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International teachers for tomorrow's school. Opportunities and challenges of the professional re-entry of international teachers in selected European countries

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WAXMANN

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Content

Introduction

Cultural diversity is an essential feature of schools. A glance at classrooms in many European countries quickly makes this diversity obvious, at least as long as the focus is on the students. On the other hand, teaching staffs are still very monocultural. This is not surprising, as the professional re-entry of international teachers (with or without a refugee background) is impeded by many barriers, which, despite differences across countries, have a number of structural similarities. These barriers include residence regulations, the often lengthy and difficult recognition of university degrees and professional experience acquired in the countries of origin, and high language barriers. Overall, it is evident – also in a comparison of countries – that the teaching profession is highly regulated with significant barriers to entry *into* and diverse obstacles and demands for normalcy *in* the profession once entry has been gained.

Despite these difficulties, the topic has gained momentum in recent years, which may have multifactorial reasons. One reason is the increased pressure on individuals and families who are forced to flee or decide to emigrate, as well as on the host societies. Scientific, social and school discourses on representation, appreciation of diversity and participation, as well as the first model projects and programmes for the acceptance of international teachers in schools also contribute to the growing awareness. In addition, the widespread shortage of teachers in many European countries is another approach to explaining why there is gradually more openness to accepting international teachers. This is because their professional, pedagogical and linguistic potential can be highly beneficial for schools – the experiences and study results described in this publication, as well as the first re-qualification programmes that prepare for professional re-entry, testify to this.

Background to this publication – the ITTS project

The ITTS project was developed in 2020 in order to focus more on the potential as well as the specific challenges associated with recruiting international teachers and to give the issue more attention, especially in countries where it has hardly played a role so far. ITTS stands for *"International Teachers for Tomorrow's School – System Change as an Occasion for Intercultural School Development and Mutual Learning"*. The main goal of ITTS is to support in a strength-oriented way the professional re-entry of international teachers who already teach at a school in their new country. Using diversity-sensitive approaches, ITTS aims to support schools in integrating the new colleagues as a means of opening schools interculturally. At the same time, the issues of system change and intercultural sensitisation are to be strengthened in uni-

versity teacher training and further education. Through cooperation with partners in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Poland, Slovenia and Türkiye, the project aims to provide impulses for the international teachers as well as for schools and teacher training. The activities focus on a cross-national stocktaking, the development of an ITTS portal, the preparation of reflection and advisory materials, as well as the anchoring of the contents in the universities. ITTS is funded by the DAAD as a Strategic Partnership within the framework of Erasmus+. The project is set to run from 2020 to 2023.

The professional integration of newly immigrated teachers is usually associated with many formal obstacles and content-related challenges, and teachers are also frequently confronted with explicitly and implicitly prevailing ideas of normalcy in schools. In many situations, this leads to uncertainty and (one-sided) pressure to justify oneself and adapt to the prevailing system. ITTS aims to support international teachers and their new schools in critically reflecting on these challenges and processes of Othering, as well as collecting examples and illustrative examples of the strengths that new colleagues bring with them. Overall, ITTS is intended to contribute to making the challenges of system change and the confrontation with notions of normalcy the subject of reflection for all those involved, to promote alternative patterns of interpretation, to strengthen the newly immigrated teachers in the sense of empowerment, and thus to take into account the requirements of schools in a migration society.

Aim and structure of this publication

This publication, entitled "*International Teachers for Tomorrow's School. Opportunities and challenges of the professional re-entry of international teachers in selected European countries*", presents the collected results of the research in the individual countries. The authors are the project leaders in the ITTS partner countries who, together with other researchers, looked at the situation of international teachers in their respective countries. In six of the seven countries (with the exception of Germany) this largely broke new ground or the corresponding contributions have filled gaps in the research. The approaches to the topic are diverse, as will be outlined in an overview of the contributions. The country reports are framed by the results of a quantitative survey and by a concluding cross-national survey in which the experiences and recommendations gained in the ITTS project are summarised.

