



OECD THEMATIC REVIEW ON MIGRANT EDUCATION

POLICY REVIEW VISIT TO DENMARK, 3-6 MARCH 2009

This document sets out:

- (I) Background to the OECD Policy Review Visit to Denmark
- (II) First Draft of Preliminary Policy Suggestions for Denmark
- (III) Biographies of Team Members

I BACKGROUND TO THE OECD POLICY REVIEW VISIT TO DENMARK

The OECD, an organisation of 30 countries, is currently undertaking a thematic review on the education of migrants. The review seeks to assist countries in improving the education outcomes of first and second generation migrants. The overarching question for the review is: *what policies will promote successful education outcomes for first and second generation migrants?* In order to answer this question, the review will start by addressing the following empirical questions:

- 1) **Access:** Do immigrant students have the same opportunities to access quality education as their native peers?
- 2) **Participation:** Do immigrant students participate (enrol and complete) as much as their native peers?
- 3) **Performance:** Do immigrant students perform as well as their native peers?

For each question, the review will examine the role of policies required to ensure equal opportunities are made available to immigrant students. The goal of the country review, therefore, is to describe and evaluate the relevant national, regional and local education policies, where appropriate, that influence access, participation and learning outcomes of migrant children.

Country review visits are conducted in Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden. The particular strength of country visits is that they get behind formal descriptions of institutions and processes, by exploring the perspectives of different stakeholders and observing practice in specific institutional contexts. Following the visits, the OECD team will prepare a Country Note with country-specific policy recommendations.

Scope of the review visit to Denmark

In the Terms of Reference for the Danish review visit, it was agreed that the review will focus on:

- 1) Improving the ability of the **primary and lower secondary school** (Folkeskole) to develop the academic competencies of immigrant children, and
- 2) Reducing the drop-out rates among students with an immigrant background in the **VET**-area.

Within this scope, it was further agreed that the OECD report should address the following **cross-cutting issues**: approaches to language learning; counteracting the impact of low parental education and SES; effective organisation and coordination of the efforts towards bilingual pupils; teacher qualifications and teaching materials; collection and dissemination of knowledge and good practice; as well as VET-specific issues related to increasing the retention rate.

II FIRST DRAFT OF PRELIMINARY POLICY SUGGESTIONS FOR DENMARK

Purpose of the Policy Review Visit and Use of This Document

The main purpose of policy review visit is:

- To try out diagnoses and preliminary policy options that the OECD Secretariat has developed for Denmark.
- To assess the preliminary suggested policy options by meeting with a wide range of key stakeholders against the criteria of *feasibility, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, robustness, implementation issues and sustainability*.
- To facilitate open policy dialogue among key stakeholders on migrant education.

In order to try out our preliminary diagnoses in the most efficient way, the review team has prepared this paper. The paper aims to present key policy issues and preliminary policy suggestions arising from the OECD's desk-based research, literature reading and fact-finding visit, which took place in October 2008.

The national coordinator is invited to circulate the paper, in advance of our meetings, among all the stakeholders who the review team will meet during the policy review visit. The stakeholders are then expected to share their views and comments on our preliminary policy suggestions with respect to the *feasibility, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, robustness, implementation issues and sustainability* from their perspectives. Different stakeholders may have different views.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This paper was developed by the three members of the review team, as a basis for well-focused and qualified discussion during the policy visit to Denmark. The draft policy suggestions are still in the first phase of the developmental stage: they will be further scrutinised, developed, consolidated and prioritised taking into account the findings of the policy review visit. They will be finalised in the Country Note after the visit. The opinions expressed in this draft are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the OECD.

Preliminary policy suggestions for Denmark

This paper identifies six policy areas for action to improve the education of migrants in Denmark.

1. Ensuring consistency of support for all migrant students
2. Maturing a "culture of evaluation"
3. Strengthening the capacity of schools to support migrant students
4. Language support
5. Capitalising on parental and community resources to support migrant students
6. Increasing retention in VET

During a first preparatory visit to Denmark in October 2008, we have identified strengths and challenges of the Danish approach in each of these policy areas, as summarised in our mission report of 7 November 2008. This paper further develops the identified strengths and challenges, and proposes a number of possible policy options that build on the strengths to address the challenges.

Policy area 1) Ensuring consistency of support for all migrant students

While many initiatives have been launched, there are disparities in quality and availability of support due to inconsistent efforts across schools, neighbourhoods and municipalities. We see the biggest challenge in Denmark as adopting a positive attitude towards migrants as an integral and positive part of society and getting good practice in the education of migrants more widely adopted.

