents with other resources and services.

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In addition to parents, other members of migrant communities are also valuable stakeholders when it comes to designing and implementing education and integration policies. Community members can boost limited human resources within schools by volunteering, or they can act as agents of change by raising awareness of previously overlooked challenges. In Italy, collaboration between migrant and youth associations and the Ministry of Integration was formalised through the Italian New Generations National Cooperation (CoNNGI), which facilitates the representation of immigrant youth at the national level.<sup>96</sup> And in Berlin, members of migrant communities were key partners in establishing an independent complaints system to address discrimination in schools.<sup>97</sup> An official study into the depiction of migrants in German educational materials revealed both stereotypical portrayals of non-Germans and divisive 'us versus them' framing—potentially damaging elements the study attributed to a lack of diversity and intercultural competence among content creators (usually teachers without migrant backgrounds) as well as among editors and illustrators.<sup>98</sup> As a result of the evaluation, a dialogue structure was created between publishers and immigrant organisations to offer a remedial forum for outdated or offensive content. The Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research also

94 National Center for Families Learning, 'Home', accessed 1 June 2017, [www.familieslearning.org/](http://www.familieslearning.org/).

95 McHugh and Sugarman, *Transatlantic Symposium Report*.

96 Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, 'Dalla call pubblica "Filo diretto con le seconde generazioni" alla nascita del Coordinamento Nazionale Nuove Generazioni Italiane (CoNNGI)', updated 8 March 2017, [www.lavoro.gov.it/notizie/Pagine/Da-call-pubblica-Filo-diretto-con-seconde-generazioni-a-nascita-Coordinamento-Nazionale-Nuove-Generazioni-Italiane.aspx](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/notizie/Pagine/Da-call-pubblica-Filo-diretto-con-seconde-generazioni-a-nascita-Coordinamento-Nazionale-Nuove-Generazioni-Italiane.aspx).

97 A pilot project that aimed to protect students in Berlin schools against discrimination (Anlaufstelle für Diskriminierungsschutz an Schulen, or ADAS) worked with Inssan, a German network combatting discrimination and Islamophobia, to develop complaint mechanisms. See Lydia Nofal, Andreas Hieronymus, and Aliyeh Yegane, 'Diskriminierungsfreie Schule: Eine bildungspolitische Notwendigkeit' (policy brief, Institut für Migrations- und Rassismuskforschung, Inssan, and LIFE e.V., October 2013), [http://life-online.de/download/publication/2013\\_10\\_beschwerdemanagement\\_policy\\_brief.pdf](http://life-online.de/download/publication/2013_10_beschwerdemanagement_policy_brief.pdf).

98 German Commissioner for Migration, Refugees, and Integration, *Schulbuchstudie: Migration und Integration* (Berlin: German Commissioner for Migration, Refugees, and Integration, 2015), [www.bundesregierung.de/Content/Infomaterial/BPA/IB/Schulbuchstudie\\_Migration\\_und\\_Integration\\_09\\_03\\_2015.html?nn=670290](http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/Infomaterial/BPA/IB/Schulbuchstudie_Migration_und_Integration_09_03_2015.html?nn=670290).

created a multimedia web-based platform to share diverse teaching materials that could fill the representation ‘gaps’ in textbooks.<sup>99</sup> Curricula materials convey to learners a subtle narrative about inclusion and belonging that can be as important as the curriculum itself. Auditing such materials regularly in consultation with migrant organisations and other community stakeholders can ensure schools are sending the right messages.

## *Lesson #4: Governance and crisis management*

In the midst of the migration crisis, school districts struggled to keep up with expanding demand. In many cases, cities and localities had to step in to plug gaps in national and regional budgets, which set funding based on past school-population data that rapidly went out of date as large numbers of newcomers entered the system. Governance structures can exacerbate these challenges. The local level, for example, is often responsible for the construction and maintenance of school building and infrastructure, but budgets are set at a higher level of government; cities and localities can thus come under pressure to expand school capacity but may or may not see a commensurate expansion of their budget that would help them do so.<sup>100</sup> And it isn’t only increased demand that creates capacity challenges. Reduced student numbers can create infrastructure challenges of their own, as when localities have to maintain and pay for infrastructure they no longer need.<sup>101</sup>

Accommodating rapid population fluctuations therefore depends heavily on having up-to-the-minute data and analytical capabilities; systems in place to plug funding gaps; and flexible approaches to infrastructure and training challenges. Inherent to each of these is a need for political will to initiate reform and stronger coordination structures. Many of the mechanisms for ‘crisis-proofing’ education systems also speak to good practice that would improve capacity to serve diverse populations.

