

ISOTIS

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT
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The role of professionals in promoting diversity and inclusiveness

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THIS PROJECT HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM
THE EUROPEAN UNION'S HORIZON 2020
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME
UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT NO. 72706

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Document Identifier

D5.1 Report on literature review WP5

Version

1.0

Date Due

M2

Submission date

28th February

Work Package

WP5 Development of professionals and organizations

Lead Beneficiary

UU

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful for all the input from the partners received in the process of preparing this review and during the kick-off meeting in Utrecht, January 17th 2017.

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Germany: Yvonne Anders, Hannah Ulferts, & Hande Erdem

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review of the literature is meant to provide an initial theoretical framework concerning the role of professionals in dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity and promoting inclusiveness. Professionals are broadly defined as all adults who work with children, either in an official institution, such as (pre)school, or in the context of community-based (volunteer) services. In view of preparing children adequately for life in the 21st century eight key competences have been identified by the European Union. Among these competences are the ability to communicate in the mother tongue and cultural awareness and expression. This is in line with research evidence showing the importance of the heritage language and culture in identity development, well being, mental health and school achievement. Hence, the role of professionals is pivotal in fostering cultural and linguistic awareness among children and promoting inclusiveness in the classroom or group. First, we identified the state-of-affairs regarding professionals' attitudes and practices with culturally and linguistically diverse children, and, next, we looked at possible determinants of these attitudes and practices using the bio-ecological model of Bronfenbrenner.

The review illustrated that professionals' attitudes towards cultural diversity are inconsistent, with some evidence showing positive or neutral views towards cultural diversity in the classroom, whereas other evidence pointing to (implicit) negative beliefs. Concerning linguistic diversity the evidence is more consistent and generally shows a strong assimilation approach, thus disregarding the importance of the first language. Generally, teachers feel ill prepared in dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity and find it challenging to work with a diverse population. Consequently, there is evidence that teachers treat children with another cultural or linguistic background differently than mainstream children. Some studies have shown that teachers use less positive speech in their interactions with children from another cultural or linguistic background, although no differences were found for the use of negative speech. Moreover, other studies have illustrated that teachers demonstrated a stronger focus on classroom management in culturally diverse classrooms. Another aspect of classroom practices concerns the use of a curriculum and materials that explicitly acknowledge different cultures and promote diversity. The findings concerning these aspects are mixed. In some countries the curriculum appears to show higher levels of diversity acceptance than others.

At the micro level several aspects have shown to contribute to professionals' attitudes and practices concerning diversity and inclusiveness. For instance, characteristics of the professionals appeared related to the degree of diversity acceptance. Demographic factors, such as gender and cultural background, professional background, including pre- and in-service training, and personal characteristics have shown to be related to professionals' attitudes towards diversity. In addition, more experience with different people from other cultural or linguistic backgrounds, either personally or professionally, was related to more diversity acceptance. Also, there is quite consistent evidence that teachers hold lower expectations of cultural or linguistic minority children, which is rooted in a cultural deficit view. Holding lower expectations can affect professionals' (classroom) practices, which in turn affects children's development and achievement and results in persistent inequalities, also in the long term.

Within the context of the classroom, school or institutions several aspects can affect how professionals deal with diversity and inclusiveness. For instance, more exposure to diversity in the classroom has shown to positively affect teachers' perceptions. As professionals are part

of a team of colleagues and an organisation or school, these aspects can influence teachers' beliefs and practices as well. Strong leadership and ample opportunities for professional development as a means of continuous improvement of practices has shown to be effective in this regard.

The mesosystem concerns the relationships between professionals and parents or the home environment. Following Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres the evidence is consistent in showing the importance of collaboration and partnerships between the different systems (i.e. home and school or community services). Despite the evidence on the importance of these partnerships, there are some barriers for parents to be actively involved in the school. Language is a major factor, as many parents do not master the host country's language well enough to be as actively involved as mainstream parents. Another aspects concerns the fact that many minority parents do not feel welcome, accepted or valued in their cultural or language background, which poses major challenges for establishing a relationship with professionals. Outreaching and active efforts from the teacher's part are recognized as effective means of establishing more parent involvement.

The exosystem focuses on the role of the wider community that can include health or social services, community initiatives involving (para)professionals and volunteer organisations. Particularly the role of cultural mediators and the provision of out-of-school activities have been acknowledged as providing a bridging function between home and school. (para)professionals working within the community, perhaps sharing the same cultural or language background as the minority children and their families, can not only be a good role model for children, but also be of support for parents in the contacts with school, in finding their way in the community and within the (social, education, and legal) system. The provision of out-of-school activities not only provides a bridge between the home and school environment, it also allows children to develop other types of skills needed to succeed in life, such as social competence or leadership. These activities have shown to be effective in terms of improving educational and social-emotional outcomes and decreasing delinquency and substance abuse.

Taken together the results of this initial review have identified that teachers and other professionals are not always positive towards cultural and linguistic diversity, which can be explained by deficit views held about the (cultural and linguistic backgrounds of) children and their families as well as the incapability to deal with diversity properly. It is also clear that more exposure and experience with different people can contribute to more positive views, as well as targeted pre- or in-service training enhancing professionals' knowledge about cultural and linguistic diversity. However, knowledge alone is not sufficient in view of changing attitudes and, consequently, behaviour and practices. In view of embracing cultural and linguistic diversity and enhancing social inclusiveness it is important to take a multidimensional approach targeting knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, and the transfer to actual behaviour. Hence continuous professional development embedded within a school or organisational system in which there is a shared view and effort to make a difference and embrace diversity is needed to make sustainable changes.

1. LIST OF DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

A list with the most important definitions and key concepts is presented below.

Acculturation: changes in genuine cultural models when groups of individuals from different backgrounds are meeting in a direct and continuous way. This definition implies that each culture constitutes a system of its own whose various elements are changing and reorganising through these contacts (Larousse, 1999). It is also defined as a process through which immigrants are expected to learn the language of the country of immigration, as well as its presumed dominant cultural values and practices” (Castles, Korac, Vasta, & Vertovec, 2002).

Adaptation: selective and often conscious attempt to modify certain aspects of cultural practice in accordance with the host society’s norms and values. The idea may coincide with a view that ‘public’ behaviour should conform to host culture, while ‘private’ activities may continue in line with society and culture of sending country (Castles et al., 2002).

Assimilation: a process where immigrants adapt to the cultural, socio-economic and political norms of the destination society or area (Emke-Poulopoulou, 2007). Assimilation takes place when out-group members are allowed to enter fully into civil life on the condition that they shed their polluted primordial identities. Assimilation is possible to the degree that socialization channels exist that can provide “civilizing” or “purifying” processes- through interaction, education, or mass mediated representation-that allow persons to be separated from their primordial qualities. It is not the qualities themselves that are purified or accepted but the persons who formerly, and often privately, bear them. This is the genius of assimilation; it is also its limitation (Alexander, 2001).