The prerequisites for this to happen are political will and leadership to improve the education of migrants; centralised feedback channels that help identify and raise the visibility of effective policy and practice; incentives to encourage adoption of such policy and practice; enabling mechanisms that provide those willing to innovate/reform with the know-how needed to proceed; feedback channels to allow practitioners to find out how they're doing and adjust accordingly; and coordination of policy and practice between different actors.

Challenges

More specifically, the following challenges were identified during the fact-finding visit:

- Recommendations from the national level regarding migrant education may not be translated into practice at the school level, as many levels need to provide information, tools, funding and evaluation strategies.
- Municipalities do not have an overview of how schools compare to each other in terms of educating migrants; there are no consistent strategies to identify and help schools where migrant students underperform.
- Initiatives are being launched by many different stakeholders at different levels in a "trial and error" approach, often without systematic evaluation of their effect on student performance.
- Results of initiatives still hinge too much on self selection, often leaving out those most in need.
- Schools do not systematically cooperate or share information with regards to the education of migrants.
- Coordination of policy and practice could be strengthened between policy makers, stakeholders and practitioners at different levels of the education system

Current strategies:

- Establishment of the "Task Force for bilingual pupils" whose aim is to assist municipalities in improving the quality of the school offer given to bilingual children. The initiative was established in cooperation between the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs and the Ministry of Education. The task force is placed in the Ministry of Education and followed by a steering group of representatives from both ministries and the municipalities.
- In the Folkeskole area, Ministry funds networking groups for teachers & leaders of schools with many immigrants
- Most schools cooperate with the local municipal Youth Guidance Centre and participate in SSP (school, social services & police) to prevent crime.

Additional policy suggestions for discussion

- **Adopt a systemic and cross-sectoral approach to ensuring that migrants achieve at all levels of education and that their education outcomes become similar to the host community.** This will take time, resources and belief. It requires collaboration between the Education Ministry and other ministries, municipalities, schools, the host and migrant communities and in particular their leaders, parental leaders, and those migrants who have graduated through the system as well as guidance experts and enterprises who are key to improving retention in VET. All must have high aspirations and expectations for all students, whatever their background. There must be constant evaluation of provision to ensure continued improvements.
- **Adopt short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies to improve the education of migrants,** with specific goals for schools with different proportions of migrant students. Provide differentiated support to schools based on their proportion of migrant students. Target groups of schools, such as schools with less than 10% migrants, schools with 10-50% migrants, and schools with above 50% migrants among their student population. There are only a minority of Folkeskoles with over 10% and even fewer with over 50% migrant students. Resources & evaluations need to be concentrated on these schools.
- **Increase school cooperation and ideas sharing,** especially among schools with similar proportions of migrant students. Provide for formalised networks of schools and especially school leaders, both among Folkeskoles and among VET colleges to allow school professionals to learn from each other. Such groups should systematically exist for schools with over 10% migrant students so that they share best practice, difficulties and how they are overcome, resources and experience. The Ministry needs to provide leadership in this initiative.
- **Enhanced cooperation among municipalities is needed,** with common goals regarding the education of migrant students, workable mechanisms to identify and help schools where migrant students do not receive sufficient support, and common processes of monitoring and evaluating progress in improving the education outcomes of migrant students. This process could be led by the association of municipalities, with the Copenhagen municipality playing a lead role. There is also a need to **strengthen mechanisms to measure and benchmark the performance of municipalities** in reducing the achievement gap between native and migrant students. Such evaluations could be done externally by EVA.
- **The Task force for bilingual pupils should collaborate closely with EVA** and base their work on solid data and evaluations. They could work together to ensure greater standardisation and external quality assurance and evaluation in the area of migrant education, including the quality of language and other support for bilingual students.

Policy area 2) Maturing a "culture of evaluation"

Strengthening the evidence base and further developing a culture of evaluation is closely linked to the issue of ensuring consistency of support for all migrant students. For good practice to be adopted widely, it is essential to identify and spread initiatives that have a demonstrated effect on the education outcomes of migrant students. For this to happen, several facets of the evidence base need to be strengthened.

At the school level, there seems to be broad support for a 'culture of evaluation', but the concept is still relatively undeveloped. While school level professionals are incorporating a relatively new focus on testing and achievement targets, there is a lack of continuous and formative evaluation of student performance. There is a need to further enhance the capacity of school level professionals to fully adopt the evaluation culture as their own.

At the system level, there is a lack of solid evidence and evaluation of different initiatives for migrant students. Academic research in this field is limited. No institution seems to have an overview or research function to establish a nation-wide knowledge base on best practices. Data on student characteristics and performance is not systematically broken down migrant background / language spoken at home. The concept and possibilities of "value-added" evaluations could be further explored.