### 1. Governance structures

Effectively responding to changing contexts and needs within the education sector relies on the engagement of actors at different levels of government and outside government. Even in the absence of crisis, many European countries have recognised this need for a robust and active network of stakeholders by establishing dynamic governance and coordination structures. In Germany, for example, where education is a state-level competency, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* gathers the 16 state-level ministers to jointly formulate interests and objectives. Within this structure, different committees explore issues such as vocational education and training, cultural affairs, quality assurance, and teacher training, all with the aim of improving coordination between different actors.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, ‘Nuances: Teaching Materials for Classroom Diversity’, accessed 22 September 2017, [www.gei.de/en/departments/textbooks-and-society/nuances-teaching-materials-for-classroom-diversity.html](http://www.gei.de/en/departments/textbooks-and-society/nuances-teaching-materials-for-classroom-diversity.html).

<sup>100</sup> Brian Salant and Meghan Benton, *Strengthening Local Education Systems for Newly Arrived Adults and Children: Empowering Cities through Better Use of EU instruments* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2017), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/strengthening-local-education-systems-newly-arrived-adults-and-children-empowering-cities](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/strengthening-local-education-systems-newly-arrived-adults-and-children-empowering-cities).

<sup>101</sup> This was a problem in Sweden, for instance, where a number of reception centres were built and then no longer needed. See Susan Fratzke, *Weathering Crisis, Forging Ahead: Swedish Asylum and Integration Policy* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2017), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/weathering-crisis-forging-ahead-swedish-asylum-and-integration-policy](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/weathering-crisis-forging-ahead-swedish-asylum-and-integration-policy).

<sup>102</sup> Kultusminister Konferenz, ‘The Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK)’, accessed 22 January 2018, [www.kmk.org/kmk/information-in-english/standing-conference.html](http://www.kmk.org/kmk/information-in-english/standing-conference.html).

Across Europe, responsibility for different levels of education (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and higher education) can also sit with different actors and levels of government. Harmonising the aims and strategies of local, regional, and national ministries to avoid potentially conflicting and counterproductive policies thus becomes even more important. This can entail improving communication between levels of government and with external actors; realising cost-effective economies of scale and avoiding unnecessary duplications (particularly of policies that have proven ineffective); and identifying and plugging gaps to ensure no student falls through the cracks.<sup>103</sup>

Besides coordinating within the education sector, such structures can act as bridges to other policy areas, such as integration, immigration, and health care. A leading example of this can be seen in Portugal, where six government agencies from five ministries (including those responsible for education, social security, health, immigration, and working conditions) have come together to form the National Immigrant Support Centre (CNAI), which offers a range of services to immigrants in a one-stop shops.<sup>104</sup> At the local level, the city of Munich has developed a master plan for integration by involving both municipal actors and others, such as education authorities, employment agencies, apprenticeship organisations, employers, and welfare institutions.<sup>105</sup> This plan coordinates a number of measures, such as additional funding for schools with high proportions of students with migrant backgrounds, ‘demand-oriented budgeting’ based on a social index, and special school and vocational programmes for young refugees.<sup>106</sup>

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In designing effective governance structures, there are several key considerations. These include defining the ultimate goals of the structure, who should participate in it, whether it should be permanent or time-bound, and how to measure its success. All of these factors must be considered with a nod to which actor within the body will take primary responsibility for its coordination, where in the government they are located, and whether they will have the power, political leverage, and access to necessary data to implement or follow up with initiatives.

