



Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe

Country Reports



INTEGRATING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN INTO SCHOOLS IN EUROPE

GERMANY

NATIONAL DESCRIPTION – 2003/04

The national contributions contained on this CD-Rom and on the Eurydice website formed the basis for the comparative study on the integration at school of immigrant children in Europe. Each contribution has exactly the same structure with four main sections entitled as follows:

- 1) National definitions and demographic context of immigration
- 2) Measures offering school-based support to immigrant children and their families
- 3) Intercultural approaches in education
- 4) Evaluation, pilot projects, debates and forthcoming reforms

Contributions are available in English and, in the case of some countries, in French.

1. NATIONAL DEFINITIONS AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF IMMIGRATION

1.1. National Definitions and Legislative Sources

Immigrant children are children whose parents have lived in Germany for a relatively long period of time and who, for the most part, are not German citizens. The new survey of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (24/05/2002) refers to them as 'pupils of non-German nationality'.

1.2. Rights to Education and to Support Measures

According to the 'Hamburger Abkommen' – 'Mutual Agreement between the *Länder* on the Standardisation of the School System' of 14/10/1971, which regulates the general duty to attend school, all immigrant children from the age of six onwards have the same rights and duties as to schooling as their German peers.

1.3. Demographic Information

In 2001, approximately 82.4 million people lived in Germany. Among these there were 7.3 million foreign nationals, or 8.9 % of the overall population. In numerical terms, Turks represented the biggest group, at 26.6 % of Germany's foreign population. In 2001, one quarter of all foreign residents (25.6 %) came from EU Member States, of which Italy was most strongly represented at 8.4 % of the entire immigrant population.

Until the 1980s, the majority of immigrant children came from families of migrant workers from Southern European countries, Turkey and North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia). Since then, there has been a trend towards greater diversity of nationality and language in schools. Recent changes in the characteristics of immigrants show a decline in immigrants from Southern European countries and a sharp rise of immigrants from Eastern European countries as well as a general drop in immigration (from 273 000 in 2001 to 219 000 in 2002) due to the economic recession.

In geographical terms, the population is distributed extremely unevenly. The most densely populated areas are the city-states of Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg. Other conurbations include the Rhine-Main area, the industrial area in the Rhine-Neckar district, the commercial area around Stuttgart and the areas around Bremen, Cologne, Dresden, Hamburg, Munich and Nuremberg/Fürth. These are also the areas where most immigrants live. The settlement patterns are relatively stable because families remain in industrial areas where labour is in demand and income guaranteed.

In the school year 2001/02, about 11 % of pupils in schools in Germany did not have German nationality. Additionally, there are the children and young people from ethnic German emigrant families (*Aussiedlerfamilien*), naturalized children and children from dual-nationality families, so that the overall percentage of pupils with a migration background is much higher, a fact that must be taken into consideration.

In 2001, 501 936 children or young people in German schools were of Turkish origin (43.4 % of all immigrant children), followed by 195 005 children from Member States of the European Union other than Germany. Of these, the biggest groups were Italian children (91 831 or 7.9 %) and Greek children (42 960 or 3.7 %). The second largest group (after the Turkish children) from outside the European Union were children from the former Yugoslavia (83 754 or 7.2 %).

Since the school year 1993/94, the number of Turkish children has risen by 7.9 % and the number of children from other EU Member States by 1.8 %. The number of children from Eastern Europe is constantly increasing; for example, the number of Polish children grew by 24.4 % between 1993 and 2001.

A higher percentage of immigrant children than German children attend a mainstream secondary school (*Hauptschule*) or a school for special educational needs (*Sonderschule*).

2. MEASURES OFFERING SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TO IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

2.1. Reception and Guidance

As the regulations are the same for all school-children irrespective of their origin there are no arrangements for informing immigrant children about their entitlement to special supporting measures. The Ministries of Education of the *Länder* have, however, published information in several languages about their school system and educational measures. These brochures are distributed to all schools and to parents who speak a foreign language. There are also regular parent-teacher meetings serving the same purpose.