A brief look at the content

The country reports and experiences compiled in this volume are as diverse as the perspectives and approaches to the ITTS project. Using a cooperative procedure, diverse processes of understanding were first initiated to define the target group and subject area, the approaches and questions for the country reports. This enabled joint

learning about the specific challenges and potentials of international teachers in the participating countries and regions.

The approaches to the topic come from very different perspectives because the authors also have different disciplinary backgrounds and focuses. This has resulted in a multifaceted collection of contributions on a topic that is still clearly neglected in most countries: the professional situation of international teachers with and without a refugee background in their new countries. Although there has been a lot of exchange and feedback in the project network during the development process of the individual country reports, the respective authors are ultimately responsible for the content and quality of their contributions.

The publication begins with the results of a cross-national quantitative study in which all project partners worked intensively. The results are published in the article by André Brandhorst, Renate Schüssler and Silke Hachmeister entitled *"Valued and supported?! Which factors have a positive effect on the professional re-entry of international teachers into school? Results of a cross-national quantitative study"*. While the seven country contributions describe in detail which framework conditions and access barriers challenge or completely prevent the professional re-entry of immigrant teachers, the quantitative survey questioned those teachers who had succeeded in re-entering the profession. With 158 participants in seven countries, the ITTS study reveals high overall satisfaction levels among these teachers and attempts to explore the factors to which this may be related. What is important – despite the heterogeneity of the international teachers – are "the self-efficacy beliefs and the handling of challenges by the teachers themselves, whether they are perceived and taken seriously as teachers (and not as support staff), and the support provided for their professional re-entry into their new schools" (Brandhorst et al., 2023).

The presentation of the comparative study is followed by the country reports in alphabetical order of the countries. The Belgian contribution by Elisabeth Goemans, Katrijn D'Herdt & Oliver Holz from the University of Leuven is the first. Here, the focus is on the situation in the Flemish part of Belgium. Under the title *"International teachers and the lack of teachers with a migration background. The case of Flanders"*, the article points out the importance and added value of international teachers in schools in Flanders, which is mainly justified by a high number of immigrant pupils. The paper describes a general under-representation of people with an immigrant background working in the education system and it explores the questions of what opportunities immigrant teachers have on their way into the profession and to what extent the Flemish government's goal of promoting a diversification of the teaching staff is being pursued in order to reflect the diversity of society more adequately.

The German contribution *"The professional re-entry of international teachers in Germany. Access, perspectives, obstacles and opportunities"* was written by Renate Schüssler, Silke Hachmeister, Nadine Auner, Lilith Beaujean & Carina Göke from Bielefeld University. Due to the special character of the two-phase teacher training system in Germany, the regulations for access to the profession are highly demanding and at the same time there are many initiatives, re-qualification programmes and

experiences with the support of professional re-entry. It shows the ways in which international teachers can re-enter their profession and points out the opportunities and pitfalls in achieving permanent employment. The article also pleads for a stronger decoupling of the professional integration of international teachers from the argument of a shortage of teachers, as the possibility of gaining fully qualified professional employment is significant for the personal development and social integration of the people concerned and also offers many opportunities for a modern school in a migration society.

An insight into European dimensions of dealing with refugees since 2015 is provided by the Greek country contribution by Vana Chiou and Electra Petracou from the University of Mytilene entitled *"The professional re-integration of international teachers. Barriers and prospects in the Greek context"*. Here, some of the EU regulations on integration and inclusion are presented and related back to the Greek situation. Studies and data on the professional integration of international workers at the European and Greek level, illustrated by data from the island of Lesbos, are also included. Media broadcasts about Lesbos in connection with the situation of refugees mostly deal with the catastrophic humanitarian conditions in the former Camp Moria or in the current Kara Tepe camp, the failure of European refugee policies, drownings just off the European coast or the persecution of aid and rescue organisations. The contribution by Chiou and Petracou omits these dimensions and concentrates on the formal obstacles for international teachers in Greece, which comparatively are extremely high. With a few exceptions, Greek citizenship (or that of another EU member state) is required and competence in the Greek language at C1 level must be demonstrated for employment in public and private schools.

