
STUDY VISIT THESSALONIKI REPORT

8 - 9 May 2018

by Petra Jurlina (NEPC - Network of Education Policy Centers) and Sanja Brajković (Open Academy Step by Step Croatia (NEPC member)), August 2018

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Attendance list

Participants from our partner organisations

| | Name | Organization | Country |
|----|----------------------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Laurinde Koster | Rutu Foundation/ Risbo | Netherlands |
| 2 | Afke Weltevrede | Risbo | Netherlands |
| 3 | Samir Bouajaja | German Republic NRW Coordination Office; Project <i>Migrant Teachers</i> | Germany |
| 4 | Kathrin Lotter | Student assistant at the European forum for migration studies (efms), Institute at the University of Bamberg | Germany |
| 5 | Myrto Ntina | Student assistant at the Aristotle University | Greece |
| 6 | Nektaria Palaiologou | Professor at School of Education- University of Western Macedonia (UoWM) | Greece |
| 7 | Yiannis Toumpoulidis | Assistant at UoWM | Greece |
| 8 | Lina Staikou | Department of European Programs -Regional Directorate of Education, Central Macedonia | Greece |
| 9 | Sanja Brajković | Open Academy Step by Step | Croatia |
| 10 | Petra Jurlina | Network of Education Policy Centers | Croatia |

Abbreviations: MRS: Migrant-refugee students

Background AVIOR

See: Study Visit Turin Report by L. Koster.

Background Study visits

The AVIOR project includes study visits to schools and other institutes/ institutions in order to **observe how bilingual and mother tongue materials are used.**

Partner organizations each participate in two study visits held in partner countries (Greece, Germany, Estonia, Italy). The next one will take place in Estonia, in November 2018 and will take place together with the Transnational meeting.

Each visit is attended by a representative from either Risbo or Rutu Foundation, to ensure continuity. Eight people participate in each study visit, hosts included.

Thessaloniki PAX: Netherlands (2); Croatia (2); Germany (2); Greece (3 from project and other University of WM and Regional Directorate of Education affiliates/ colleagues.)

The study visit is consistent with Output 5. Idea supporting study visits is that although use of bilingual/ mother tongue materials may not be a part of official policy of the country's educational system (as witnessed in Italy and Greece, for instance¹), good practices can be found at schools, sometimes even teacher-training institutes. By observing these practices first-hand, participants are inspired to report on and further develop good practices themselves, thus creating a multiplier effect.

¹ For e.g., see: <http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/WP2.2-Language-support-mapping-report.pdf>

Agenda Study Visit Tessaloniki

Day 1: Tuesday, May 8, 2018

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| 8,30 AM – 10 AM | Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Central Macedonia | <p>Presentation of the situation with immigrant and refugee students in Greece:</p> <p>Panagiotis Ananiadis, Director of Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Central Macedonia - greeting</p> <p>Nektaria Palaiologou (Professor of Intercultural Education), Yiannis Toumpoulidis (PhD Candidate in Intercultural Education): Refugee Education in Greece (Introduction – General Overview)</p> <p>Smaro Hiona, Harikleia Tsirigoti (Members of the Refugee Training Coordination Team): Reception Facilities for Refugee Education in Greece (DYEP)</p> |
| 10.30 – 13.30 | Study visit at the 6th Intercultural Primary School at Eleftherio – Kordelio Thessaloniki - Morning School Programme | <p>Stergios Papadopoulos (Headmaster), Zoe Malevitsi (English teacher), Artemis Kefalidou (4th grade teacher)</p> <p>Presentation of school's history and activities (Stergios Papadopoulos, Zoe Malevitsi)</p> <p>Classroom Observation, 4th grade (Artemis Kefalidou)</p> |