- **Segmented assimilation:** immigrants sometimes do not become active members of society as a whole, but rather become assimilated into specific parts of it, defined on the basis of race or ethnicity and class. For instance, Mexicans in the US are said to ‘become assimilated as blacks’ (i.e. into a disadvantaged and discriminated part of society), while Koreans ‘become assimilated as whites’ – i.e. into the dominant group (Portes & Zhou, 1993). The focus of research under the concept of segmented assimilation is thus on the processes that stigmatise or privilege certain groups when they enter society, and on the ways migrants – especially members of the so-called second generation – direct their strategies of adaptation toward specific ethnic communities and economic niches” (Castles et al., 2002).
- **Structural or functional assimilation:** Recognition that immigrants may participate successfully in some spheres of activity (for instance, in the labour market or education system) while they remain highly discriminated against or excluded from other spheres (such as neighbourhood life or the political system) (Castles et al., 2002).

Capital (Bourdieu, 1986):

- **Economic capital:** refers to monetary income as well as other financial resources and assets, and finds its institutional expression in property rights - people differ in the extent to which they earn income from gainful employment, assets, subsidies and other resources.
- **Cultural capital:** it includes long-standing dispositions and habits acquired in socialisation process, formal educational qualifications and training, and the

accumulation of valued cultural objects such as paintings or other artefacts signalling levels of refinement and status attainment.

- **Social capital:** sum of actual and potential resources that can be mobilized through membership in social networks or individual actors and organisations - people differ in the size and span of their social networks and membership.

Citizenship: a right and indeed a responsibility to participate in the cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs of the community together with others (Council of Europe, 1995).

Colour-blind or egalitarian beliefs: stress the importance of treating everyone equally regardless of the cultural background (Hachfeld, Hahn, Schroeder, Anders, & Kunter, 2015).

Diversity: it has become a major political-cultural issue with the post-enlargement Union (since 2004) with a need of a common European identity and set of values. At the same time the earlier emphasis on “integration” was substituted with the current one on “identity”. A period of European integration by means of a political consensus in political economic terms was followed by the attempt to provide social cohesion by cultural means, in the wider context of the crisis of the welfare state. The “united in diversity” motto of the European Union and the idea of “forging a common destiny” imply interaction and dialogue between diverse cultures (Blokker, 2006). Since 2007, many charters for diversity were adopted all around Europe following the adoption in 2000, of two directives: the Employment Equality Directive prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, religious belief, age and disability in the area of employment; the Racial Equality Directive prohibited discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity in the context of employment, but also in accessing the welfare system and social security, and goods and services (Halba, 2014).

- **Culture of diversity:** a balance achieved which ensures the fair and proper treatment of persons belonging to minorities and avoids any abuse of a dominant position (Council of Europe, 2005).

Incorporation: a relatively neutral concept concerning the terms and conditions of entering and becoming a part of a host society. Thus ‘integration’, ‘assimilation’, ‘acculturation’ or ‘social marginalisation and exclusion’ are specific forms and processes of immigrant incorporation in destination societies (Iosifides, Lavrentiadou, Petracou, & Kontis, 2007).

Integration (social integration/inclusion): a two-sided process, the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as the ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life (Council of Europe, 2008). Immigrant integration may be viewed as a two way process of adaptation, both of immigrant and natives in the country or area of destination. Integration entails an element of social change where immigrants become members of the host society avoiding discrimination, prejudice and their impacts (Emke-Poulopoulou, 2007).

Intercultural education: the pedagogy - aims, content, learning processes, teaching methods, syllabus and materials, assessment - of which one purpose is to develop intercultural competence in learners of all ages in all types of education as a foundation for dialogue and living together (Huber & Reynolds, 2014).

- **Intercultural competence:** a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action which enables one either singly or together with others to understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself. This entails responding appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people, establishing positive and constructive relationships with such people, and understanding oneself and one's own multiple cultural affiliations through encounters with cultural "difference" (Huber & Reynolds, 2014).
- **Intercultural dialogue:** an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It operates at all levels - within societies, between the societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world (Council of Europe, 2008).
- **Interculturalism:** the use of the word 'intercultural' necessarily implies - if the prefix 'inter' is given its full meaning - interaction, exchange, breaking down barriers, reciprocity, and objective solidarity. If the term 'culture' is given its full force, it also implies recognition of the values, lifestyles, and symbolic representations to which human beings, both individuals and societies, refer in their relations with others and in their world outlook. It concerns the recognition of their importance, recognition of the way they work and their variety, and recognition of the interactions that take place both between the multiple registers of a single culture and between the different cultures, in time and space (Rolandi-Ricci, 1996).

Mediation: a process of building, repairing social link and managing day to day conflicts, in which a third person, impartial, independent, without any authority but freely accepted by partners (called "helper") tries to support, either by improving or establishing relations or solving conflicts, through exchanges between persons and institutions. This is a technical process for the solution of problems in order for people in conflicts to find a solution, through a formal or informal negotiation, without a lawsuit, through a person called the mediator. The third person in the heart of the mediation, essential element – no mediation without this third person called mediator- is often, in the practice a delusion. Qualities essential for mediation are impartiality, independence and absence of official power are often missing (Guillaume-Hofnung, 2005)

- **Cultural mediation:** a profession whose main objective is to facilitate the relations between natives and foreign people, in order to promote knowledge and reciprocal understanding, to enhance positive relations between people with different backgrounds. The main characteristics for cultural mediators are skills and competences in communication, empathy, active listening and knowledge either in the native country or the host country (culture, laws, traditions...) (ONLUS H.E.L.P, 1997) Cultural mediation may also be defined as the process through which a person, variously designated as a cultural mediator or multicultural liaison officer, facilitates communication when conflicts or misunderstandings due to cultural and linguistic barriers pose actual or potential obstacles between people of different backgrounds and service providers (Eisenbruch, 1988; Fandetti & Goldmeier, 1988; Marsella, Fiedman, & Spain, 1994). To overcome what may be a mix of cultural and linguistic barriers, both parties may benefit from a mediator who can translate not only literal meanings, but also the subtle cultural undertones, in order to communicate effectively. 'Effective communication requires understanding not only one's own culture, but other cultures as well' (Marsella et al.,

1994). For instance, if a teacher relies solely on her or his Western model of teaching, important ethno cultural factors may be overlooked, risking overgeneralization, stereotyping, or missed learning opportunities. Cultural mediation affords a bridge of understanding, particularly between host culture professionals and newcomers, through awareness and sensitivity to ethno cultural differences (Vargas, 1999).

- **Cultural mediator:** an actor facilitating communication through translation and linguistic support. Its role involves communication (essential to know each other and oneself) or the better knowledge of two (or more) cultures or two (or more) different languages (Dursun, 2001).

Multiculturalism: a specific policy approach where different cultures exist and may interact within a given space and social organisation - linked to cultural diversity and assimilationism (Council of Europe, 2008). Multiculturalism can be understood as a moral preference. Yet it is also very much an empirical process. In societies that have experienced intense racial and ethnic conflicts and have deepened civil society, a universalizing movement toward the recognition of particularity begins to appear. The ambition is to achieve - to perform and to display - what once appeared to be ascriptively rooted, primordial identity (Alexander, 2001). It may be described as one of the most distinctive achievements of modernity – this is the “recognition of difference” with its ideological as well as philosophical idea, means in sociological terms (Taylor, 1994).