A comprehensive governance and coordination process takes time to achieve, making it crucial that governments not wait until a crisis arrives to develop one. For example, the negotiation of curriculum reform in Finland (which became effective in 2016) took several years to ensure sufficient consultation and commitment from educators and school administrators.<sup>107</sup> Robust governance and dialogue structures are particularly important within the education sphere, as national education systems can be a source of strong emotional and cultural attachments within the public. When societies are in flux, some may hold fast to the stability and familiarity of the school system, despite its limitations. To manage change amid these emotions, it may be necessary to start with smaller reforms or voluntary test cases to gradually build support for needed structural change and larger-scale innovation.

103 Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Meghan Benton, *Towards a Whole-of-Society Approach to Receiving and Settling Newcomers in Europe* (Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2016), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/towards-whole-society-approach-receiving-and-settling-newcomers-europe](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/towards-whole-society-approach-receiving-and-settling-newcomers-europe).

104 Alto Comissariado para as Migrações, ‘National Immigrant Support Centre (CNAI)’, accessed 22 January 2018, [www.acm.gov.pt/-/cnai-centro-nacional-de-apoio-ao-imigrante](http://www.acm.gov.pt/-/cnai-centro-nacional-de-apoio-ao-imigrante).

105 Mathias Marschall and Helga Summer-Juhnke, ‘Integration of Newcomers, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees in the City of Munich’ (presentation at the International Association of Educating Cities, Lisbon, 11 March 2016), [www.edcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/jaec\\_lisbon\\_2016-03\\_presentation\\_refugees-integration-munich.pdf](http://www.edcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/jaec_lisbon_2016-03_presentation_refugees-integration-munich.pdf).

106 Ibid.

107 Janne Pietarinen, Kirsi Pyhältö, and Tiina Soini, ‘Large-Scale Curriculum Reform in Finland: Exploring the Interrelation between Implementation Strategy, the Function of the Reform, and Curriculum Coherence’, *The Curriculum Journal* 28, no. 1 (2017): 22–40.

## 2. Adapting to crisis

Crisis-proofing education governance structures means ensuring that they can quickly adapt to migration (or other) shocks by using rapid response mechanisms to plug gaps in infrastructure, workforce, or funding without sacrificing high-quality learning for students. To do so, structures should provide both the fora and mechanisms for actors to share timely and accurate data and to work collaboratively to develop flexible solutions.

- **Data.** Responding to crisis more effectively requires better early-warning mechanisms. For education systems, this includes improving communication with migration specialists to understand trends in present and future arrivals (both by numbers and background) as well as improving ways for schools or districts to quickly flag gaps in capacity. Yet data collection and dissemination within Europe is limited, especially at the local level, and the time lag between data collection and publication can frustrate efforts to prepare for population shifts when they are first detected. It can also take several years for the full impact of educational reforms and new initiatives to become clear through evaluation. School systems under immediate pressure must therefore develop reliable short-term indicators to get an early sense of whether a programme is succeeding or failing—and have contingency plans in place should the evidence reveal them to be ineffective or inefficient. One example of a strongly data-driven approach to education in Europe is the London Challenge, which successfully improved the outcomes of pupils in London schools between 2003 and 2011. Although it is difficult to isolate exactly what moved the needle, detailed analysis of school performance, a focus on analysing the key features of underperforming schools, and commitment to breaking down data on pupil and school characteristics to identify trends are thought to be some of the factors responsible for the programme’s success.<sup>108</sup> With diverse populations in many urban areas across Europe, detailed and disaggregated data will be critical to monitor key outcome indicators over time and to identify and remedy inequalities where identified.
- **Funding.** Many countries have long-standing debates about whether (and how) to use supplementary funding to target additional resources to schools affected by high levels of migration or that have a large share of students from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds. France, for example, allocates additional funding based on the socioeconomic disadvantage of neighbourhoods, while Germany has traditionally used the citizenship or family country of origin of a school’s pupils to calculate the additional funding it should receive. The United Kingdom takes a different approach, offering free school meals through the Pupil Premium programme after having abandoned its allocation of funding for children of ethnic minority backgrounds. In addition to variation between funding models, there are also questions about who decides: the United States employs an elaborate system of weighted funding according to a complex formula, while Germany relies heavily on the discretion of local school administrators to distribute funds—a system that may be more in tune with local needs, but that has also led to accusations of a lack of transparency.<sup>109</sup> Because funding is often channelled between levels of government based on population data, out-of-date counts can have a detrimental impact on the ability of local service providers to respond to large-scale arrivals. Furthermore, national governments can be slow to allocate assistance to local and regional governments, when and where it is needed most. During the migration crisis, many local and regional governments struggled to access needed funding. To overcome state budget shortfalls following the migration crisis, the German federal government launched a programme to provide additional resources for local school administrators to hire extra staff.<sup>110</sup> The European Social Fund has also supported subnational governments as they adapt to the crisis. In Vienna, the StartWien-Youth College project is cofinanced by the European Social Fund in conjunction with other regional and national funding.<sup>111</sup>