The Icelandic contribution by Cherry Hopton & Guðrún Pétursdóttir from the NGO Intercultural Iceland entitled *"Interculturalism and education in Iceland. The benefits of teacher diversity in a diverse school"* illustrates that there is little representation of international teachers from third countries in the Icelandic education system and discusses what could be done to improve this disparity. Written and edited by the staff of the NGO Intercultural Iceland, it places a special emphasis on issues of intercultural education.

In contrast to the other articles, the Polish contribution by Maria Aleksandrovich & Grzegorz Piekarski from the University of Słupsk integrates the refugee movements associated with the war in Ukraine due to its particular geographical relevance, but also because it was written later than the other reports. It is entitled *"International teachers in Poland. Qualification recognition and employment requirements"*. The article makes clear that the teaching profession in Poland is also a regulated profession for which special qualifications or licences are required. It traces the recruitment opportunities for international teachers and describes a quantitative increase in such recruitments. However, it is noted that the procedure for recognising teaching qualifications depends on the country of origin. And indeed, with the exception of Ukrainians, there are hardly any international teachers in the integrated statistical data who come from the main countries of origin of refugees to Europe.

The contribution of Slovenia *"International teachers in the Slovenian school setting"*, written by Mihaela Brumen, Jerneja Herzog, Matjaž Duh & Tomaž Zupančič from the University of Maribor, focuses on the integration of immigrant pupils and discusses to what extent the conditions of a migration society are taken into account in the training of teachers, e. g. with regard to intercultural competences. They explain that the recruitment of international teachers is dependent on the recognition of qualifications, residence regulations and language skills. The report includes a small independent study in the form of qualitative interviews with a teacher from Madagascar and a survey of school administrators. The results have been used to draw conclusions about the situation of international teachers in Slovenian schools.

Nesrin Oruç Ertürk from the University of Izmir focuses on the situation of Syrian teachers in Türkiye in her contribution *"Syrian teachers, migration and educational consequences in the Turkish context"*. With the Temporary Education Centres (TEC), a parallel structure for Syrian pupils has been established in which refugee students are educated in accordance with the Syrian curriculum and in Arabic, separately from the Turkish population. Although this has resulted in more easily accessible employment opportunities for Syrian teachers in comparison to other countries, the report shows that Syrian teachers, like their immigrant Syrian pupils, face considerable challenges.

The publication concludes with the framing article *"International teachers in Europe: obstacles to a new professional start in a country comparison – findings and recommendations from the ITTS project"* by Silke Hachmeister & Renate Schüssler. This brings together the different strands in the publication and formulates a series of summary findings and recommendations as insights gained from the country reports, the quantitative comparative study and the experiences of cooperation in the ITTS project.

Due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the Iranian and Afghan human rights situation, the terrible earthquake in Syria and Türkiye in February 2023 and the already observable and further foreseeable consequences of the global climate crisis, to name just a few serious examples, the inevitability and dynamics of migration will undoubtedly gain in significance. It is difficult to keep up with this dynamic in a volume developed by an international consortium and published in two languages. In addition, the increasingly obvious manifestations of the shortage of teachers in many European countries suggest that, in the future, the recognition of foreign qualifications and recruitment opportunities for international teachers and pedagogical staff from other countries will become more flexible. It is important, therefore, to stay informed and remain in a dialogue – to which this publication, it is hoped, makes a small contribution.

Finally, we would like to express our special thanks to our colleague Lilith Beaujean, who, with great commitment and much meticulous detail work, standardised the bibliographical information as far as possible and patiently checked all the final contributions. A big thank also goes to the team of the *Lehrkräfte Plus (Teachers Plus) programme* for valuable support, encouragement and advice. We would like to thank Dr. Peter Dines, who did the translations and proof reading of the English texts, for

his excellent cooperation. The same applies to Beate Plugge and Kerstin Carow from Waxmann Verlag for her careful support in the publication of our volume. In this context, we would like to point out that the translations of quotations in the German and English versions were done by the authors themselves. The bibliographical references of the articles indicate whether the quotation is in the original version or in the translated version.