Day 2: Wednesday, May 9, 2018

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|---------------|---|--|
| 8.30 – 13.30 | 64th Primary school of Thessaloniki- Morning school programme; Afternoon school programme; Pre-school programme | <p>Welcome from Headmaster, Georgios Kalfopoulos</p> <p>Visit to Morning class tailored for refugee -migrant students; after that visit to regular class (two different buildings); presentation of a game with children; visit to kindergarten class (same building as the 'Regular curriculum' classrooms)</p> |
| 13.45 – 17.30 | Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Central Macedonia | <p>Presentations:</p> <p>Nikolaos Akritidis (Head of Department of Scientific and Pedagogical Guidance for Primary Education): Refugee flows, refugee education in Greece</p> <p>Lina Staikou (Coordinator of Erasmus + KA2 Xenis Zeus): "XENIOS ZEUS"</p> |

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| | | <p>Eleftheria Spyropoulou (Diktio Alpha, Center for addiction prevention and promotion of psychosocial health in Western Thessaloniki): Bridges: psychosocial support workshops for children and adolescent refugees 8 – 16 years old</p> <p>Sanja Brajković (Open academy Step by Step, Croatia; NEPC): Using Croatian – Bojash bilingual materials in preschools and schools</p> <p>Kathrin Lotter, Samir Bouajaja (EFMS, EFMS, LMZ-NRZ): Legal situation of education for refugees, German educational system</p> <p>Afke Weltevrede, Laurinde Koster (Risbo, Rutu Foundation): The Netherlands' school system</p> |
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Summary and findings Study Visit

Overall summary and findings

In schools, study visit participants observed class in primary and pre-school classes.

Efforts of teachers and support staff to communicate the curriculum was analysed, taking into consideration the absence of bilingual material, or the training to use it (be it official, i.e. provided by the Ministry of Education or local governance, or unofficial via CSOs), as well as Greek-as-second-language methodology used in class.

The AVIOR group talked to **head principals** (via consecutive translation); **teachers (preschool teacher included)**; **Morning class teacher** (class tailored exclusively for MRS during the Refugee crisis (in January and February 2016, over 123,000 migrants landed in Greece, compared to about 4,600 in the same period of 2015 – source: IOM)).

For more on how the Greek educational system works for MRS, with examples such as programmes in the Greek islands designed for MRS to receive 20 hours of English a week (because of possible transfers to another country, so English is taught as a sort of lingua franca of Europe), after which students receive a certificate stating number of hours of Greek, mathematics, English, please refer to reports of agencies such as AIDA (Asylum Information Database), for e.g.: <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/reception-conditions/employment-and-education/access-education>

Questionnaire used in the previous study visit to Turin was used as much as possible during this study visit as well, to ensure continuity of the audit process, as well as to use the same criteria in all countries analysed by AVIOR study visits.

The short video is in preparation and will be shared on the Project Surfdive, as well as the final website and it will contain interviews with teachers, staff, as well as atmosphere from the schools visited.

Schools visited by the project team seemed generally supportive of Greek-as-a-second-language speakers to attend school, yet schools' and authorities' general belief is that it only immersion into Morning class followed by MRS presence in the regular part of the school curriculum is/will be enough for these children to comprehend school assignments and maintain attendance rates.

Children are assessed on their Greek language abilities when coming into the school system. Those who do not speak Greek (or for whom school assessed they do not do so fluently) are separated into different classes depending on level of their grasp of language. However, this

division seemed to overlap with their origin more than the level of proficiency in Greek. The reason for this, as explained in schools visited (for other schools and practices this report cannot witness) is to better deal with very specific challenges that come with every group of students: repatriated Greeks; Roma whose home language is Turkish albeit who were born in Greece; MRS (socio-cultural factors; socio-economic factors; both tied to fact of specific origin). Still, this results in the fact Roma students of Turkish origin or older MRS who have been in the country for a longer while and seemed to have enough of a grasp of the language miss out on a significant part of the regular school curriculum as they seem to spend significant part of their school day still in the Morning class.

By observing, we found that the mother tongue of the children is not being used in class, be it Morning class or regular class. Furthermore, no evidence was found of mother tongue exposure in the learning environment (for example, on walls and through materials). This of course does not mean all schools in Greece follow the same principle – as previously stated, the general impression is schools are doing what they can with what they have.