108 Marc Kidson and Emma Norris, *Implementing the London Challenge* (London: Institute for Government, 2014), [www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Implementing%20the%20London%20Challenge%20-%20final\\_0.pdf](http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Implementing%20the%20London%20Challenge%20-%20final_0.pdf).

109 Julie Sugarman, Simon Morris-Lange, and Margie McHugh, *Improving Education for Migrant-Background Students: A Transatlantic Comparison of School Funding* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2016), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/improving-education-migrant-background-students-transatlantic-comparison-school-funding](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/improving-education-migrant-background-students-transatlantic-comparison-school-funding).

110 Eurocities, *Cities’ Actions for the Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*.

111 Ibid.

- **Flexibility.** Localities dealing with an unexpected influx of newcomers often have to quickly adapt what are usually slow and deliberate resource allocation processes to meet pressing needs. But ramping up investments in infrastructure, workforce training, and services can hold risk. For instance, building a school that may later be underused is a costly investment, and deciding how many additional teachers are needed in a school receiving newcomers throughout a school year can be difficult. Ideally, public services should be able to ‘flex up’ and ‘flex down’ to accommodate fluctuations in population numbers and needs, but this depends on having both a primary and secondary inventory of workers and infrastructure. During the migration crisis, some countries saw innovative efforts to repurpose existing infrastructure for emergency schools or reception centres, while others harnessed the energy of a volunteer workforce to mitigate some of the most critical capacity challenges. In Madrid, a programme called Volunteers for Madrid organises 1,400 people interested in supporting the integration of newcomers into the city’s neighbourhoods.<sup>112</sup> And in Finland, Reading Grandmas and Grandpas spend 30 minutes each day with students who are learning Finnish and need extra help. The Finnish initiative is being expanded to include a model for children with different cultural backgrounds; in the expanded programme, seniors with immigrant backgrounds can read in their mother tongue to children who share it and will receive extra training on teaching vocabulary.<sup>113</sup> In Israel, the Ministry of Education uses an integrated approach that combines Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) with in-person teaching to offer 12 courses to 500 classes.<sup>114</sup> A combination of volunteers and digital resources can help localities accommodate fluctuating enrolment with reduced costs, though this in no way lessens the importance of planning more systematic ways to plug gaps in services.

Governance structures should help policymakers balance the need to react to emerging challenges with long-term strategic thinking. Doing so is essential if schools are to both meet current needs and prepare for the next crisis.

## *Lesson #5: Adapting content and pedagogy to 21st century needs*

Technology, innovation, and globalisation have reshaped labour markets around the globe. The pace and all-encompassing nature of this change has raised concerns that students (the workforce of tomorrow) will not have the skills they need to adapt to and compete in the job market. Yet the future course of technological change and how significant its impact will be are often matters of considerable debate. History has seen a number of notorious predictions of how technology would fundamentally change society (and work in particular) that have not come to pass, such as economist John Maynard Keynes’ prediction that technological advances would lead to widespread growth in leisure time. With debate still raging about just how much labour markets will change in the coming years, education policymakers and schools face the difficult task of deciding what skills are most important to teach today.