- **Multicultural beliefs** incorporates the idea of viewing group differences and cultural background should not only be acknowledged, but seen as enriching (Hachfeld et al., 2011).

Social cohesion: capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means (Council of Europe, 2008).

2. INTRODUCTION

European countries are facing increasing societal cultural diversity, especially with the new wave of refugees. Consequently, dealing with diversity is inevitable for professionals working with young children in institutionalized settings, such as (pre)schools, as well as local, community-based social services. This diversity does not only apply to children's cultural background, but also the language spoken at home that might be different from the majority language. Policies on European and national levels, even at local levels, have not yet adopted a consistent approach in dealing with multilingualism for minority languages in education (Vetter, 2013). The mother tongue is considered an important aspect of developing an (cultural) identity (e.g. Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Cummins, 2001; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001) and there is substantial evidence that supporting the heritage language and culture is related to better well being, mental health and school achievement (Berry et al., 2006; Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Bond, 2008). One of the major challenges for professionals is that they feel they are ill prepared in dealing with diversity and multilingualism (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Michel & Kuiken, 2014; Van Gorp & Moons, 2014). A lack of intercultural competences on the teacher's part will pose challenges on teachers to support the development of these skills in children, meaning they will not be adequately prepared for life in the 21st century.

The European Union (2006) identified eight key competences that are needed to succeed in life in view of personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. These competences are: Communication in the mother tongue; Communication in foreign languages; Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; Digital competence; Learning to learn; Social and civic competences; Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and Cultural awareness and expression. The key competences are considered equally important, because they each contribute to a successful life in a knowledge society. Many of the competences overlap and interlock: aspects considered essential for one domain could support competence in another. Professionals, as the primary non-parental adults, fulfil a key role in fostering the development of these competences in (young) children while, at the same time, these professionals also need to further develop their own multicultural and multilingual competences to better support children.

A main competence in the relations between professionals and families in a diverse society is intercultural competence. This is the ability to understand one another across and beyond all types of cultural barriers and is a fundamental prerequisite for making our diverse democratic societies work. Therefore there is a need for a concerted effort to develop the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge that contribute to intercultural competence in the everyday practice of teaching and learning. It addresses the root of a range of issues our societies face: stereotyping, discrimination, and all forms of racism, which are exacerbated in times of economic difficulty. The concept of intercultural competence is related to the concepts of identity, culture, and intercultural encounter.

Scholarly research in the past 50 years has investigated the nature of intercultural competence with detailed lists of its components. They can be broken down into attitudes, knowledge and understanding, skills and actions (Huber & Reynolds, 2014). These attitudes include for instance valuing cultural diversity and pluralism of views and practice, respecting people who have different cultural affiliations from one's own, and being willing to learn from and about

people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives. The knowledge and understanding that contribute to intercultural competence include an understanding of the internal diversity and heterogeneity of all cultural groups, an understanding of processes of cultural, societal and individual interaction, knowledge of the beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products that may be used by people who have particular cultural orientations, and the socially constructed nature of knowledge. The skills involved in intercultural competence include skills like multiperspectivity or the ability to decentre from one's own perspective and to take other people's perspectives into consideration in addition to one's own, empathy or the ability to understand and respond to other people's thoughts, beliefs, values and feelings, cognitive flexibility or the ability to change and adapt one's way of thinking according to the situation or context, the ability to act as a mediator in intercultural exchanges, including skills in translating, interpreting and explaining. While attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills are all necessary components of intercultural competence, they have to be first acquired/possessed but they also have to be deployed and put into practice through action during intercultural encounters.

Concepts like knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, skills and behaviour are clearly related and show reciprocal influences. Beliefs and attitudes can be more or less based on explicit or implicit knowledge and have an affective element of evaluation or judgment in it. Beliefs and attitudes, in turn, are hypothesized to drive one's everyday behaviour and actions, although the strength of this relation remains open for debate. In view of embracing cultural and linguistic diversity and enhancing social inclusiveness it is important to take a multidimensional approach targeting knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, and the transfer to actual behaviour. Critical thinking skills and reflection are important prerequisites for change, which needs to be taken into account in further professional development provided to professionals.

The current review focuses on the professional and provides a first overview of issues affecting how professionals view and deal with diversity and multilingualism in- and outside the classroom. We will start with a short review on what is known concerning professionals' attitudes and behaviour related to cultural and linguistic diversity, before we turn to the possible determinants of those attitudes and practices guided by Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model.

2.1 PROFESSIONALS' BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES RELATED TO CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Concerning the attitudes professionals have towards cultural and linguistic diversity the empirical evidence base appears to be inconsistent. Particularly, the findings regarding cultural diversity are mixed. Some studies have shown that teachers are neutral or slightly positive towards cultural diversity in the classroom (e.g. Sanders & Downer, 2012; Youngs & Youngs, 2001), whereas other studies showed that teachers were rather negative (e.g. DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005). Other studies have looked more specifically at the beliefs held by teachers and distinguished between 'colour-blind' or egalitarian and multicultural beliefs (Hachfeld et al., 2015). Although both types of beliefs included a basic acceptance of cultural diversity, the colour-blind beliefs concern treating everyone equally whereas the multicultural beliefs more strongly emphasize the positive and added value of diversity. Some studies have shown that teachers with a majority background endorsed colour-blind beliefs (e.g. Van

Tartwijk, Den Brok, Veldman, & Wubbels, 2009), whereas a German study showed a balance between the two types of beliefs (Hachfeld et al., 2015).

The evidence concerning linguistic diversity is more consistent and generally shows a preference for a strong assimilation approach (Blom, 2015; Sakka, 2010; Van Gorp & Moons, 2014; Vetter, 2013; Young, 2014), thus disregarding the importance of the first language for identity development and as a basis for second language learning (Cummins, Mirza, & Stille, 2012). For instance, some studies showed strong (school) regulations focusing on speaking only the majority language, such as in Belgium and Austria (Van Gorp & Moons, 2014; Vetter, 2013). However, some studies have illustrated that teachers see the benefits of the first language in building self-esteem and in learning the second language. For instance, Spanish teachers appeared to be more accepting towards children using their first language during social and free time, such as on the playground (Dooly, 2005). However, these teachers also mentioned the risk of interference of the first language in second language learning and pointed to the risk of conflicts or isolation of children if they use their first language. Further, it appeared Spanish teachers' views were more positive for using the Catalan language compared to the use of Arabic.