Challenges

More concretely, the following challenges have been identified during the fact-finding visit:

- **Lack of data on student performance in general, and on the performance of migrants in particular.** There is a lack of continuous evaluation of student performance; schools don't know how well they are performing, and municipalities do not have an overview of the value added by different schools to the learning of their students. Hardly any data on student characteristics and performance is disaggregated by migrant background, which makes it difficult to formulate targeted responses.
- **Testing materials.** Standardised testing materials are available for reading, spelling, math, but for other subjects there still seems to be a lack of information of how students are expected to perform at different ages in different subjects. Especially for teachers used to working with poorly performing students this may result in a decrease of aspirations and expectations for their students. The available testing and reference materials were considered inadequate for diagnostic testing of bilingual children
- **Limited capacity of school-level professionals in assessment, evaluation and use of data.** The school professionals are eager to have more evidence about what constitutes effective pedagogical practice in regard to migrant students. But little attention has been paid to enhancing the capacity of school level professionals to fully adopt the evaluation culture as their own. Little training is available in evaluation and especially formative assessment, and the use of evaluative evidence. As school leaders have large discretion over assessment and evaluation practices, it is important that they are well-equipped to focus on this issue.
- **Limited use of academic research and evidence in the design of policy and practice.** "That works at our school" study step in the right direction. But there was little evidence of what constitutes good practice, and it does not draw on evidence on student performance. It is difficult to identify successful schools as performance of schools is very similar across the country (the performance differences revealed by PISA are mostly within-school differences). Academic research in the area of migrant education, particularly in the VET-area, is limited and there are few interactions between schools and research institutions.

Current strategies

- Strengthening the culture of evaluation through assessing the progress of the individual pupil on the basis of the binding attainment targets of all subjects, national tests and written plans on the progress of each child.
- An obligation for the municipalities to publish quality reports on the efforts and progress of the municipalities' schools regarding among other things the teaching of immigrant children.
- Compulsory leaving examinations for all pupils in the Folkeskole.

Additional policy suggestions for discussion

- **Provide breakdown by migrant status/ language spoken at home of aggregate statistics** ranging from school enrolment to classroom performance to retention and performance in VET.
- **Provide teachers and school leaders with tools for evaluating performance within schools**, identifying weak performers and helping them. Training in assessment and evaluation techniques for school leaders & teachers should be provided in both pre-service and in-service courses. Include quick and easy to use formative assessment techniques in the training. School level professionals also need assessment guidelines & materials for diagnostic and comparable testing in different grade levels, especially of migrant students. School leaders must be aware of their key role in encouraging formative assessment practices, collaboration and information sharing among teachers, and communication about student performance to parents.
- **Adopt an outcomes-based approach** where schools are rewarded for value-added improvement of student performance, and especially for supporting the weaker learners. Teachers, schools and municipalities should be evaluated on the basis of closing the achievement gap. Provide incentives for schools to innovate and provide feedback on what works to other schools, researchers & policy makers. Provide incentives for setting up peer learning networks and partner schools, for example by providing collective rewards for schools working together or covering the costs of web-portal for information sharing or costs of meetings etc. Funding for new initiatives could be made conditional on good evaluation practice. The Ministry should play a role to push scaling up of practice that was shown to be successful.
- **Provide incentives for researchers to focus on the education of migrants**, for example by providing funding / scholarships. Teacher training colleges should provide programmes encouraging direct contact between researchers and schools and focus on action research. **Draw more systematically on the expertise of education professionals**, to determine under what conditions different approaches are more and less effective; and spread know-how more systematically.
- **Synthesise and disseminate findings from international research to municipalities & schools.** Need to ensure that at least one national institution collects robust evidence and focuses on dissemination and communication with stakeholders, for example through a website, counsellors / resource persons or action research. The Taskforce for bilingual pupils and EVA could play a greater role in this area.

Policy area 3) Strengthening the capacity of schools to support migrant students

As in other countries, schools in Denmark are under pressure to provide more inclusive and intercultural sensitive programmes that respond to the needs of increasingly diverse student populations. Policy action is necessary to support teachers and school leaders in adopting adequate teaching methods and investing extra effort in overcoming skills and language obstacles.

For some **teachers**, dealing with heterogeneous student populations is a relatively new challenge. Survey results show that about 75-80% of teachers feel uncomfortable in teaching migrant students. Research also indicates that Danish teachers have lower expectations of migrant students than of their native peers. There is a need to enhance teacher training to improve both the general pedagogical skills of teachers and their capacity to deal with migrant students in particular.

School leaders, in turn, must master the new forms of pedagogy themselves, and they must learn how to monitor and improve their teachers' new practice. Those teachers who have taken in-service training report difficulties in applying their new knowledge and skills once they are back at school. Strong leadership is needed to ensure a culture change in schools, facilitate cooperation among teachers and ensure that diversity and bilingualism are seen as a potential resource not a disadvantage.