Meanwhile, the emergence of new technologies within the education sector—such as personalised learning, flipped classrooms, and translation software—present untapped opportunities to support schools with mixed ability and linguistically diverse pupils and to deliver the 21st century skills they will need to thrive in increasingly unpredictable labour markets and diverse societies. Yet these innovations are not a silver bullet.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> HundrED, ‘Reading Grandmas and Grandpas’, accessed 4 September 2017, <https://hundred.org/en/projects/reading-grandmas-and-grandpas>.

<sup>114</sup> OECD, *Innovating Education and Educating for Innovation: The Power of Digital Technologies and Skills* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016), [www.oecd.org/fr/innovation/innovating-education-and-educating-for-innovation-9789264265097-en.htm](http://www.oecd.org/fr/innovation/innovating-education-and-educating-for-innovation-9789264265097-en.htm).

According to some commentators, the field has been commandeered by big tech companies<sup>115</sup> at the expense of teacher-led initiatives that might focus on innovative ways to learn that don't involve technology, such as collaborative problem-solving (a key skill in demand among employers and now being assessed as part of PISA tests).

## 1. Developing 21st century skills

Successive reports have highlighted the importance of so-called 21st century skills, which include problem-solving, interpersonal communication, and working in teams.<sup>116</sup> These skills are thought to be among the hardest to automate and will thus serve young people well as they enter changing labour markets. Moreover, there is some evidence to suggest that children with a migrant or disadvantaged background are among the most likely to benefit from mastering these skills. However, these are also the hardest skills to teach and measure (conversely, the skills that are easiest to teach and test are the easiest to automate).<sup>117</sup>

Character, essential skills, and metacognition have also been of interest given the divergent outcomes of young people from different backgrounds. Evidence suggests that much success in education and the labour market is not associated with cognitive ability but can be explained by other factors such as perseverance and conscientiousness.<sup>118</sup>

- **Character education.** The education world has seen and increased focus on moral values and character building. Angela Duckworth's influential work on 'grit' asserts that when schools emphasise the development of traits such as discipline, self-motivation, and perseverance, students have better social and academic outcomes.<sup>119</sup> However, her work has not been without controversy, with some critics arguing that a focus on teaching grit in schools can denigrate the real-life challenges that disadvantaged students face on a daily basis.<sup>120</sup> While there is some evidence to suggest that character education disproportionately benefits vulnerable pupils, its impacts are highly context-specific and depend on staff capacity.<sup>121</sup> Evidence for the benefits of developing metacognition and self-regulation (learning how to learn and managing attitudes towards learning) is much more positive, promising significant gains for low costs.<sup>122</sup>

115 Audrey Watters, *The Monsters of Education Technology* (N.p.: CreateSpace: 2014).

116 See, for example, OECD, *Innovating Education and Educating for Innovation*; Hampson, Patton, and Shanks, *10 Ideas for 21st Century Education*.

117 Rose Luckin et al., *Solved! Making the Case for Collaborative Problem-Solving* (London: Nesta, 2017), [www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/solved-making-case-collaborative-problem-solving.pdf](http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/solved-making-case-collaborative-problem-solving.pdf).

118 A 2012 working paper on the importance of soft skills points out that while development is usually assessed through performance on cognitive tests, '[s]uccess in life depends on personality traits that are not well captured by measures of cognition. Conscientiousness, perseverance, sociability, and curiosity matters'. See James Heckman and Tim Kautz, 'Hard Evidence on Soft Skills' (working paper no. 18121, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, June 2012), 3, [www.nber.org/papers/w18121.pdf](http://www.nber.org/papers/w18121.pdf).

119 Indeed, Duckworth claims that the academic success of certain U.S. charter schools (publicly funded independent schools that are run with less school-district oversight than other public schools) can be attributed to this behavioural training, rather than to other factors, such as academic content. See Angela Duckworth, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* (New York: Scribner, 2016).