2.2 CLASSROOM PRACTICES AND MATERIALS

Several studies have shown that teachers tend to treat children from another cultural or linguistic background differently than mainstream children. For instance, a meta-analysis by Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007) showed that in the United States teachers used less positive speech towards ethnic minority children compared to mainstream European American children, but no effects were found for the use of negative speech. Another finding emerging from the literature is that teachers focus more strongly on classroom management in more diverse classroom (e.g. den Brok & Levy, 2005; van Tartwijk et al., 2009). Teachers working in Dutch multicultural classrooms reported using more strategies focused at dominance while at the same time maintaining proximity in the relationship with children (den Brok, Tartwijk, Wubbels, & Veldman, 2010). Typical behaviours these teachers engaged in were standing in front of the class, remaining calm in emotional conflicts and re-establishing the relationship after behavioural corrections. These findings are supported by how children perceive their teachers. A review by Den Brok and Levy (2005) illustrated that non-western children perceived teachers as being more dominant compared to their western counterparts. However, at the same time non-western children also perceived their relationship with their teacher as more close, although the evidence was not completely consistent.

Providing a culturally sensitive (pre)school environment and using non-discriminatory materials in the classroom provides a basis for promoting inclusiveness. This goes beyond the incidental projects on multiculturalism or International Day (Lee & Oxelson, 2006) and involves the use of the environment and materials as inherently part of a culturally sensitive curriculum. Few studies to date have investigated these type of aspects in (pre)school classrooms. For instance Perلمان, Kankesan, and Zhang (2010) showed that Toronto preschool classrooms provided moderate levels of diversity acceptance, which was evident in the implementation and display of diversity-promoting curriculum activities and classroom materials. However, the acceptance of diversity in preschool and kindergarten centres in Greece, England and the United States was, on average, low as illustrated by observations with commonly used measures such as the ECERS-R and ECERS-E (Denny, Hallam, & Homer, 2012; Gregoriadis,

Tsigilis, Grammatikopoulos, & Kouli, 2016; Sylva et al., 2006). Another study showed that some teachers incorporated practices like sharing language and culture in the classroom, explicitly supporting and encouraging children's multilingualism both in the classroom and at home (Lee & Oxelson, 2006).

3. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PROFESSIONALS' BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model will be used to illustrate how the different systems can play a role in how professionals view cultural and linguistic diversity and relatedly how it affects their practices. At the lowest level, the microsystem concerns the aspects directly affecting the child, which in the current paper mainly concerns the role of the professionals either in or outside the classroom play. At the same time, these professionals are also part of the microsystems of a classroom, a school or institution, which can influence their beliefs, attitudes and practices. The mesosystem describes the relations between the different microsystems, which in this case mainly concerns the relations between professionals and home. The exosystem concerns the wider community of other services, including social and health services, the neighbourhood and people living in it, and local policy. The macrosystem concerns the attitudes and ideologies of the culture.

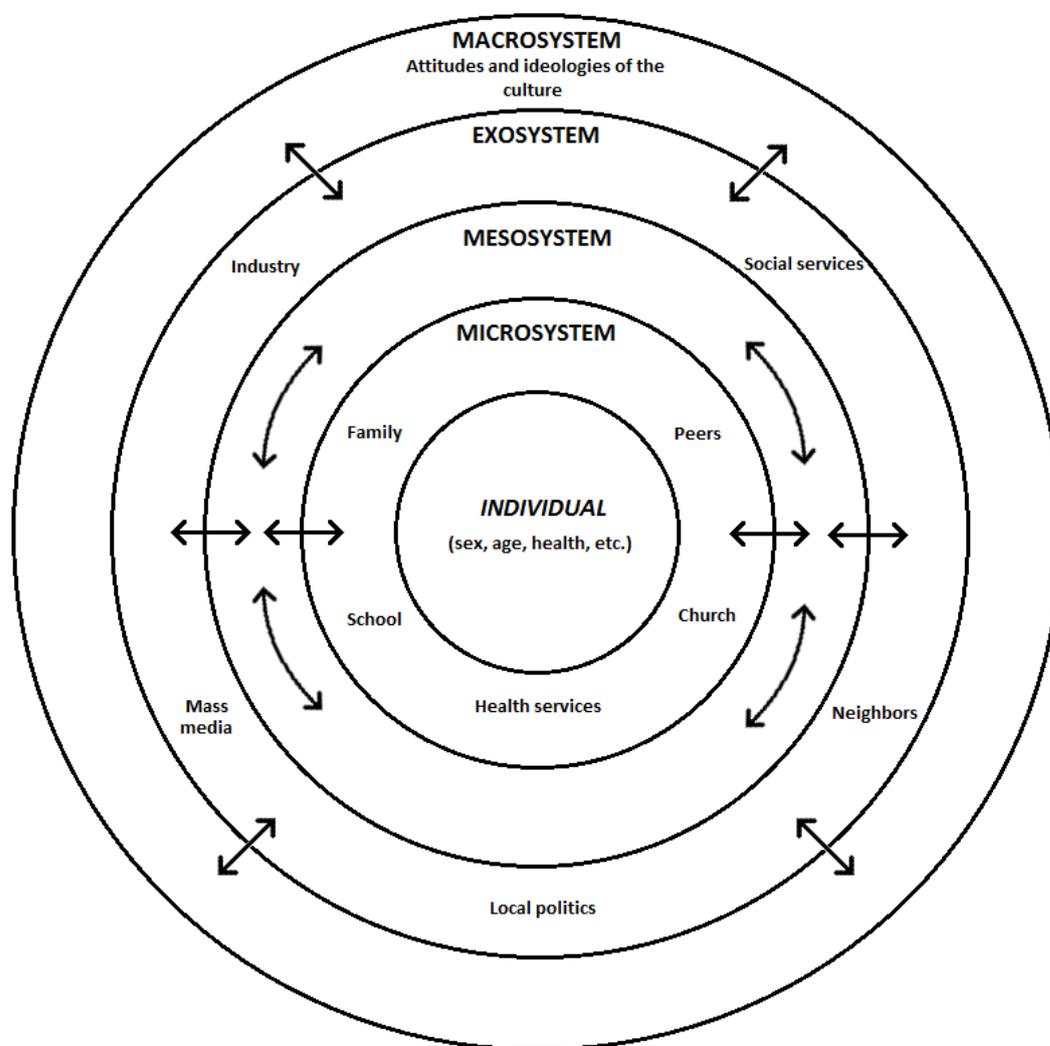


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

3.1 MICROSYSTEM: INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SCHOOL, INSTITUTION, OR ORGANISATION

Professionals are viewed as agents within a wider context of school, institution or organisation. Professionals, particularly teachers, acknowledge that cultural diversity in the classroom requires a new understanding and re-construction of the concepts of diversity and multilingualism, a redefinition of the role of a teacher and the use of appropriate materials and resources (Dooly, 2005; Sakka, 2010). How professionals deal with diversity and multilingualism is dependent on several different aspects and layers within the micro system. First, there are the individual characteristics of professionals, such as their own cultural background, educational qualifications or self-efficacy that may affect how they deal with diversity and multilingualism. Another important strand concerns the professionals' expectations as these contribute to their everyday behaviour and practices. Also characteristics of the classroom, the team or organization the professional is part of contribute to their attitudes and practices in dealing with diversity and inclusiveness. All these aspects will be further elaborated on below.