Challenges

In particular, the following challenges have been identified with respect to the background and capacities of school-level professionals

- **Little diversity in the workforce of school-level professionals.** Collect data on the backgrounds of school-level professionals to monitor developments. For those migrant-origin teachers who are in the system, make sure to fully draw on the value added that they can bring to the system. Can more added value be obtained from their presence and their expertise in schools? Can they help making migrant cultures and languages an integral and positive part of school / VET college life?
- **Teacher pre-service training:** Need to enhance teacher pre-service training to improve the skills of teachers in adapting their practice to an increasingly diverse student body. Danish as a Second Language (DSL) is not available in all teacher training institutes and the structure of training makes it difficult for students to actually choose DSL. Because of this and possibly a lack of interest, the numbers of teachers who take DSL in pre-service training still small. There is some focus on language / communication in other subjects in teacher training, but are the trainers sufficiently qualified for providing this instruction?
- **Teacher in-service training:** Inconsistent efforts in providing in-service training for teachers and school leaders – not all schools are reached and only about 20-25% of teachers in Copenhagen (less in other municipalities) have been through the in-service intercultural training. The use of in-service training varies between municipalities, school and individual teachers. There are few courses for VET institutions. There are few possibilities for teachers to refresh what they have learned or network among themselves to follow up the training. There is also a lack of evaluation and little information on how the training is used in schools and about how useful & efficient the training really is.
- **School leadership:** Preparatory training is not mandatory for school leaders and leaders report lack of time to attend in-service training. Many leaders are former teachers without any professional preparation for any of their leadership tasks. School leadership should be professionalised by making it mandatory for becoming school leaders to take preparatory training. Strong leadership is needed to

ensure a culture change in schools, facilitate cooperation among teachers and ensure that diversity and bilingualism are seen as a potential resource not a disadvantage.

Current strategies

The provision of both pre-service and in-service training in Danish as a Second Language has been extended.

- **Teacher pre-service training:** Aspects of intercultural education are part of several mandatory subjects of pre-service training; in addition, becoming teachers can choose DSL as an option.
- **Teacher in-service training:** In the Folkeskole, professional development is generally optional for teachers. However, schools or municipalities can decide that all teachers at a school or in an area are required to complete certain courses or other development that is deemed necessary or relevant. Independent providers on the market provide intercultural education courses that municipalities or schools can order.
- **School leadership:** The Ministry of Education has entered into a "partnership on leadership" with associations of school leaders and board members at upper secondary level; and is working towards a similar partnership in the Folkeskole with Local Government Denmark and the school leaders.

Additional policy suggestions for discussion

- **Increase no of migrant-origin teachers and school leaders**, for example by offering stipends / grants for students from migrant backgrounds to enrol in teacher training and by reaching out to migrants with a foreign qualification in teaching and help them obtain a recognised Danish teaching qualification (embed recognition of non-formal and informal learning into the process). **Increase the value added to the system by migrant origin teachers** drawing on their background and expertise. Collect data on numbers and linguistic backgrounds of migrant origin teachers and school leaders to effectively monitor developments.
- **Review adequacy of pre-service teacher training to strengthen both the general pedagogical skills of teachers and their capacity to support migrant students;** ensure that all teacher training colleges offer DSL and resolve structural problems in pre-service teacher training so that teachers can take the DSL / intercultural education module without having to dismiss another subject. Are university based theoretical components sufficiently coordinated with school-based practice? How is the induction of new teachers organised, are they trained to respond to the particular characteristics of their school's student population?
- **Continue in-service courses and ensure monitoring and follow-up.** There is a need to collect data on training participation in different municipalities to reach out to those municipalities & schools which do not organise training, and especially to VET colleges where in-service training in intercultural education and DSL is less frequent. Monitor how training translates into practice, and to provide fora for continuous teacher exchange after the training, not only within their own school, but also across schools. Provide resources for teachers to refresh what they have learned (e.g. web-based). Are there in-service courses to upskill foreign-language teachers to become teachers for DSL, as they already have expertise in linguistics and language teaching?
- **Provide train the trainers courses to spread knowledge among all teachers.** Those trained in DSL should be able to spread knowledge and good practice among their colleagues. Within schools: have DSL / intercultural education specialist teams but also ensure that all teachers interact and work in teams to mainstream DSL support and intercultural education.