We wish you an enjoyable read and look forward to your feedback to the authors of the country reports or to us as editors at itts@uni-bielefeld.de.

March 2023

Renate Schüssler, Silke Hachmeister, Nadine Auner, Katrijn D'Herdt & Oliver Holz

Valued and supported?!

Which factors have a positive effect on the professional re-entry of international teachers into school? Results of a cross-national quantitative study

André Brandhorst, Renate Schüssler & Silke Hachmeister

Abstract: The country reports in this volume describe in detail which framework conditions and access barriers challenge or prevent the professional re-entry of immigrant teachers into their profession. However, if one draws attention to those teachers who have successfully re-entered the profession, it can be seen that this is characterised by both encouraging experiences of self-efficacy and by diverse challenges.

This quantitative study, which was conducted in Belgium, Germany, Iceland, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia and Türkiye, reflects the high satisfaction levels of those teachers who have succeeded in gaining a position in schools. At the same time, it identifies problems and challenges. It also addresses issues of support for international teachers re-entering the profession.

Keywords: international comparative study, migrated subject teachers, schools in Europe, professional integration, self-efficacy, role, arriving at school

1. Introduction

The experiences of re-entering the profession are described in detail in the seven country reports in this volume. It is shown that teachers in the different countries are facing various obstacles and barriers when returning to work as a teacher in a new country. In some countries, access to the profession is regulated in such detail that only a comparatively small number of teachers succeed in making a new start – even if the general integration conditions are favourable compared to other countries. In other countries, restrictive migration regimes and defensive integration policies prevent professional integration. Thus, the doors to classrooms are closed to many qualified international teachers and the very large potential of international teachers remains untapped.

On the other hand, the country reports reflect ways in which a professional restart can succeed. There are reports of programmes, initiatives and measures that prepare international teachers or provide accompanying support for professional re-integra-

tion and some international teachers succeed in gaining a foothold in their profession in the country of residence on their own. These teachers are the focus of this study, for little information is available in most of the participating countries on those international teachers who have successfully re-entered the profession to varying degrees, despite the obstacles and barriers outlined in the country reports.

This transnational study is intended to provide information about the experiences of international teachers with and without a refugee background at school. Under what conditions do they work and in what fields of activity? Do they feel perceived as international teachers or as subject teachers? What is their professional satisfaction like? In which situations do they experience esteem, when do they feel self-efficacious? What do they perceive as particular challenges and what factors are stressful for them? What feedback and support do they receive from other school stakeholders? Where do they need support? Are there country-specific differences, both in terms of country of origin and country of residence? Do, among other variables, the reason for migration, gender or age play a role?

2. Research desiderata and questions

In connection with the first re-qualification programmes in Sweden, Germany and Austria, a number of qualitative and quantitative studies were conducted. Some of these served the purpose of formative evaluation (North Rhine-Westphalia, Potsdam, Vienna), some evaluated the impact of the programmes on the path to professional re-entry (Syspons, 2021) or attempted to record the competence assessments of the participants. In addition, some of the published studies and unpublished qualification papers documented the experiences of selected participants during their return to work. For example, for *Lehrkräfte Plus* in North Rhine-Westphalia: Syspons (2021); Hachmeister (2022); for Potsdam: Gonzalez Olivo and Vock (2022); for Schleswig-Holstein: Kampa et al. (2022); for Sweden: Käck (2020) and for Austria: Obermayr et al. (2022). For a nationwide overview in Germany, the GEW (Union for Education and Science) study "*Verschenkte Chancen*" ("*Wasted opportunities*") (George, 2021; cf. also George & Stock, 2021) should also be mentioned. The studies impressively demonstrate the great potential of a new career start, but also barriers and obstacles.