We have learned from observation and talking to the teacher that MRS do not follow a prepared teaching plan, nor their progress is being tracked, and that most children remain in this type of class for a year or in more rarer cases, less than duration of one school year - depending on the subjective assessment of the teacher.

Traces of bilingualism or teaching of the other (first) language only exists as such in the Morning class while we did not notice any traces of individualized approach, depending on the first language of the child, in regular classrooms (except in pre-school, example of which we emphasize several times as a good practice example in this Report). UNICEF-provided translators come to school(s) once a week, but not to help with the curriculum - their role is to communicate school/administrative related issues with children/students and their parents.

Many reasons were shared as to why there is no systematic and continuous support of use of mother tongue (if other than Greek) in the system and the curriculum. Except for reasons of it being challenging to support financially, there is the schools' observed perception of migrants'/refugees' lack of long term dedication to stay in the country; continuous coming and going of MRS during school year; and strong administrative obstacles which enable non - Greek educated personnel to work or teach in public Greek schools².

One of the biggest obstacles reported to the AVIOR team was the permanent mobility of people/children, not only from country to country but city to city as well. Reception period

² Good practice example when it comes to inclusion of new residents is the German example – coordination of intercultural mediator teachers: Germans with different background, ethnic, help with the integration of newly arrived students and teachers.

was supposed to last 2-3 years but as the arrival is constant, the influx is continuous so because there new MRS keep arriving (although to a much lower rate than during the peak of the crisis), every month presents a change in the classroom environment, for the teacher and the other students equally.

Another provided reason was that there are not enough permanent teachers. (Temporary teachers work in Morning classes, so there is also lack of continuity there). Teachers working in the morning classes pass initial training but after that they lack continuous professional development and group reflection with exchange of experiences.

As no new school infrastructure is allowed under austerity measures so there is an infrastructure issue as well. Also, on average, usually there is no teacher-support staff in Greek schools, and they are present only for special education classes (pedagogue, psychologist, speech therapist) – this the group witnessed in the first school we visited, Kordelio.

Due to previous assessment of the authorities that there was little point in investing in reaching academic achievements of the MRS during and just after the peak of the refugee crisis, schools focused on working on MRS' socioemotional skills. However, in the next academic year, 2018-2019, the educational system will focus more on reaching required academic milestones, i.e. focus more on cognitive than socio-emotional development.

1st school: Elephterio Kordelio School



The school was visited on the first day of the study visit, right after the session at the Directorate of Education. The group was greeted by the school principal, who has been the principal of this school for the last 24 years. He shared his personal motto that makes a happy school and it's: *children, teachers and parents*.

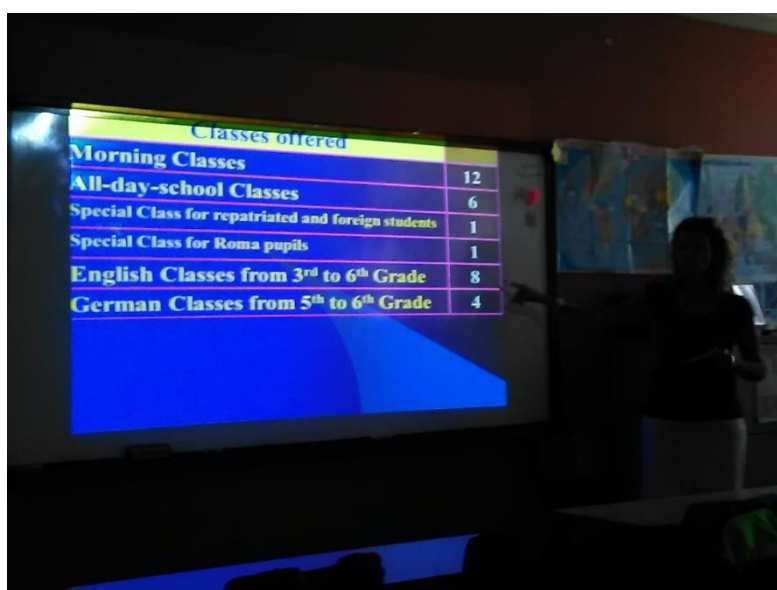
Reportedly, the school participates in Action Aid UK and UNICEF programs; there is emphasis on work with children with special abilities.