3.1.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROFESSIONAL

Demographic characteristics, such as gender and cultural background, have shown to play a role in the extent to which professionals have positive attitudes towards cultural diversity. Some studies have revealed that females are more culturally sensitive (Ottavi, Pope-Davis, & Dings, 1994; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006; Youngs & Youngs, 2001), whereas other studies have revealed the opposite (Brown, 2004). Further, the evidence concerning professionals' cultural background is also mixed. Some studies have illustrated that professionals with another cultural background than the majority were more positive towards cultural diversity (Flores & Smith, 2009; Sanders & Downer, 2012), whereas other studies have not reported this relation (Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1997).

Also, higher educational qualifications have shown to be related to more positive attitudes (Byrnes et al., 1997), although not consistently (Perlman et al., 2010; Sanders & Downer, 2012). This was particularly the case if the pre-service training addressed issues of diversity, multicultural or multilingual education (Brown, 2004; Flores & Smith, 2009; Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006; Youngs & Youngs, 2001) and the positive effects of diversity preparation were evident above and beyond the ethnic background of professionals (Flores & Smith, 2009). Therefore, many researchers advocate the necessity of good preservice education and suggest solutions for improving teacher preparation, ranging from extended multicultural curricula to single diversity courses (e.g. Barnes, 2006; Gay & Howard, 2000; Siwatu, 2011).

In addition to the importance of pre-service education, a growing body of research stresses the need of continuous in-service training to influence teachers' attitudes and practices (e.g. Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, & Knoche, 2009; Early et al., 2007; Jensen & Iannone, 2015). In-service training consists of a wide variety of professional development opportunities that can range from a single workshop to continuous coaching and mentoring practices (Buysse, Winton, & Rous, 2009). Several reviews and meta-analyses on the matter indicate important elements of effective professional development, such as permanence, specialized training, successful implementation, and joint participation (e.g. Egert, 2015; Henrichs, Slot, & Leseman, 2016; Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittaker, & Lavelle, 2010). Especially joint participation in for instance professional learning communities (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas,

2006; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008), has received increased interest as a means to establish more permanent changes in teacher's attitudes and practices (Egert, 2015; Stoll et al., 2006; Vescio et al., 2008; Zaslow et al., 2010). However, sufficient evidence on its effectiveness is still lacking (Jensen & Iannone, 2015). In contrast to more general research on professional development, little attention is devoted to the role of professional development elements that are specifically targeted at teachers' culturally sensitive attitudes and practices. Nevertheless, evidence shows promising results (i.e. DeCastro-Amrosetti & Cho, 2005).

Professionals who have little experience with people from other cultural backgrounds than their own or speaking another language at home felt insecure on how to best deal with diversity. Studies have illustrated that professionals showed fear of not being accepted by the parents or even for racial or cultural conflicts (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Dooly, 2005). Professionals with more, personal or professional, experience with people from other cultural or linguistic backgrounds, on the other hand, showed more positive attitudes (Byrnes et al., 1997; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). However, stronger cultural awareness among professionals does not necessarily translate into better educational practices. An interesting finding from a study among Greek primary and secondary school teachers is that they showed relatively high cultural awareness but did not see the relations with the content of their educational practices or their communication with children (Sakka, 2010). These Greek teachers participated in a teacher-training program focused on diversity, because they encountered difficulties in coping with children from cultural or linguistic minority groups. This problem-oriented approach towards diversity is reflected among many teachers (Dooly, 2005; Sakka, 2010) and may hinder more constructive ways of dealing with diversity. Among the problems mentioned in several studies are classroom management, lack of resources, time and support (e.g. Dooly, 2005). One of the advantages of more culturally diverse classrooms, mentioned by teachers, is more open-mindedness and tolerance among students (Dooly, 2005). Teachers also viewed cultural diversity as a resource and reported they could learn from students. However, these teachers with more positive attitudes, mentioned advantages as well as disadvantages (Dooly, 2005), showing that intercultural awareness alone may not be sufficient to affect attitudes and in turn, change educational practices. It rather requires a stronger positive stance towards cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource or asset that can benefit all children as well as professionals working with children. These positive attitudes are necessary for professionals to reconstruct the meaning of linguistic and cultural diversity where professionals function as cultural mediators who can facilitate the dialogue between children in the classroom (Banks, 2016; Dooly, 2005).

Also personal characteristics, such as teacher efficacy and enthusiasm, have shown to be related to more positive beliefs towards diversity (Hachfeld et al., 2015). Teachers showing higher self-efficacy and more enthusiasm in their work viewed cultural diversity as enriching and emphasized the need to acknowledge and respect differences.

3.1.2 PROFESSIONALS' EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES

Professionals have different expectations and hold different values on children and their families from another cultural background or speaking another home language. These expectations and attitudes may be, in part, implicit but they affect the way professionals deal with children, such as in the interactions in the classroom. Differences in approaches or communication, even if only subtle, in turn, can affect children's developmental and educational outcomes resulting in persistent inequalities. Overall two types of expectancy

effects have been mentioned as explanatory factors of social inequalities: self-fulfilling prophecies and self-maintaining expectations (Van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, & Holland, 2010). With self-fulfilling prophecies we mean situations, which are based on false conceptions that evoke new behaviour living up to these misconceptions, thus resulting in lower achievement. Self-maintaining expectations on the other hand are low expectations based on real differences perpetuating these expectations and resulting in low achievement, also known as the Golem-effects. The expectations and values concern several aspects, including school achievement, the home environment or the role of parents in supporting children's development.

Numerous studies have shown that teachers hold lower educational expectations for children from different language and cultural backgrounds (for a meta-analysis see Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007), which affects these children's educational careers in the short and long run (e.g. Van den Bergh et al., 2010). Van den Bergh et al. (2010) investigated teachers prejudiced attitudes both explicitly and implicitly, which showed different relations with their expectations of children's performance, ability, and level of attainment and students' academic achievement. Teachers' explicit prejudice was not related to their expectations or student outcomes, whereas implicitly held prejudice predicted lower teacher expectations and lower math and reading skills.

The lower expectations tend to be based in genetic and cultural deficiency theories that both imply that parents are somehow responsible and to be held accountable for children's low achievement (e.g. Banks, 2016; DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Dooly, 2005; Duncan & Magnuson, 2006; Sakka, 2010). According to the cultural deficit model professionals hold a set of beliefs based on deficits and shortcomings in children with another cultural or linguistic background, attribute these deficits to limited intelligence or the family context, and behave in accordance with these beliefs which results in a perpetuation of these beliefs. Interestingly, this cultural deficit view was apparent not only in western, but also non-western teachers (Dee & Henkin, 2002; Flores & Smith, 2009).