- **Continue to work on ensuring that all teachers share the responsibility for raising the educational outcomes of migrants;** they all must adopt pedagogic approaches suitable for diverse student populations and support the language learning of migrant pupils.
- **Ensure strong leadership for a positive attitude towards diversity.** Leaders at all levels (Ministry, municipality, school) need to make it a priority that migrant languages and cultures are seen as an asset for Denmark and an integral and positive part of school / VET college life. School leaders in particular need to be aware of need for whole-school approach to address diversity issues, and all new school / VET college leaders should take preparatory training for the job. Ministry and municipalities should encourage distribution of leadership (specialist teams of teachers responsible for different areas of school improvement such as DSL support, or evaluation). Not only teachers, but also school leaders themselves must be involved in in-service courses on DSL / intercultural education.
- **Provide whole-school professional development programmes that are situated in actual school contexts and involve both leaders and teachers.** Practice from other countries suggests some whole-school development approaches such as: appoint DSL consultant within school, diagnostic visit by specialist, develop migrant achievement plan, professional development for teachers, additional support in the classroom, support to building school leadership teams, inclusive school culture that celebrates diversity of cultures and languages.

Policy area 4: Language support

There is recognition that high proficiency in the Danish language is essential for the learning of all children, not only migrant children. All children in Denmark now undergo early language screening at age three and receive language stimulation in kindergarten, if necessary. These systematic efforts should be lauded.

However, the effectiveness of the early language support is not consistently evaluated, and there is evidence that the benefits of early language support "fade out" in grade 4-5. There is a strong perception within the system that more systematic language and literacy support throughout primary and secondary education might be required.

With respect to language, there are challenges in terms of (1) strengthening support in Danish as a Second Language in Folkeskoles and VET colleges, (2) establishing agreed standard provision and evaluation of DSL teaching in all municipalities, and (3) finding ways to validate and value proficiency in a mother tongue other than Danish.

Challenges

- **Strengthening support in Danish as a Second Language.** Schools report that it is not always possible for them to find enough teachers with DSL qualifications. The effectiveness of training programmes for teachers in DSL have not been systematically evaluated. In the Folkeskole, is there sufficient emphasis on *academic Danish*, which is essential to allow migrants to achieve academically in the Folkeskole and enable them to progress into youth education and higher education? In VET colleges, is there sufficient emphasis on *technical Danish*, which is vital for them to achieve in the VET and the workplace?
- **Ensuring consistency of DSL provision.** It appears that the type of provision, teaching programme and progress evaluations of DSL support vary between municipalities. They should be standardised to

ensure that all migrants have equal opportunities to learn the language of instruction. What are the standards to evaluate whether children at age 3 need DSL support? How is their progress and the success of the support evaluated? What are the standards to evaluate whether students in the Folkeskole / in VET colleges need DSL support? Are they pushed / encouraged to take support classes? Is there progress monitored and communicated between levels of education?

- **Validating proficiency in mother tongues.** Bilingualism often seen as a problem rather than a resource. It contributes to increasing the language pool in Denmark – is this recognised as an asset? Schools & educational authorities seem to lack information about students' language backgrounds. Is students' proficiency in their mother tongue assessed and are they supported / encouraged in improving and using their mother tongue skills? Do schools work with external partners such as community organisations or embassies to provide mother tongue support? Are different mother tongues seen as a positive and normal aspect of school life; are students encouraged to draw on their mother tongue skills; are bilingual classroom assistants available at schools?

Current strategies

- Since 2004 all bilingual pre-school children from the age of 3 have been obliged to complete a language stimulation course if a professional judges that they have need of it.
- In the Folkeskole, Danish as a second language is taught to pupils who are deemed to need such instruction in order to be able to perform satisfactorily in the other subjects of the school.
- Within VET a subject called “vocational Danish as a second language” has been developed for immigrants who need to improve their Danish language proficiency in order to complete a VET programme. The subject is an optional part of the basic courses of the technical and commercial VET programmes.

Additional policy suggestions for discussion

- **Continue early screening and targeted early language support**, but increase the focus on quality and evaluation of this support. Does the language support improve the school readiness of migrants, is their progress regularly assessed and communicated to schools? Do kindergartens and schools cooperate in improving school readiness? Do early language support personnel share information and methodologies on what approaches to language learning are most successful?
- **Adopt a holistic approach to language learning**, where DSL is taught not only in specialised classes, but in all subject classes; not only in school but also through youth work and other partners of the schools such as libraries, sports clubs, community organisations etc. Continue to focus on integrating language and content learning; mainstream (subject) teachers need basic knowledge about linguistics / language learning and they need to understand their own key role in strengthening the linguistic capacities of students. They need to interact with DSL specialists in school and with their peers to coordinate language progress of the student population.
- **Ensure standardised provision of DSL** based on similar criteria for all migrant students. DSL support should be based on research about the types of DSL support that work best, a common curriculum, qualified teachers, and ongoing evaluation of students. It should go beyond conversational Danish to focus on academic Danish (and technical Danish in VET). Encourage schools to cooperate and share DSL teacher resources through formalised networks of schools