With the exception of Germany (Schüssler et al. in this volume) and Sweden (Economou, 2020; Käck, 2020), the study situation in the countries that participated in this quantitative survey is very poor. Furthermore, the analysis of the Slovenian partners on the situation of immigrant teachers in Slovenia (Brumen et al. in this volume) represents an attempt to fulfil this desideratum, even though only an illustrative presentation of individual results and conclusions is possible due to the low number of participants. Furthermore, even after consultations with all participating partners and a review of the country reports, the authors are not aware of any study that specifically examines the topic of the professional re-integration of international teachers in Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Poland, Slovenia and Türkiye. Therefore, the country reports

published in this volume already fill a research gap in these countries with their respective accentuations and different approaches to the topic of international teachers.

Transnational studies on the professional integration of newly arrived international teachers are also rare. Bense (2016) gives an overview of 120 empirical studies (in German and English), but these are not transnational and do not focus on the particular challenges of refugee migration. An exception is a transnational study by Caravatti et al. (2014): the authors interviewed more than 1,300 teachers in 53 countries. But here too, the topic of refugee migration plays a very marginal role and the main countries of origin of those people fleeing to Europe (Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq) are hardly represented in the selection of countries (Eurostat, 2022). Overall, transnational studies on the topic of international and especially refugee teachers have thus been scarce. Accordingly, Bense (2016) concluded that "[…] further empirical and cross-disciplinary engagement on the issue of professional support for migrant teachers is mandatory" (Bense, 2016, p. 47).

Taking up this desideratum, a transnational standardised questionnaire survey was developed and conducted among international teachers as part of the *International Teachers for Tomorrow's School* (ITTS) project in seven European countries: Belgium, Germany, Iceland, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia and Türkiye. The fact that this survey takes into account a topic that has so far received little attention in most of the participating countries is also shown by the statement of a participating teacher who has been working as an international teacher for more than 10 years – as one of the few exceptions – in her country of residence, Slovenia: in all the years of her professional activity, she has never been asked questions that would take into account her professional situation and the associated obstacles and opportunities. Just by taking part in the study, she feels that her specific situation is noticed and valued.

The focus of this questionnaire survey is on the experiences of international teachers who have succeeded in (re-)entering the teaching profession. Therefore, we can speak of a positive selection of the participants in the study in at least two senses: on the one hand, those international teachers were interviewed who succeeded in re-entering the profession in their new country, i. e. the comparatively larger proportion of international teachers who were unable to access their profession was not addressed by the study, but their situation is described in the country reports. On the other hand, it can be assumed that those teachers working in schools who feel rather insecure in their new job and function, or who are particularly precariously employed, are less likely to agree to participate in a study than those who feel comfortable and successful in their new role.

The working conditions and fields of activity of international teachers were addressed in the questionnaire, among other things, as well as challenges and support needs. Due to the high level of regulation and the very different educational policies, teacher training and recruitment conditions in the various countries (which can even vary from state to state in Germany) as well as the differing integration and labour market conditions, a transnational study inevitably has to be sophisticated in its design or use a corresponding level of abstraction in developing its items. This require-

ment was taken into account in a communicative development and validation process in several rounds and with the participation of all project partners. In addition, the questionnaire was tested and appropriate adjustments were made. With the aid of variance analysis procedures, the topic areas were processed and discussed separately for different covariates such as country of origin, country of residence and migration cause.

From the multitude of possible research subjects and correlations that can be gained from the material, this article addresses the following questions:

1. The findings of the survey show high satisfaction values and a feeling of esteem after a successful return to work. In the context of this article, we work out which factors and conditions particularly contribute to this professional satisfaction (Bieri, 2002; Cihlars, 2012; Dammerer, 2020) and promote a feeling of esteem. For example, is the feeling of job satisfaction and esteem particularly pronounced in specific areas of activity and functions? What is the relationship with conflicts and perceived obstacles? What factors contribute to impaired satisfaction and teachers feeling overburdened?
2. A second evaluation complex examines the role of support for international teachers by school mentors (Cihlars, 2012; Dammerer, 2020) or other school staff as well as the welcoming culture of the school (George, 2021; Hachmeister, 2022).

From the data material of the study a number of conclusions can be drawn on both questions, which are presented and discussed in this contribution, following the description of the study design and sample.