2.2. Integration into School Learning

Immigrant children of school age who can take part in lessons without any serious language difficulty are allocated to classes according to their age and ability. The proportion of immigrant pupils in a mainstream class should not in theory exceed one fifth but may do so if the pupils concerned have no language difficulties.

Pre-School Language Promotion Programmes

In a relatively recent development, school-based support now starts at the time of a child's registration for school entrance. Most Ministries of Education of the *Länder* in Germany have initiated pre-school language-promotion programmes for immigrants' children whose knowledge of German is not sufficient to attend school. The date of registration has been brought forward to September/October of the year before these children start school, at age six. Upon registration, the children have to pass an oral language test and, if they show deficits, must join a language-promotion group at the local kindergarten, or (in some cases) at the local primary school, during the months between registration and school attendance. Thus, the children are five years old when they attend the course. This support is directed to children of immigrant families who were born in Germany or entered Germany at a very early age. The language course is run by a qualified child care worker/*Erzieher* or a primary school teacher and provides for six hours of teaching per week on average. About fifty percent of immigrant children need this language help.

Special Classes and Courses

If the proportion of immigrant pupils in mainstream classes is substantially in excess of one fifth, special classes (for children of the same age) can be formed for immigrant children who will be instructed in German in accordance with the curriculum of the German school. The *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany provide all the resources for the language teachers in these special courses (for children of different age group, e.g. children aged 6-9 years) who must have a teaching qualification in the German language and/or in German as a foreign language. Additional teaching materials are provided but, as is the case with all other teaching materials, the resources are provided by the local authorities (the town council and the local council). There are three types of special course in schools: basic courses, advanced courses (second phase of the intensive course in 'German as a second language') and support courses. At the end of the advanced course, children should be able to participate fully in lessons in all subjects. Support courses are linked to the teaching of regular subjects and should help children and young people to understand some specialist terminology.

2.3. Support for the Language, Culture and Religion of Origin

The *Länder* offer what is called 'mother-tongue instruction' for children who come from Greece, Italy, Croatia, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Turkey so that 'it will be possible for them to be reintegrated into schools in their countries of origin.' ('Agreement on the Education of children of Foreign Workers', 26 October 1979 version). There are two models of mother-tongue instruction:

- Model A: in the *Länder* of Bayern, Hessen, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Rheinland-Pfalz, the Ministries for Education have full responsibility for mother-tongue instruction, i.e. the teachers are employed and funded by the Ministries.
- Model B: in the *Länder* of Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein, mother-tongue instruction is a matter for the embassies and consulates of the countries of origin. The Ministries support the measure by offering the use of classrooms free of charge and by giving financial assistance for the salaries of teachers who, however, remain employees of the country of origin.

In the *Länder* in eastern Germany, mother-tongue instruction is not offered due to the small number of immigrant children. Elsewhere mother-tongue instruction is given in primary schools and lower-secondary level schools and includes information about the country and culture of origin. Participation is voluntary (except in Hessen). The marks awarded can be included in the pupil's school report (*Zeugnis*) at the end of the school year. Mother-tongue instruction is given for up to five hours per week.

To facilitate mother-tongue instruction, bilateral expert commissions (e.g. the German-Turkish Expert Commission for the Teaching of Turkish Pupils in Germany) have been founded. They meet at regular intervals in Germany and in the partner country to discuss matters of common interest e.g. the recruitment of teachers and bilateral in-service training courses for teachers.

The *Länder* of Bayern, Niedersachsen and Nordrhein-Westfalen offer additional 'Islamic instruction' to children of Turkish or Arabic origin for two hours per week. The teachers have acquired a teaching qualification in their country of origin but have to attend additional training courses organized by the Ministries of Education. All schoolbooks – like all books for mainstream education – are subject to inspection by the Ministries.