- **Value and validate foreign language proficiency.** Recognise foreign mother tongues as an asset, contributing to increasing the language pool in Denmark. Consider broadening the existing language screening at age 3 to assess migrant children's linguistic competencies both in Danish and the language(s) they speak at home. Promote and strengthen existing policy concerning 'immigrant language as an elective subject', offering students to take foreign languages such as Turkish, Arabic, Urdu or Farsi as elective subjects within the teaching programme and allowing them to take this subject in the leaving examination of the Folkeskole. Where mother tongues are taught, make sure the instruction is based on a rigorous curriculum with achievement targets and provided by qualified teachers. Consider drawing more on bilingual classroom assistants / offer training possibilities for people wanting to become bilingual classroom assistants.
- **Connect parents and communities more to language learning.** Simultaneous work needs to be done not only to teach Danish to young people but also to attract migrant adults into language courses, eg. by offering Danish courses for parents. A community approach is also essential whereby leaders in the migrant community believe in the benefits of learning Danish as well as practicing their mother tongues. Consider migrant communities as resources and capitalise on the linguistic resources that they have (eg. migrant parents or community leaders may offer after-school support or remedial or homework help). Consider links to migrant associations and embassies to foster mother tongue instruction. These institutions should cooperate and share information about student performance with the school.

Policy area 5) Capitalising on the resources of parents, communities and external partners

International research highlights the importance of parental involvement in education for the achievement of students, independently of their socio-demographic background. Parental involvement is especially important in a system like Denmark's where school hours only last half a day and a high responsibility for support is put on parents. Migrant parents have a key role to play in the Folkeskole and in supporting their children's success. New ways of cooperation must be found between schools and migrant parents.

Simultaneous work is also needed to attract migrant parents back into education, to learn Danish, to improve their basic skills, to provide them with pathways to progression, to recognise their prior learning and to provide them with the confidence to see education as something to be valued for themselves and their children. Going further, there also needs to be a community approach adopted whereby leaders in the migrant community believe in the benefits of education and, in particular, in the retention of young people not only in basic education but also in progression to higher or vocational education and training. The community must have high expectations and aspirations for all their members but particularly the younger members.

Challenges

- **A system that relies heavily on parental support.** In the Danish system of half-day schools and below-OECD average number of compulsory instruction time (for ages 7-11), parental support with homework and other learning activities has a major impact on the performance of students. This can have a negative effect on migrant students whose parents may not have the financial, educational and / or linguistic capacities to help with homework and stimulate learning.
- **Difficulties in engaging migrant parents with school education.** Adult migrants need to see the value of education, especially if their children are to continue to attend in their twenties when there is no previous tradition for such retention amongst the migrant communities. There has been relatively

slow progress in supporting mothers' / parents' language learning. Danish research shows that mother's education and job situation, as well as the language spoken at home matter for migrants achievement. Schools need to find new ways of cooperating with parents.

- **Little communication between actors within the education system and migrant communities and their leaders.** There seems to be no interaction between the school system and community organisations such as the council of ethnic minorities. The migrants' cultures, languages etc must be respected and valued by the Danish population for inclusion and integration to happen between the host community and the migrants.
- **Many students would need additional learning opportunities.** We only spoke to a small number of migrant students but all of them were eager to have longer school days and more opportunities for learning and support. While some pilot all-day schools have been introduced, the number remains limited and these schools have a stigma attached to them. A wide range of after-school programmes are available, but increased efforts must be made to improve the information flow between schools and after-school providers. Schools do not cooperate enough with external partners. There is a need for active outreach and better information to engage migrant parents and students in existing activities and learning opportunities.
- **Some schools face high levels of concentration of migrant and low-SES students,** due to residential patterns, and sometimes reinforced by the parental choice. Such concentration, according to international and Danish research, can be detrimental to the learning outcomes of these students. How can the school choice patterns of parents, both native and migrants, be influenced to work towards a better socio-demographic mix of school populations?

Current strategies

- To reach out to migrant parents, the Ministry of Integration has launched a school-home cooperation project and educators show commitment and interest on involving migrant parents.
- Different forms of out of school support are also available through after-school provision at the schools, homework cafés and youth evening schools to compensate for lack of parental support.
- Copenhagen Integration Model to influence the socio-demographic mix of students

Additional policy suggestions for discussion

- **Continue to focus on parental involvement in school education.** Continue and expand school-home cooperation, parent guides etc with a focus on increasing family expectations and support. Also focus on the Danish parents to include migrant parents, as "integration is a two-way process of mutual accommodation by immigrants and residents of member states" (EU common basic principles).
- **Community involvement / role models.** Mobilise migrant communities to support migrant students' educational progress (identifying role models from the community, encourage communities to offer learning opportunities and guidance outside the classroom etc.). For migrants who graduate it is important that they are seen / used where possible as a key resource in helping to encourage migrants to complete education. Their use as mentors / role models is important.
- **Adult learning programmes to improve parents' educational level and employment situation.** If many migrants are unemployed or predominantly in low status employment, young people may not be encouraged to continue in education. What innovative initiatives / incentives are in place to upskill

and encourage adult migrants back into education, formal or informal, or through the labour force? What initiatives are in place for family education? Learning opportunities for parents such as language learning, parenting skills, reading to their children, getting a job etc.? In providing such offers, consider sites that will allow flexible learning such as kindergartens or schools where mothers drop off their children or evening courses for working parents.