3. Study design and sample

The study was conducted between September 2021 and February 2022. A previous pre-test, conducted in May 2021 in several countries, resulted in only moderate changes to the design.

Specially developed Likert scales, nominally scaled questions on occupational activities in the country of residence and open-ended questions were asked. Topics addressed included the forms of integration and acceptance by the other teaching staff, activities that the international teachers pursue at the school, role expectations, support needs and the extent to which they are met, dealing with professional and – to a lesser extent – non-professional burdens, as well as the degree of esteem, taking into account biographical backgrounds.

International teachers in eight European countries were invited to participate in the study. Access to possible survey participants was gained through proactive canvassing by the ITTS project partners. This went hand in hand with the research and the use of contacts to educational administrations, local schools, NGOs and university networks, which were also activated for the country reports. Participation in the survey was voluntary and not financially supported. It was not possible to recruit

participants for the study in all ITTS project countries. A total of 158 teachers from the following six ITTS participating countries took part: Belgium, Germany, Iceland, Poland, Slovenia and Türkiye. Participants from Sweden were also recruited.

Tab. 1: Study participants by country of residence

Germany	82
Sweden	26
Türkiye	22
Belgium	12
Slovenia	10
Poland	5
Iceland	1
Total	158

With regard to the composition of the participating countries, three special features should be noted.

1. Many of the participants in Germany, who had a large quantitative weight in the study with a total of 82 persons, are either participants or graduates of state or university re-qualification programmes described in the German country report (cf. Schüssler et al. in this volume). This means that many of the teachers work with the support of mentors and receive accompanying training.
2. In Sweden, too, the survey was sent to graduates of bridging programmes (*Supplementary Education for Migrant Teachers and Preschool Teachers*) at the universities in Stockholm, Göteborg, Umeå, Örebro, Linköping and Malmö – here, too, we are dealing with international teachers who have been prepared for their re-entry into school.
3. A special situation concerns the study participants from Türkiye, where the majority are Syrian teachers. They teach in *Temporary Education Centres* (TECs) set up especially for Syrian students in accordance with the Syrian curriculum in Arabic (cf. Oruç Ertürk in this volume).

Overall, the ability to include international teachers in this questionnaire study is dependent on the degree of institutionalisation of the programmes outlined, on the extent to which international teachers have already been integrated into the school system, and on the proactive acquisition efforts of the project partners.

4. Descriptive statistics

In the following, some characteristics of the survey participants are presented, which are taken up again in the analyses in section 4 as covariates of the regression analyses. All analyses were calculated using SPSS 28. Missing categorical values were replaced by means of multiple data imputation.

Of the 158 participants in the survey, 55% are female. 80% of the respondents are between 30 and 49 years old. The composition of participants by country of residence was already presented in section 3 above (cf. Table 1). The international teachers are from 35 countries of origin, with international teachers from Syria and Türkiye (21%) forming the largest groups (cf. Table 2). 35 of the respondents did not give any information about their country of origin.

Tab. 2: Study participants by country of origin

Syria	39	25%
Türkiye	26	16%
Ukraine	6	4%
Russia	5	3%
China	3	2%
Iran	3	2%
Iraq	3	2%
Netherlands	3	2%
Spain	3	2%
Others (max. 2 mentions per country)	32	20%
n.a.	35	22%
Total	158	100%

47% of the respondents stated fleeing the country as the reason for migration, 10% stated labour migration and 42% other causes. The group of respondents can be described as heterogeneous with regard to this characteristic. They cover a wide range with regard to the duration of employment as a teacher in their country of origin (cf. Fig. 1) as well as with regard to the period of time for which the international teachers have lived in their country of residence (cf. Fig. 2). On average, the international teachers participating had seven years of professional experience as a teacher in their country of origin and nine years of residence in their new country. 85% of the respondents state that they intend to stay in their country of residence for a longer period of time.