3.1.3 CLASSROOM, TEAM, AND ORGANISATION CHARACTERISTICS

Within the context of the classroom, school or institutions several aspects can play a role in how professionals deal with diversity and inclusiveness. For teachers the classroom is the place where they spend the most time in working with children hence characteristics of the classroom can potentially play a large role in how teachers think about diversity or in how they interact with a diverse population. To date, very limited information is available on this particular aspect though. Some studies have shown that in more culturally or linguistically diverse classrooms teachers tend to have more positive attitudes (Byrnes et al., 1997; Flores & Smith, 2009; Sanders & Downer, 2012). This suggests that merely exposure to more diversity can have positive effects on teacher's perceptions. Further, there is some evidence that teachers who have a higher and more positive climate in the classroom also showed more acceptance of diversity (Sanders & Downer, 2012).

As professionals are agents within a wider context, characteristics of the team and organisation affect how professionals deal with diversity and multilingualism as well. For instance, the diversity within the team and the shared vision regarding diversity and inclusion within the organisation shape the context in which professionals work. Furthermore,

professional leaders within the organisation play an important role in coping with diversity and in guiding professional development. These three aspects will be explicated below.

Due to the increasing societal cultural diversity, not only classrooms are becoming more diverse, but also schools across different contexts draw staff from diverse cultural backgrounds (Walker & Riordan, 2010). Few studies addressed the issue of diverse staff in schools. However, a substantial body of research discusses the effects of diversity in teams within the field of business. Within this field, the optimistic belief has grown that diversity in teams will lead to an atmosphere of enhancing group performance. The information-processing paradigm states that cultural diversity leads to a direct increase in the variety of perspectives, knowledge, networks, and skills, hence to greater creativity and better performance (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Although studies endorse this belief (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010), the preponderance of evidence creates a more pessimistic view. Team diversity has shown to be related to more conflict, less effective communication, and less social integration (e.g. Ely & Thomas, 2001; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Stahl et al., 2010). Overall, theory suggests that deep-level diversity (i.e. functional background, education, personality) is more likely to be associated with positive effects such as increased creativity, while surface-level diversity (i.e. race/ethnicity, gender, age) is more often related to negative effects on group performance (Mannix & Neale, 2005).

A solution for obtaining the full benefits of diverse teams is to provide bridges across diversity in a way that is meaningful to the particular team. If a team cannot create an environment that is tolerant towards divergent perspectives, the individuals with unique perspectives may be unwilling to pay the social and psychological cost necessary to share their perspective (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Teams with high collective identification – many meaningful bridges between team members – are more willing to share their unique perspectives and tend to have less conflict and better performance (e.g. Huo, 2003; Van der Vegt & Bunderson, 2005). Thus, shared organisational vision that values diversity and inclusion is crucial in the performance of diverse teams.

Ely and Thomas (2001) have identified two types of visions and policies regarding diversity and inclusion that are commonly found within teams. The first, discrimination-and-fairness policy, aims to reduce discrimination and fosters equality and diversion. The second policy, access-and-legitimacy, promotes cultural pluralism and creates opportunities to celebrate differences and to view diversity as a resource. These two policies are evident within the school context as well and can be considered part of the overall school climate in which professionals navigate (Hachfeld et al., 2011; Schachner, Noack, Van de Vijver, & Eckstein, 2016). The effects of positive school climates have been extensively researched, but less attention has been dedicated to school climate aspects that are related to a school's approach to cultural diversity (Horenzcyk & Tatar, 2012). Professionals in schools that foster the equality and inclusion approach (discrimination-and-fairness) are expected to treat all students equal and to encourage collaboration and contact between diverse students (Schachner et al., 2016). Although there is evidence that this approach decreases discrimination and facilitates school adjustment, it comes close to a 'colour-blind' perspective where equality is mistaken for sameness. Therefore, it tends to implicitly promote adjustment towards the mainstream culture and can be associated with assimilation practices (Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009; Schachner et al., 2016; Schofield, 2001). Schools that value cultural pluralism (access-and-legitimacy) go beyond the prevention of discrimination and other negative consequences of cultural diversity and professionals within these schools treat diversity as an asset that can enrich the learning

process (Schachner et al., 2016). The latter perspective seems relatively new in educational settings, and although (aspects of) both policies often co-occur in schools, the equality and inclusion approach is most commonly adopted (e.g. Hachfeld et al., 2011; Riehl, 2000; Schachner et al., 2016; Schofield, 2001). This is not a surprising result given that teachers often feel unprepared and overwhelmed when dealing with cultural diversity (Michel & Kuiken, 2014; Van Gorp & Moons, 2014). In order to cope with these feelings of insecurity, it might be easier for schools to focus on preventing the negative consequences of cultural diversity instead of viewing it as a resource. However, a growing body of research is in favour of a tendency towards a more positive approach of diversity. As practices and beliefs of teachers and educational institutions can limit or extend the educational experiences of children (Ang, 2010), several researchers argue that the next step should be to embrace diversity and adopt a cultural pluralism perspective within education (e.g. Plaut et al., 2009; Schachner et al., 2016; Walker & Riordan, 2010). This means that, in order to change school climates regarding diversity, diversity training measures should be carried out much more systematically, both during teacher education and through ongoing in-service professional development (Schachner et al., 2016). Professional leaders might play an important role when trying to achieve this goal.

Professional leadership is yet another aspect that can affect professionals' attitudes and practices concerning diversity. In educational settings, professional leadership means taking responsibility for the shared understanding of the aims and methods of learning and teaching of children (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). When considering diversity and inclusion in education, it is important to focus on professional leaders for several reasons. First, professional leaders can bridge diversity by proactively taking steps to bring a subordinate goal or shared vision on diversity to the team (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Constructing meaning of diversity is a shared process, however, the attitudes of professional leaders towards diversity and inclusiveness are important for the entire attitude within the school, as leaders typically have additional power in defining situations and their meaning (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011; Philpott, Furey, & Penney, 2010; Riehl, 2000). Moreover, Riehl (2000) concludes in her review that the overall evidence suggests that professional leaders, when committed to equity and social justice, are indeed able to foster new forms of practice regarding the promotion of inclusive cultures and practices. Thus, professional leaders play a central role when creating cultural pluralistic cultures within schools and it should be the leaders' work to promote productive professional relationships among culturally diverse teams (Walker & Riordan, 2010).

Second, professional leaders play a role in facilitating ongoing in-service professional development, which is deemed necessary to change school climates regarding diversity (e.g. Schachner et al., 2016). Leaders focus on building the collective capacity of the school community. Collective capacity and team-based approaches to teaching are increasingly understood as effective means to improve students' learning outcomes (Stoll et al., 2006; Walker & Riordan, 2010). Professional learning communities appear promising for building this collective capacity (for a review, see Stoll et al., 2006), and thus leaders are often expected to build professional learning communities that support ongoing individual and organisational learning (e.g. Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011; Sumsion, et al., 2015). As investment in professional development for the education workforce has increased, there is a growing and unregulated 'industry' regarding ongoing and in-service learning and leaders have to decide about the best professional development opportunities for their staff (Georgeson & Campbell-Barr, 2015). However, according to Sumsion et al. (2015) many leaders do not have the

capacity to take an 'evaluative stance' in relation to decisions about professional development. This means that in order to cope with increasing diversity in education, we should not only strive for ongoing in-service training of professionals, but it might be equally important to focus on training professional leaders in developing and delivering meaningful training to their teachers as well (Philpott et al., 2010; Sumsion et al., 2015). In conclusion, the effective, inclusive school is one where professional development regarding cultural diversity is an ongoing balance between pre-and in-service training for both professionals as well as their leaders (Philpott et al., 2010).