2.4. Adaptation of Daily School Life

On religious holidays, children are given permission not to attend class by the school supervisory authority.

Compulsory physical education and swimming instruction is usually taught in mixed-sex groups. However, schools must offer to teach boys and girls separately if immigrant parents so request. If this is not possible, an immigrant child may be exempt from the instruction concerned.

2.5. Access to School Services and Special Financial Assistance

The regulations of the Federal Government and the *Länder* on school medical services, accident and liability insurance, career guidance, teaching aids, school transport, grants and other welfare measures, apply equally to immigrant and German school children.

2.6. Language Tuition for Parents and Families

There are no language tuition measures for parents or families in the framework of compulsory school.

2.7. Information to Parents

The regulations of the *Länder* on the participation of parents or guardians in the shaping of school life apply to immigrant parents in the same manner as to German parents. In addition, the Ministries of Education of the *Länder* concerned provide parents, children and young people with information in their own language on various types of schools and entitlement to special support measures.

See also section 2.1.

3. INTERCULTURAL APPROACHES IN EDUCATION

3.1. Curriculum and School Activities

In order to develop intercultural competence, children and young people must learn about the traditions and patterns of their own and other cultures.

Curricula include the following elements that are deemed relevant in acquiring a knowledge of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds and interrelationships and an understanding of how to live together in a society of cultural plurality:

- Information about characteristic features of one's own and other cultures
- Common features of and differences in cultures and their mutual influence
- Human Rights and their universal validity
- Development and relevance of prejudices
- Reasons for discriminatory attitudes
- Reasons for and effects of present and past migrations
- International efforts to solve religious, ethnic and political conflicts
- Possibilities for minorities and majorities to live together in multicultural societies.

The Recommendation of the Standing Conference of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs on 'Intercultural Teaching in School' of 25 October 1996 emphasizes the following subjects and themes:

- in history lessons, learning from sources that present events from different perspectives
- in geography lessons, analysing the relationships between areas and culture-related structures
- in sociology lessons, analysing various possible solutions to present political and social conflicts and their cultural pre-conditions
- in lessons on religion, analysing the common features of and differences between world religions.

Additionally, in foreign language lessons, especially in bilingual lessons, the pupils are introduced to other cultures by using idioms, proverbs, quotations, rhymes, colloquial expressions of foreign origin and thus gain access to a point of view that is different from the one they take for granted.

Other examples of measures that can enhance the intercultural approach in education include:

- Class and school fêtes, with particular emphasis on the cultures of immigrant pupils
- Twinning with foreign schools and pen-pal schemes with pupils abroad
- Community-help projects organized by the school to assist immigrant members of the community
- Awards for pupils and classes that have made particular efforts to promote tolerance and solidarity.

3.2. Teacher Training

Initial teacher-training programmes do not in general include the intercultural dimension as yet, but there are exceptions: training programmes for foreign languages, geography and social science. In-service teacher training in which teachers come to know pupils with a multicultural background also include the intercultural dimension. The teacher-qualification programme 'German as a foreign language' puts special emphasis on the intercultural dimension since the programme is directed to facilitating the integration of immigrant children.

4. EVALUATION, DEBATES AND FORTHCOMING REFORMS

The Recommendation 'Intercultural education in schools' – Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of 25/10/1996 mentioned above comprises the following future goals:

- Further development of curricula in all subjects towards an intercultural change of perspective
- Development of practical suggestions on how to include intercultural aspects in teaching structures
- Inspection of schoolbooks for possible prejudice against other societies or cultures
- Evaluation of new pilot schemes or model projects in this field
- Improvement of conditions in school training schemes
- Support for multilateral projects and international networks of schools
- Improvement of cooperation between schools and social workers, youth welfare services, socio-cultural initiatives and multicultural advisory boards.

On 09/07/2004 a new law on immigration was passed which will come into effect on 01/01/2005. The new law comprises detailed regulations concerning residence permits, access to the labour market and measures to promote integration of adults. It does not concern school-based measures for children.