120 Valerie Strauss, 'The Problem with Teaching "Grit" to Poor Kids? They Already Have It. Here's What They Really Need', *Washington Post*, 10 May 2016, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/05/10/the-problem-with-teaching-grit-to-poor-kids-they-already-have-it-heres-what-they-really-need/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/05/10/the-problem-with-teaching-grit-to-poor-kids-they-already-have-it-heres-what-they-really-need/).

121 The Education Endowment Foundation ranks the evidence on social and emotional programmes as mixed (moderate impact for moderate cost). It has the greatest impact on emotional or attitudinal, rather than educational, outcomes. See Education Endowment Foundation, 'Teaching and Learning Toolkit'.

122 Education Endowment Foundation, 'Meta-Cognition and Self-Regulation', accessed 2 May 2017, <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit/meta-cognition-and-self-regulation/>.

- **Collaborative problem-solving.** Working with others (as equals) in pursuit of a shared goal encompasses a critical set of skills as students learn to apply, explain, and synthesise knowledge in groups.<sup>123</sup> Prominent initiatives have sought to foster collaborative problem-solving across the educational trajectory, from the LEGO Foundation’s Six Bricks initiative, a play-based project to develop problem-solving and language skills in children’s early years, to the SPRinG Programme, a very positively evaluated set of classroom practices and trainings in how to foster pupils’ skills by organising classrooms and groups to stimulate collaboration, developing pupils’ group-work skills, and creating challenging tasks.<sup>124</sup> There is strong evidence that collaborative problem-solving can both raise pupils’ achievement levels and improve their attitudes and motivation to learn.<sup>125</sup> But while there are some indications that uptake of collaborative problem-solving methods is growing, as evidenced by their inclusion in the 2015 PISA survey, more precise measures of their use in practice are made difficult by variations between national contexts.
- **Skills for innovation and entrepreneurship.** In 2012, Denmark included the integration of innovation and entrepreneurship into the mainstream curriculum as part of its National Innovation Strategy.<sup>126</sup> The strategy also promoted innovation courses in teacher-training programmes and practice-based teaching in schools. Yet the evidence of how effective school entrepreneurship programmes are or how they can be improved is mixed. For example, a ‘mini-company’ initiative launched in the Netherlands to foster entrepreneurial skills among students was evaluated as having no statistically significant effect on the development of such skills and a significant negative effect on their willingness to start a business.<sup>127</sup>

A less-frequently discussed challenge children will need to be prepared for is having to chart a career path in an increasingly fragmented labour market. Even more so than their parents, tomorrow’s workers will need to develop a comfort with change and uncertainty, and a willingness to learn new skills or move to secure their desired jobs. In addition to carefully crafting teaching practices to outfit students to meet these challenges, it is thus important to create or strengthen institutions that can provide career advice to help students understand these evolving and complex labour-market dynamics.

## 2. Technological innovation for personalised learning

To meet these skills demands, some educators and policymakers have turned to technology. Digital education technologies are often designed to enable more experiential, personalised learning and to augment teacher capacity. For instance, technology could release teachers from some routine, time-consuming tasks (such as administrative records-keeping and certain types of homework marking). It could also be used to enable more efficient collaboration between staff members or to facilitate communication with parents.<sup>128</sup> Technology may also hold some promise in reducing the barriers to access newcomer children and youth face, and in offering a range of online courses in subjects such as computer programming, renewable energy, and robotics that schools may not individually have the capacity or expertise to offer.<sup>129</sup> However, technological innovations can also exacerbate classroom inequalities if efforts are not made to address the ‘digital divide’, or if they divert attention from teacher quality and innovative pedagogical practices.

123 Luckin et al., *Solved! Making the Case for Collaborative Problem-Solving*.

124 Ibid.

125 For instance, the Educational Endowment Foundation estimates the likely value added as equivalent to five months of additional schooling. Cited in *ibid*.

126 Government of Denmark, *Denmark – A Nation of Solutions: Enhanced Cooperation and Improved Frameworks for Innovation in Enterprises* (Copenhagen: Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Higher Education, 2012), <https://ufm.dk/en/publications/2012/files-2012/innovation-strategy.pdf>.