3.2 MESOSYSTEM: RELATIONS BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS AND PARENTS

Agents surrounding the child (teachers, parents, friends, etc.) not only interact with the child, but with each other as well. Within the literature, the leading framework for the effects of this interaction between agents on children regards Joyce Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence (1987, 2001). It is widely accepted that students learn more and succeed at higher levels when home, school, and community work together to support student's learning and development (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Moreover, parental involvement in school is increasingly highlighted as important for child outcomes regarding academic careers (Driessen, Smit, & Slegers, 2005; Smit, Van der Wolf, & Slegers, 2001), social competence (Hill & Craft, 2003), and behaviour (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

3.2.1 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Research on the effects of parental involvement shows many differences in the conceptualisation of parental involvement (Intxausti, Etxeberria, & Joaristi, 2013). A very broad and general way to define parental involvement is the investment of parents' resources in their children's schooling (Sheldon, 2003). Several researchers try to grasp the concept by defining various types of parental involvement. For instance, Van Loo (2004) explicates that there is a difference between parental involvement – i.e. parents feeling involved with a childcare institution because their child is attending the institution – and parent participation – i.e. parent actively taking part in activities of the institution. Epstein (2001) divides parental involvement even further and proposes six types of involvement: *parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community*. In addition, Driessen et al. (2005) state that two perspectives of cooperation between schools and parent can be discerned – parent-initiated parental involvement and school-initiated parental involvement. The latter perspective seems to dominate the current research. Most researchers not only argue that parent-professional partnerships (PPP) are important, they also – implicitly or explicitly – state that these partnerships should be school-initiated as the existence and quality of these partnerships are the responsibility of the school and teachers (Driessen et al., 2005; Epstein, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002; Intxausti et al., 2013; Kim, 2009; Kroeger & Lash, 2011; Lewis, Kim, & Bey, 2011).

To guide professionals in engaging these partnerships, several studies have been conducted on the barriers that might stand in the way of effective PPP. Specifically, barriers for partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse parents have been investigated, as these parents are often viewed as less engaged in their children's education (e.g. Kim, 2009; Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Terrill & Mark, 2000). Although research indicates that minority parents are no different regarding their interest in their children's education (e.g. Daniel-White, 2002) the lack of participation in the school is often being mistaken by

professionals as a lack of interest (Kim, 2009). However, it might also be a matter of differing cultural values that underlie the views and behaviours of both parties. Two important barriers for this lack of participation are highlighted: communication problems between teachers and parents and general teacher beliefs regarding parental involvement.

As the interaction between parent and teacher is key to families becoming involved in the school, communication is a crucial aspect in PPP (e.g. Intxausti et al., 2013). However, communication is often a major barrier for minority parents to get involved in the school. Communication is, for instance, affected by a discrepancy in social and ethnic background between the teacher and the parent (Van Keulen & Van Beurden, 2002) and language is a key factor as poor knowledge of the host country tongue is one of the barriers that has proven to prevent parents from getting involved (Intxausti et al., 2013; Kim, 2009; Lewis et al., 2011). In addition, the communication skills of the school and teachers are important for an effective PPP as well. Lewis et al. (2011) stress the importance of 'outreaching' and argue that schools should use multiple ways to communicate with parents, such as informal classroom talk, newsletters, and home visits. Moreover, it is important that schools create inclusive, positive and open social climates, and communicate positively with parents (Hasley, 2005; Lewis et al., 2011; Kim, 2009). Lastly, communication between teachers and minority parents can also be affected by differences in childrearing styles and views regarding upbringing (Kim, 2009; Van Keulen & Van Beurden, 2002).

A second barrier that prevents minority parents from participating is related to teacher beliefs regarding parental involvement. Several studies indicate that effective PPP is more likely to occur when teachers view parental involvement as important. For instance, a study of Hujala, Turja, Gaspar, Veisson, and Waniganayake (2009) shows that the way PPP is constructed and valued differs between countries. Portuguese and Norwegian teachers viewed children's education as a shared responsibility between school and the home and showed the strongest endorsement for parental support in children's learning. Finnish teachers on the other hand, saw parent involvement in the child's education as less important. In addition to more general teacher beliefs regarding parental involvement, literature also indicates that teachers have less-than-positive perceptions toward the efficacy and capacity of minority parents (e.g. Kim, 2009). Respecting parents' knowledge and skills in helping children's education is important for PPP (Lewis et al., 2011). However, family roles and resources are often devalued and negated when parents' language and cultural practices differ from the majority language and culture (Kroeger & Lash, 2011). As a result, schools are less likely to initiate the involvement of minority parents and often choose wealthier American European parents to participate in school activities (DeMoss & Vaughn, 2000). These teacher perceptions and practices contribute to the uncomfortable and unwelcome feelings minority parents experience regarding school involvement (Christie, 2005; Kim, 2009) and can therefore be considered an important barrier.

An underlying mechanism that plays a role in effective PPP regards the (perceived) power relations between the teachers and parents. Most teachers are unaware that their mainstream practices of PPP are discourse practices that reproduce a set of power relations that often mirrors the existing power structures within society (Kroeger & Lash, 2011). For instance, communication between teachers and parents is often a one-way street (Prott & Hautumn, 2005) in which the schools are expected to communicate, and parents are expected to be open to such communication (Epstein, 2001). Such practices place the parent in a subordinate position in relation to the teacher, resulting in a lack of parental participation (Prott & Hautumn,

2005). This might be even more the case for minority parents as the power relation in society are often in favour of the majority. Moreover, Auerbach (2007) describes PPP as a social construct that gives a privileged place to those from dominant groups regarding characteristics such as race, culture, and gender. Thus, power relations within PPP place the parent in a position of 'listening to the authority', although, elite parents are more likely to be excluded from such power relations (McLaren, 2009). As a result, mainstream PPP practices not only place minority parents in a subordinate position in relation to the teacher, but in relation to majority parents as well (e.g. Auerbach, 2007).

To conclude, there are several barriers that keep minority parents from becoming involved in school. Several studies have indicated that teachers' efforts to reach out to parents and bring them into the school are effective in increasing parental involvement (for a review see Kim, 2009). Therefore, several authors advocate that enhancing PPP is a responsibility of the school and teachers should try to overcome all those barriers (e.g. Kroegeer & Lash, 2011; Lewis et al., 2011) As a result, pre-service and in-service teacher training should prepare teachers better for such responsibilities (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002).