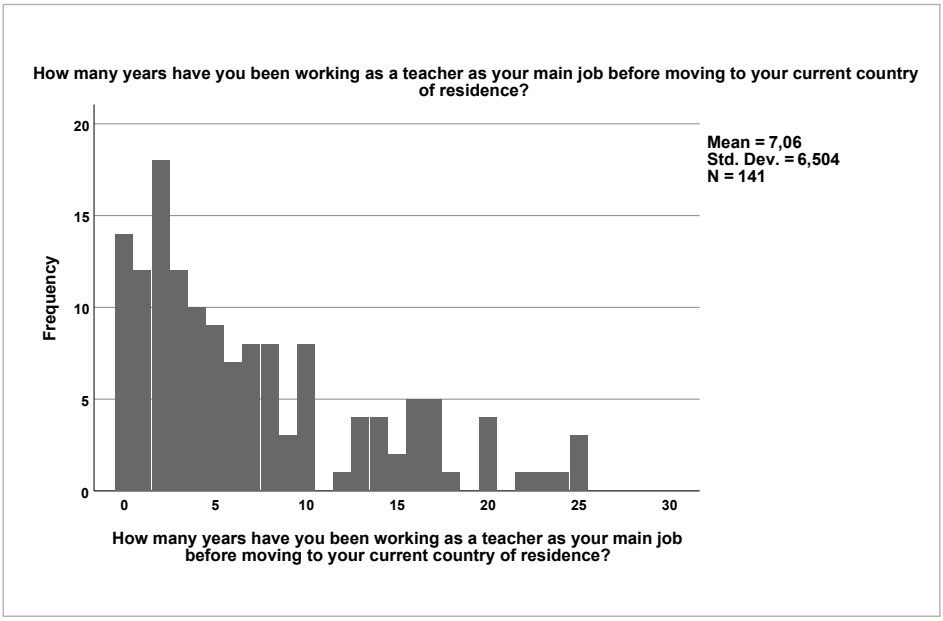

Fig. 1: Duration of employment as a teacher in the country of origin (n = 141)

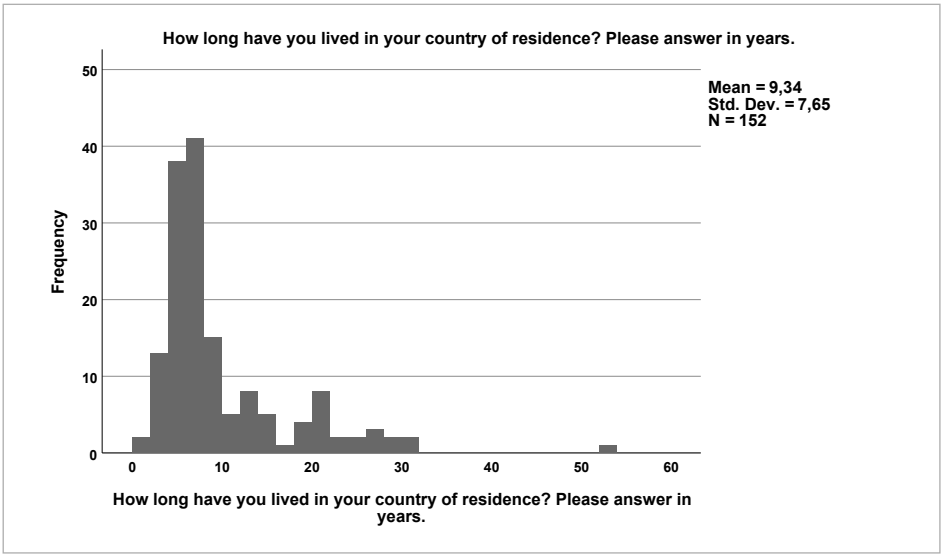

Fig. 2: Duration of stay in the country of residence (n = 152)

Concerning the formal qualification for a job as a teacher, 88% of the respondents have, according to their own assessment, completed a specific training as a teacher. An overview of the formal educational qualifications of the participants can be found in Table 3.