There is a website, in English, Russian, Greek, German and a regular school newspaper, distributed to all other Thessaloniki schools.

The existing support staff in the school are substitutes ("auxiliary teaching staff") - usually temporary and appointed from the general list of substitute teachers of the Greek Ministry of Education. They are hired to provide support for pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs.

Kordelio school in numbers:

- ▶ 196 local- regular students
- ▶ Repatriated Greeks 2 (from Albania or ex-Soviet countries- this is a category in itself)
- ▶ Other nationalities (2 from Syria, some Roma): 65
- ▶ Special class for Roma
- ▶ Special class for repatriated Greek
- ▶ Russian speakers have a chance to attend Russian language class in the afternoon. This class is a supportive teaching course addressed to immigrant students with a *Russian background only*, to support them in their mother tongue; in this way through bilingual education, learning a new foreign language in the mainstream classroom, i.e. Greek in this case, becomes easier.



| Classes offered | |
|---|----|
| Morning Classes | |
| All-day-school Classes | 12 |
| Special Class for repatriated and foreign students | 6 |
| Special Class for Roma pupils | 1 |
| English Classes from 3 rd to 6 th Grade | 1 |
| German Classes from 5 th to 6 th Grade | 8 |
| | 4 |

Roma class takes place during a regular school day. Not to build native language or Greek language competencies, but because of low SES background, to help understanding the school curriculum, their obligations and assignments, as well as homework, so, to provide the students with more opportunities to practice Greek language with the teacher and ensure they understand assignments.

Mandatory subjects (mathematics, geography, similar) are taught only in Greek, and there is no support to teach or explain these subjects in mother tongue of students whose mother tongue is not Greek (in this school it is prevalently Albanian, Roma languages – or Turkish, and Russian, with only 2 students whose m. t. is Arabic). Albanian students were mostly born in Greece but converse in Albanian at home with their parents, as well as Roma students). So, the “extra support” Roma and other non-Greek students receive is in extra hours of Greek in the day – however this does take them away from the regular classroom during school day.

Class observation

Explanation of AVIOR purpose and aim, and desired use of materials.

The class was divided into four parts: the pre-phase: introduction video, prior knowledge on making friends and looking different, story of the chicken, post-phase: using vocabulary words to describe certain emotions connected to the moral of the story. The game part was a practical use of the story (friendship morale, camaraderie).

Children/students asked AVIOR visitors questions in Greek and English.

They provided examples of communication which is not in Greek: non-verbal communication; words from foreign languages; other methods, to find a way to ask for something or provide an answer where there is a difficulty in communication.

The (bear/hugs) video provided an example of teaching and introducing socio-emotional skills into a classroom; non-verbal communication, connecting with a person with a disability (whom everybody wanted to hug while he was a bear and it was not clear it was a person with disability); discussion with class about it. *What would they say to a friend who needs a hug?* (Reflection on the Avior story: what will the bird with the broken wing do while his siblings are flying, what can he do instead?)

- Lesson on disabilities, difference of achieving goals, Braille, sign language, etc.
- Second story: children talk about the languages they can speak

Class discussion was observed, where Greek material from AVIOR was used, along with other exercises that focused on empathy and camaraderie more than on bi/multilingual-mother tongue material. The story from Avior materials was read out in Greek by the teacher (the puppy story) which focuses on emotions rather than developing multilingual competencies or strengthening mother tongue so the question that remains open is how does multilingualism fit in?

Observations

Bilingual children were present in the classroom, but the fact of their bilingualism was not visible in the class environment at all.

The exercise on the floor which raises awareness of importance of camaraderie among friends-classmates who “fight” for a place on the imaginary ship would make sense if it taught words or verbs in Greek (for non-Greek speakers) and other languages (for native Greek speakers), so that it emphasized inclusion of others. To provide a theoretical example, if someone in that class did not understand Greek, how could they better take part in the

exercise except imitate classmates and try to do the same, in which case orders (do this, do that) should be slower and accentuated. (Touch. Jump. Look.)