3.3 EXOSYSTEM: ROLE OF THE WIDER COMMUNITY

In the exosystem several aspects of the wider community involving professionals, such as local and community-based (social) services, volunteer associations and local policy, may play a role in the promoting inclusiveness of culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families. Professionals working in these services are typically not teachers, but school counsellors, youth workers, social workers and paraprofessionals or volunteers (usually people with strong ties to the community) who have a bridging function between home and school. We will address two main approaches: the intercultural mediation approach and the provision of extracurricular activities.

3.3.1 CULTURAL MEDIATORS

The profession of cultural mediation plays an emblematic role in the context of diversity, as migration has to be considered from a macro-level perspective (legislation, institutionalization of migration policy, strategies of inclusion of immigrants, security concerns, human rights issues) and a micro-level perspective (to raise and answer questions about migrants' everyday life) (Halba, 2008). The main function of a cultural mediator is facilitating communication and interaction between individuals, families and the community in order to reduce cultural and language barriers and enhance feelings of inclusiveness and acceptance in the community (Catarci, 2016). Intercultural mediation is aimed at solving or proposing alternative solutions to conflicts rising between migrants and different institutions (school, hospital or court of justice). Mediation is defined as *"a process of building, repairing social links and managing day to day conflicts, in which a third person, impartial and independent without any authority but freely accepted by partners (institutions and migrants), tries to establish relations or solve conflicts through exchanges between persons and institutions"* (DIV, 2004). For instance, in France a general framework for social mediation exists (DIV, 2004) stating the main principles for the professionals working in this field: neutrality and impartiality. The main goal is to respect both parties (migrants and institutions) by establishing dialogue and negotiation. The role of a cultural mediator is to facilitate the expression of immigrants' needs while keeping in mind the resources and constraints of the (welfare or education) system, hence oscillating between perspectives of 'advocacy' and 'empowerment' (Catarci, 2016). Social and cultural mediation

is grounded in in the European convention for human rights and provides a bridge between migrants and institutions. The power relations in mediation are based on equal foot.

A European comparison of intercultural mediators in Italy, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, UK showed a common ground in in the use of mediators to enhance interaction and cohesion between groups; accessibility of public services and citizen rights; and management of conflicts arising in multicultural contexts (Casadei & Franceschetti, 2009). Despite the recognition of the added value of cultural mediators in enhancing inclusiveness of families in the host society, these mediators do not always feel supported in the work they do (Catarci, 2016). A survey among over 500 intercultural mediators from Italy indicated that they experienced low job satisfaction, insufficient recognition of their role as mediator in the service or institution and a lack of supervision and reflection on their role.

Different types of cultural mediators can be distinguished (Ishimaru et al., 2016): educators in different formal roles (i.e. teachers, administrators, counsellors or instructional aides), school-based parent-liasons, and community-based (para)professionals. The use of parents and a parent association in the school has shown to be effective in enhancing parent involvement (Lewis et al., 2011). As school-parent coordinators they can be seen as an information bridge between schools and families. They fulfil the role of a cultural intermediary by educating and supporting families and the school to be open, accepting and understanding of one another (Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007). However, parent liasons working as cultural brokers in schools also encounter challenges in their work. Parent liasons are part of the school institution, which is maintaining and reproducing educational inequalities, while at the same time they are advocates for (immigrant) parents and have a role in translating the academic school culture and educating parents in their rights. When parent liasons are effective in connecting parents and administrators and empowering parents in their own cultural and linguistic background, this can result in increased parental involvement in school (Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007).

3.3.2 EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Children from families with lower socio-economic status tend to participate less in out of school activities, such as sports, music, and scouts or other community-based clubs (e.g. Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Dearing et al., 2009). What is even more worrisome is that there appeared to be mediation effects of the neighbourhood the child lived in and the cognitive stimulation at home, showing that children from higher educated parents lived in better and wealthier neighbourhoods and received more cognitive stimulation at home, both of which were mediating factors in the participation in extra-curricular activities putting children from low educated parents at double jeopardy (Dearing et al., 2009). However, these types of activities are a way to bridge the achievement gap of children from another cultural or linguistic background. There are two pathways in which participation in out-of-school activities can be beneficial for children's developmental or educational outcomes (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010). Firstly, when these activities are provided within the school context this can lead to better connections with the school in which the child's identity as a valued member of the school community is reinforced. Children have the opportunity to establish and deepen relations with supportive peers and adults who can function as a mentor that can foster social inclusiveness. Second, during out-of-school activities, also when provided by community-based services, children have the opportunity to develop multiple talents, such as interpersonal skills and setting goals, which are beneficial for their educational attainment in the short term and better

career opportunities in the long term.

In Europe the provision of out-of-school activities is closely related to another approach that is focused on early school leaving. Early school leaving, defined by the EU as leaving secondary school with a lower secondary school diploma or less (OECD, 2013) is particularly apparent among immigrant youth. For example, in a European comparative study, Crul et al. (2012) reported that the percentage of early school leaving of second-generation Turkish immigrant youth living in large European cities ranged from 10% to almost 40%. It is the result of the complex interaction between home, family, community, school-based and systemic factors (European Commission, 2011). Therefore, policies targeted at reducing early school leaving must combine education and social policy, youth work and health related aspects (European Commission, 2011) at the different levels of local, regional and national contexts. As Thelot (2004) argued, it is important to bridge between “formal learning” acquired at school and all “non-formal and informal learning” acquired outside of school. This should be a successful factor for pupils with less classical profiles, who are more resistant to traditional ways of learning or who encounter less favourable conditions for efficient learning (violent background, lack of pedagogical equipment or absence of the teacher).

Several studies from the United States have shown that children who participate in extra-curricular activities profit in a number of developmental and educational domains, which holds especially for disadvantaged children (e.g. Mahoney, 2002; Marshall et al., 1997). Several studies have shown the beneficial effects of out-of-school activities on both children’s beliefs about their academic abilities and their actual school achievement (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010; Huston et al., 2008; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Simpkins, Ripke, Huston, & Eccles, 2005). Moreover, effects on social development, such as more social competence, more compliance and autonomy, more peer friendships, and less problem behaviour, including delinquency and drug abuse, have been reported as well (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fredricks & Eccles, 2010; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2011; Simpkins et al., 2005). Finally, children who were engaged in extracurricular activities showed more civic engagement (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010). The out-of-school activities allowed them to develop leadership skills, exposed them to collective action and taught them to take social responsibility, all of which are part of the key competences identified as necessary to be successful in life. Also in Europe several initiatives exist. A study from Spain has shown beneficial effects of out-of-school activities on children’s social and behavioural adjustment (Molinuevo, Bonillo, Pardo, Doval, & Torrubia, 2010). In France after-school mentoring is offered by associations, such as social services or community services (Glasman & Besson, 2004). However, so far the focus has mainly been on students in secondary education, for example by providing school mentoring to students facing difficulties at school. In primary school, institutions are also providing leisure or sport activities. Rooted in a community approach, schools are working together with local authorities (mainly municipalities) responsible for primary & secondary education and children get the opportunity to interact with adult role models other than their schoolteachers.

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LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's ecological model



This project has received funding from the
European Union's Horizon 2020
research and innovation programme
under grant agreement No. 727069