127 OECD, *Evaluation of Programmes Concerning Education for Entrepreneurship* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2009), [www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/42890085.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/42890085.pdf).

128 Suzanne Straw, Oliver Quinlan, Jennie Harland, and Matthew Walker, *Flipped Learning* (Slough, UK and London: National Foundation for Educational Research and Nesta, 2015), [www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/NESM01](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/NESM01).

129 See OECD, *Innovating Education and Educating for Innovation*.

The main opportunities to use technology to better meet the needs of newcomer students fall into three categories:

- **Classroom adaptations for language learners.** Digital technologies could help teachers support language learners who need additional assistance or classes with students of a range of linguistic and educational backgrounds. One such model is the ‘flipped classroom’. Instead of assigning traditional homework tasks, teachers who ‘flip’ their classroom ask learners to watch in their own time and at their own pace instructional videos that cover content often presented in in-class lectures or other one-way formats.<sup>130</sup> For language learners, this means a chance to speed up, slow down, repeat, or have information translated, as needed. The theory is that classroom time and teachers’ skills are better used when children come to class with some understanding of the topic and can then engage in group exercises or receive personal support. Transcription software could also help language learners. New technology, such as those created by Ai-Media, allows everything someone says to be captured and either displayed live on screen or saved for later download.<sup>131</sup> A pilot study found that children were using transcripts of their teachers’ lessons to review key points and instructions, and teachers also reported using them to improve their teaching style.<sup>132</sup>
- **Distance learning for children and young people out of school.** Another distinct asset of technology-based learning tools is their portability. While asylum-seeking children wait to enter mainstream education systems, they might benefit from virtual welcome and orientation classes. And where there is a shortage of mother-tongue teachers and teaching assistants, it may be possible to communicate online with instructors who have these language skills but are located elsewhere. Even more ambitious initiatives may make partial or entire degree programmes accessible remotely. The Jamiya Project in Jordan offers Syrian refugees in Amman and Zaatari camp the chance to complete an accredited IT course from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.<sup>133</sup> It uses a combination of on-site tutors and Syrian academic mentors in addition to the online course, and students use WhatsApp and social media to communicate with tutors and with one another. This model is potentially replicable for refugee children in destination countries, either as a complement to in-person classroom instruction in the host-country language or as a mother-tongue substitute for content instruction until pupils acquire the necessary language proficiency to keep up in the mainstream classroom. Though such tools are unlikely to offer a complete fix for the capacity constraints and learning challenges European schools have encountered, support for such courses at the national or regional level could help alleviate some of the most immediate resource challenges.
- **Personalised learning and differentiated instruction.** Providing differentiated instructions to students with varying needs can be difficult for even the most highly trained teachers. Digital resources can help teachers collect the data to understand which students need additional help and recommend remedial resources. At Ørestad Gymnasium in Denmark, for example, using a digital personalised learning platform allows more advanced students to carry on learning independently while teachers concentrate on those in need of assistance.<sup>134</sup>

Digital technologies may hold untapped benefits for both migrant-background students and their peers. However, they are not a substitute for competent and dynamic teachers or well-designed curricula. The most effective technologies help pupils and teachers tap into broader skills, such as creativity, learning how to learn, and

<sup>130</sup> A 2015 report describes the conditions in which flipped classrooms work best. See Straw, Quinlan, Harland, and Walker, *Flipped Learning*.

<sup>131</sup> Ai-Media, ‘Main Page’, accessed 1 June 2017, [www.ai-media.tv/](http://www.ai-media.tv/).

<sup>132</sup> Oliver Quinlan, ‘Innovation in Education: Research Updates’, Nesta, 3 April 2014, [www.nesta.org.uk/blog/innovation-education-research-updates](http://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/innovation-education-research-updates).

<sup>133</sup> Charlotte Alfred, ‘A “University in Exile” to Reconnect Syrian Students and Academics’, News Deeply, 1 May 2017, [www.newsdeeply.com/syria/community/2017/05/01/a-university-in-exile-to-reconnect-syrian-students-and-academics-2](http://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/community/2017/05/01/a-university-in-exile-to-reconnect-syrian-students-and-academics-2).