Perhaps because this was a class without significant number of non-native language speakers it made more sense to build their social skills, or the teacher and the principal were not aware of the emphasis of the particular project and study visit in question (a sensible guess, although unconfirmed).

The existence of a special Russian language class tailored for Russian-Greek bilingual students points to a possibility that a similar program could be initiated for other language groups in school (the Roma one, on the other hand, does not strengthen Romany/ Turkish language skills of the Roma students but the students' Greek and social skills).

2nd school: 64th Primary

The 64th Primary School of Thessaloniki shares the facility with a special-ed school, a secondary school and a multicultural kindergarten (intercultural due to fact it has children from Iraq, Morocco, Syria, Turkey, and Roma).

Special needs/ special education school and preschool is separated from regular kindergarten and school buildings, but despite physical division of students, the fact they are close to each other and that the former group is attending school is considered a success as earlier special-needs students did not attend school in some cases at all, due to too many obstacles for schools and families.

For three hours every day MRS are in Morning class which functions as reception class (focuses on Greek language and mathematics), after which students join their regular classes, where they would be the whole day if they were not in the Reception day for a part of the day.

There were about 20 MRS, aged 6-12 in the Morning class during AVIOR group observation. Children taking part in the Morning classes include: local Roma students who were born in Greece but at home are Turkish speaking, dispirited students whose Greek-origin parents returned to Greece from abroad; migrants and refugees. The groups are divided according to origin. The Morning class - reception program AVIOR witnessed was for MRS only, and we have not witnessed the Roma or returned Greek students (to be clear that this report is on the MRS Morning class program only, and not the Roma or Greek-repatriated one). The Roma reception program was developed with cooperation with Thessaloniki (Aristotle) University, and was a part of the Roma anti-drop out program.

Observations

Translator for MRS is present at least once a week, to help with administrative issues, to communicate things to parents and children. This Morning program is from this school year 2017/2018, last year it was only the evening program

Some MRS seemed to have mastered Greek well but were still in Morning/ reception class, as old as 12. As there is no instructor/instruction in Arabic (for example), older kids help the younger - most of the older MRS present in the AVIOR observed Reception class went to school in Syria so are literate and well-adjusted to school surroundings. Some consult parents, if they have parents and if the parents are literate - to help them with writing down the translations of Greek material from school to Arabic, so that they understand (Greek curriculum) better

Students literate in Arabic write glossaries (in Arabic), for themselves, next to assignments in Greek textbooks

Morning class teacher speaks exclusively Greek to MRS, although is flexible and eager to use which every method comes to mind to communicate things better to students: English, Google translate. The teacher in question was a temporary teacher and for MRS only, on a non-permanent contract employed by the school for the semester.

- ▶ There is no national policy in Greece to work with the MRS' mother tongue, so this is actually not implemented in any school. Actually, teaching in foreign languages other than Greek is not allowed (outside the official foreign-language learning classes that are part of the curriculum, such as English, German, and Italian etc.)
- ▶ The pre-school teacher is a good practice example as she created a warm and very bilingual learning environment and communicated to parents the importance of talking to their children in the native language so that on a cognitive level they perform better in school, in Greek, later. She also encourages and educates parents on the importance of affirmation of mother tongue. Apart from that, to decrease the stress of the dichotomy of Greek vs. mother tongue, she encourages learning of other foreign languages through repletion and games: English, German, and thus has created a real multi-language environment.
- ▶ There is no special training for Morning class/ MRS teachers in Greece

Final presentations and Feedback discussion

Official policy in Greece is that only Greek language can be used during teaching and only through immersion method for all. If there is bilingualism used in classroom by teachers, it is by teacher's instinct.

There are no teachers who are specially trained to work as Greek-as-second-language teachers - that the Avior group saw. To work as Reception-Morning classes teacher, one is recruited on a temporary basis from September to June.