- **Non-formal / informal youth work and additional learning opportunities.** Support homework cafés, after-school supervision, summer / holiday schools and cooperation with other agencies such as youth organisations, libraries etc. and ensure parents are aware of full range of after-school options. Guidance and information that is easy to understand is vital to ensure that those who need it the most are actually reached by the initiatives. Additional youth work can provide key opportunities for migrant adults and youth to gain educational experiences in a non-threatening and non judgemental environment. Success in sport, art, community work can give migrants the confidence to try new formal educational experiences. Is there room to continue development of all-day schools?
- **De-segregation policies:** how have the voluntary bussing policies used by some municipalities worked out? Have they been evaluated? What are the results? Can positive experiences of parent associations (such as "use your local school in Norrebro") be replicated and more widely adopted in other areas? What are the conditions for success?

Policy area 6: Increasing retention in VET

The policy areas identified above are relevant for both the Folkeskole and VET-colleges: both need to work on ensuring consistency of support, maturing a culture of evaluation, strengthening the capacity of school leaders and teachers in dealing with diversity, providing language support and reaching out to parents and communities.

In addition, the OECD team was asked to consider the VET-specific issue of increasing retention in VET colleges, an issue that is less relevant for the Folkeskole where attendance is compulsory. However, there are of course linkages between the Folkeskole and the VET sector, as the academic instruction and guidance provided at the Folkeskole level is crucial to students' transition into post-compulsory education.

In addressing the issue of retention in VET, it is important to realise that most migrants are starting from a low educational base. Many of the young migrants are achieving in levels of education unimaginable to their parents, within one or two generations. That success must be lauded. If the achievements of those who do successfully attend and graduate from education at and above the Folkeskole level are not acknowledged then it will be hard to motivate others to follow them. School leaders and teachers in the Folkeskole and VET must have high expectations and aspirations for migrant students, otherwise more may drop out.

Several factors play a role in contributing to high drop-out rates of migrants in VET. Many migrant students drop out because they cannot find a work placement. This may be linked to the fact that enrolment in different programmes is largely determined by student choice and that guiding mechanisms are not working well to direct students towards industries with greater demand for apprentices. There is also a perception that discrimination by employers plays a role. Other reasons for drop-out are linked to the fact that VET colleges may not be well prepared to respond to increasingly diverse student populations with varying cultural, linguistic and skills backgrounds.

Challenges

While we had only limited interaction with VET stakeholders during the fact-finding visit, we identified a number of issues to be addressed, and also hope to gain further insight during the policy visit.

- **Data on immigrants in VET.** Difficult to measure the extent of the drop out problem as there is little data on students' background characteristics, such as migrant background and language spoken at home.
- **Migrant-specific difficulties in finding a work placement.** Most migrant students drop out because they cannot find a work placement. Some feel discriminated against by employers. High unemployment among migrant adults may reduce motivation of migrants to continue education.
- **The length of VET programmes** may be a disincentive for migrants to remain in formal education. By participating in formal education as adults they may be going away from cultural traditions of their communities. How flexible is the system and does a **qualifications framework** exist for students to move in and out of education and have their work experience recognised? Are there sufficient **second chance programmes** to reintegrate those who have dropped out?
- **The reduction of school-based VET provision** seems to have a disproportionately negative impact on migrant students, as many participated in these programmes and cannot find a work placement. Does the data on labour market outcomes clearly show that school-based provision is not an option? What alternatives are there for those students who cannot find a work placement?
- **Insufficient educational and career guidance.** Enrolment of students in different programmes is largely determined by student choice. But is migrants' choice of programmes informed enough? Are they, and their parents, aware of the available options and the employment perspectives? Migrant students may have less possibilities than natives to seek information from working adults.
- **The background and training of VET teachers** may not be suited to address the need of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. VET trainers have little pedagogical training. Many come directly from the industry, have only 8 weeks pre-service, and 1.5 yrs on the job training. Is there adequate language support? Some Danish research shows that migrants in VET may have difficulties with technical words and need sustained language support.