<sup>134</sup> Allan Kjær Andersen, ‘Future Schools for Future Citizens’ (comments during a meeting of the Integration Futures Working Group, Berlin, 19 June 2017).

problem-solving.<sup>135</sup> And while the rise of the ‘ed-tech’ industry has put a plethora of digital learning tools on the market, the optimism with which these products are marketed should be taken with a grain of salt. While some products advertise themselves as allowing for deeply personalised learning, they may in reality offer a fixed and limited number of streams that do not capture the full spectrum of abilities and learning needs within diverse classroom. With clearer guidance from ministries of education on their specific curriculum needs and the opportunities educators see to integrate technology into sound pedagogical methods, it may be possible to foster productive relationships with the commercial sector and shape the development of improved tools.

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*Placing educational equity at the forefront of 21st century pedagogy and curriculum development is crucial if educational systems are to give all learners ... a brighter shot at the future.*

A major unknown and point of concern is whether technological innovation risks widening the gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’.<sup>136</sup> Technological innovation is largely occurring in wealthy education settings, leaving those with fewer resources in relative educational poverty. Equipment may be prohibitively expensive for some pupils and schools. There is also a risk that encouraging too much experimental innovation, without effective oversight and evaluation of what works, could lead to negative educational outcomes for some students. Placing educational equity at the forefront of 21st century pedagogy and curriculum development is crucial if educational systems are to give all learners—including newcomer students—a brighter shot at the future.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS: MAINSTREAMING 2.0?

Many of the approaches outlined in this paper focus on building the skills of the student population, teacher workforce, and supporting service providers. This is an important shift. Instead of thinking about minorities and underserved groups as pupils with special needs and challenges, the most promising approaches examine the demands future citizens will face through a skills and strengths lens rather than a solely needs-focused lens. Doing so can allow educational policymakers to better identify the capabilities each student will have to develop given impending social, demographic, and technological change. The next phase of the educational mainstreaming project will centre on completing this cultural shift.

From a governance perspective, these approaches suggest a way to move beyond the focus on newly arrived populations and instead develop integration or social cohesion as a muscle that the whole of society has to work to build. Instead of thinking narrowly about which policies will promote a welcoming community or inculcate good citizenship (with both concepts based on a fixed notion of what it means to participate and belong), education and integration policy deliberations more broadly would benefit from a focus on creating the conditions that will nurture and strengthen these capabilities in pupils, both now and for the future.

<sup>135</sup> McLoughlin and Lee describe six key elements that underpin effective, innovative pedagogy: ‘digital competencies that focus on creativity and performance; strategies for meta-learning, including learner-designed learning; inductive and creative modes of reasoning and problem-solving; learner-driven content creation and collaborative knowledge-building; horizontal (peer-to-peer) learning and contribution to communities of learning (e.g., through social tagging, collaborative editing, and peer review.’ See Catherine McLoughlin and Mark J. W. Lee, ‘The Three P’s of Pedagogy for the Networked Society: Personalization, Participation, and Productivity’, *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 20, no.1 (2008):10–27.

<sup>136</sup> For a discussion of some emerging research and analysis on the subject, see Kentaro Toyama, ‘Why Technology Alone Won’t Fix Schools’, *The Atlantic*, 3 June 2015, [www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/06/why-technology-alone-wont-fix-schools/394727/](http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/06/why-technology-alone-wont-fix-schools/394727/).

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**Migration Policy Institute Europe**, established in Brussels in 2011, is a non-profit, independent research institute that aims to provide a better understanding of migration in Europe and thus promote effective policymaking. Building upon the experience and resources of the Migration Policy Institute, which operates internationally, MPI Europe provides authoritative research and practical policy design to governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders who seek more effective management of immigration, immigrant integration, and asylum systems as well as successful outcomes for newcomers, families of immigrant background, and receiving communities throughout Europe. MPI Europe also provides a forum for the exchange of information on migration and immigrant integration practices within the European Union and Europe more generally.

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