There is a distinction between migrants and refugee students in the Greek education system (different legal status, different educational schemes and approaches). Migrants are not only repatriated Greeks, which was the case during 1980s and 1990s, when Greek state began to develop its first educational integration policies and established the institution of reception and tutorial classes but also: migrant students in general, second and third generation migrants, Roma children and children from socially vulnerable groups. For all these categories, depending on level of language skills, there are additional reception classes.

There seems to exist a general fear that 'investing' in MRS' bilingual education is expensive i.e. will not be remunerated: material, staff, programmes as most MRS are perceived to believe Greece is a temporary stop on the way to more Western European countries. Another reason provided was that Greek educational policy experts want to prevent any language ghettos (which might happen, they argue, if you could for instance teach MRS mathematics or other subject-classes in their native languages).

There is no official training (as a prerequisite) for teachers who (are about to) work with MRS. There are some in-service courses provided by the Institute of Educational Policy and the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. These are for teachers who already work with migrant students. Teachers working in Reception Facilities for Refugee Education were provided with short preparatory courses. However, there are many courses provided by some universities and other institutions.

Given the restricted resources, and the fact that 2017-2018 was the first year of compulsory education for MRS in Greece, and that there was no material in other languages yet – materials for repatriated Greeks were used from the early 1990s, although a lot of this material is not suitable for children who have no grasp of the language.

The willingness to use multilingual material exists in schools, and teachers would appreciate it, but official framework and official support lacks or simply does not exist.

The educational system lacks ways of inclusion of either teachers of R-M background or some sort of native-language support for children. There exists a suspicion that foreign teachers and educators are not on the level of Greek teachers and could not be assessed as per how and what they teach.



Conclusion

Games AVIOR team witnessed during Study trip to Thessaloniki were more about social skills, emotions (feeling of being left out, cooperation, team work, what moves us to act like a member of a team), than about bilingual skills.

Continual transfer of people is a problem specific to Greece.

Assessment for most MRS is non-formative or descriptive, without grades at the point of the AVIOR study visit.

The central question for everybody in every educational system is whether we want a child-centred school system or EU-country centred school system?

Special good practice mention:

In the **64th Preschool** there are many children who are second-language speakers, many of them from low SES as well. The teacher created a learning environment that was bilingual by learning herself some phrases and sentences from her students' languages and encouraging their use in class and class environment. Also, to acquire other language skills (other than their mother tongue), she uses games that repeat phrases which enable children to engage and master the said language, through a lot of routines, which is an appropriate way of learning languages for early and pre-school children. Theoretical basis behind this is that each child must have a stable and complete knowledge of a linguistic system (structures, grammar, and vocabulary) in order to learn any other language, something that cognitive development expert's support.

In the **Eleptherio Kordelio School**, the already existing school paper/ newsletter, sent out to all other city schools regularly, could be used to promote ways of support of native language skills in all Thessaloniki schools (our recommendation).

Regarding the categorization of students in Greece, still in the 3rd generation people are considered different in terms of ethnic origin (i.e. it takes to be 4th generated to not be counted as repatriated Greek by the census, etc.). However, the system has somewhat liberalised so since 2010 children born in Greece are considered native Greeks.

After observing the efforts of the MRS in the Morning class to keep notes in their native language during class, our recommendation is that this need for a better native (Arabic, Farsi, etc.) - to-Greek/English language support should stand as a common point for the possible collaboration between non-profit groups, translators, parents and teachers/ schools.

Overall, there are real obstacles when it comes to use of multilingual material in class, and teachers are handling communication challenges according to their own imagination and means. Any materials such as AVIOR supported ones are welcome.

Next steps, concerning the project

- ▶ Meeting at the Directorate concerning the use of material for case studies and Implementation
- ▶ We prioritise: Two Croatian games, German story, Italian not because not all schools have apps; the question is for the parents: how can they use this bilingually?
- ▶ Estonian will be tested in October during the Transnational meeting.
- ▶ Reports after the Case studies will be sent to Ellen Rose. Regarding the action research method: the parents will be involved in commenting upon it.