Current strategies

- **Retention Caravan:** programme to prevent migrant student drop-out includes retention coordinator at schools, contact with parents, role models, developing teacher competencies, networks between actors in the area, study and homework support options
- **We Need All Youngsters** Campaign: role models with migrant background to inform migrant students about learning Danish and the Danish education system
- **Language support** provided by some VET colleges; provision of "vocational second language Danish"
- **Guidance policies:** Youth Guidance Centres focus on all students with special needs; leaflets about Danish VET options available in Turkish, Somalia, Arabic, Farsi and Urdu; a handbook for multicultural guidance available at Ministry website; Ministry has decided that all students at risk of dropping out must be offered mentorship

- **Outreach to parents:** some VET colleges have strong focus on establishing and maintaining contact with immigrant students' parents including home visits.

Additional policy suggestions for discussion

- **Adopt a holistic response to increase retention; mobilise experts, employers, school leaders, teachers, parent and student organisations.**
- Is there a **Danish qualifications framework** that young people can gain accreditation in some modules, leave and then return and build up on their credits? The qualification framework would allow for greater accessibility and flexibility.
- Review the **training, qualifications and pedagogical approaches of VET teachers**. Are they sufficiently prepared for teaching increasingly diverse student populations? Are their pedagogical approaches adequate? Do they see themselves as key in providing language and academic support to each individual student? Do they have high expectations and aspirations for all students? How can the preparation and training of VET trainers be strengthened?
- **Standardise the provision, length and evaluation of 'vocational second language Danish' support.** At what level are students required / encouraged to take language support? Ensure that the provision goes beyond conversational Danish to focus on academic and technical Danish. Ensure that specialist teams for DSL cooperate with regular teachers to optimise outcomes.
- **Reduce disparities in provision of support** – ensure that the existing programmes reach the migrant students most in need, and also target information to parents and community leaders.
- **Improve the data situation in VET.** Collect data about migrant and language backgrounds. Develop "at risk indicators" such as failing grades, school absences, disciplinary problems, lack of engagement with schooling. Monitoring of those at risk should be linked to interventions to improve outcomes and prevent drop out. Indicators could be used to monitor students; and to monitor and evaluate school and system interventions.
- **Ensure that students can make informed choices.** Improve guidance and information about options and perspectives at the Folkeskole level to avoid that too many students enrol in areas where there are no training places. For example, is educational, job and career guidance provided as part of the lower secondary curriculum? Continue outreach and provision of information to **parents** and also involve **community leaders**.
- **Strengthen employer engagement** by providing incentives for them to get more involved in provision of practice placements. Also **improve the interface between VET colleges and companies**. For example, do training offices exist which can hire apprentices to be shared between several companies?
- **Remove dead ends and provide second chances.** Ensure cooperation between mentors and counsellors at school and agencies that work with young people already out of school to give advice on reintegration options. A flexible adult learning system should take into consideration working and family life, previous (sometimes negative) educational experience and recognise skills and knowledge gained outside formal education. Flexible learning arrangements, such as part-time or distance learning should be offered to target provision to specific adult needs and schedules.

III) BIOGRAPHIES OF THE OECD VISIT TEAM MEMBERS

Gregory Wurzburg is a Senior Analyst in the OECD Education Directorate. He is currently responsible for OECD work on political economy of education reform; parental choice, school autonomy and system accountability; country reviews focused on drawing policy lessons from PISA; cooperation with other parts of the OECD examining economic implications of education policy. Earlier responsible for work on the economics and finance of lifelong learning; also contributing to work on the policy lessons from PISA, the role of human capital in economic performance, implementation of lifelong learning, intellectual capital reporting in financial markets, labour market outcomes and educational attainment, and human resources and enterprise flexibility. Gregory is a US citizen.

Deborah Nusche is a Policy Analyst in the OECD Education Directorate currently working for the *Thematic Review on Migrant Education*. With the OECD since 2007, she previously worked on issues of learning outcomes assessment and school leadership. For the *Improving School Leadership* project, Deborah participated in case study visits, co-authored a two-volume study on school leadership policy, and is currently managing the dissemination of project results. She has previous work experience with UNESCO and the World Bank and holds an M.Sc. in International Affairs from the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris* (Sciences Po). Deborah is from Germany.

Breda Naughton is the Principal Officer in the Integration Unit of the Department of Education and Science in Ireland. She works closely with the Minister for Integration in his office. She previously worked for four years on the education needs of asylum seekers - both the children and the adults. The main focus of the Integration Unit's current work is the preparation of an Intercultural Education Strategy, a Value for Money Review of the education of students at primary and post-primary education who do not have English or Irish as a first language and the OECD Thematic Review of Migrant Education. These reports are due for completion by next autumn and each study complements the other. The work will be based on the findings of an extensive consultation process that was held in the latter half of 2008 with the key stakeholders and on research that is or has been carried out.