Tab. 3: What is your highest educational qualification acquired in your country of origin? (n = 151)

Bachelor or equivalent qualification	49%
Master or equivalent qualification	36%
Associate degree	8%
Doctorate	5%
Other	2%

62% of respondents state that their qualification is recognised in their country of residence. This is significant insofar as 78% specify that official recognition of their qualification is necessary in order to be able to work as a teacher. The relatively high proportion of people with – according to their own assessment – recognised qualifications is in line with expectations: the survey focuses as by design on international teachers working at a school, which shows that they have already overcome central obstacles of the system.

In the following, we will take a closer look at how the interviewed teachers work at their school. With regard to their employment situation, the majority (52%) of the international teachers surveyed have a limited employment contract between one and two years, 28% are employed for an indefinite period (cf. Fig. 3).

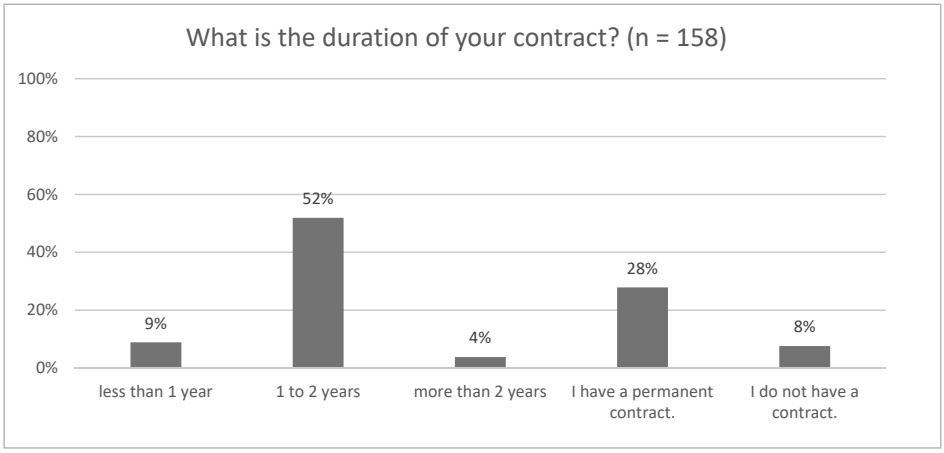

Fig. 3: Contract duration (n = 158)

When asked about the scope of their contract, 42% of respondents say that they are employed full-time. 45% are employed part-time between 50% and 99% of a full-time position. Only 13% say they are employed for less than half of a full-time job (cf. Fig. 4).

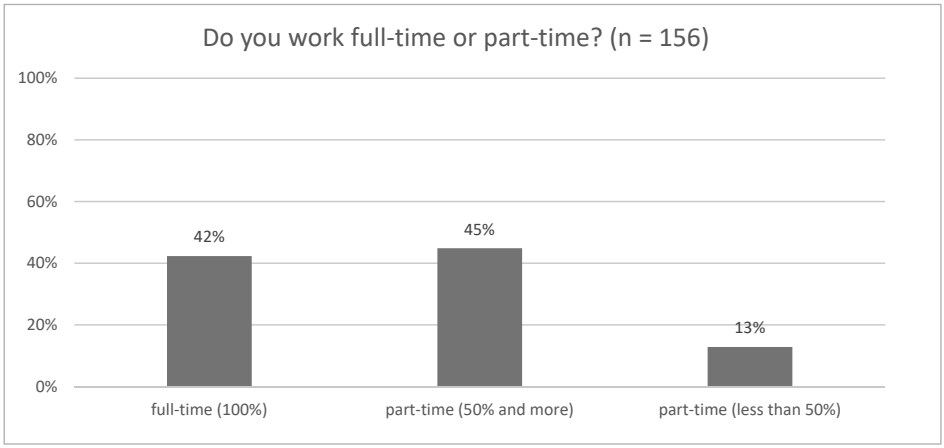

Fig. 4: Contract range (n = 156)

In addition, respondents were asked how long they had been employed at their current school. It was found that 38% have been employed at their school for less than one year, 50% for between one and five years and 13% for more than five years (cf. Fig. 5).

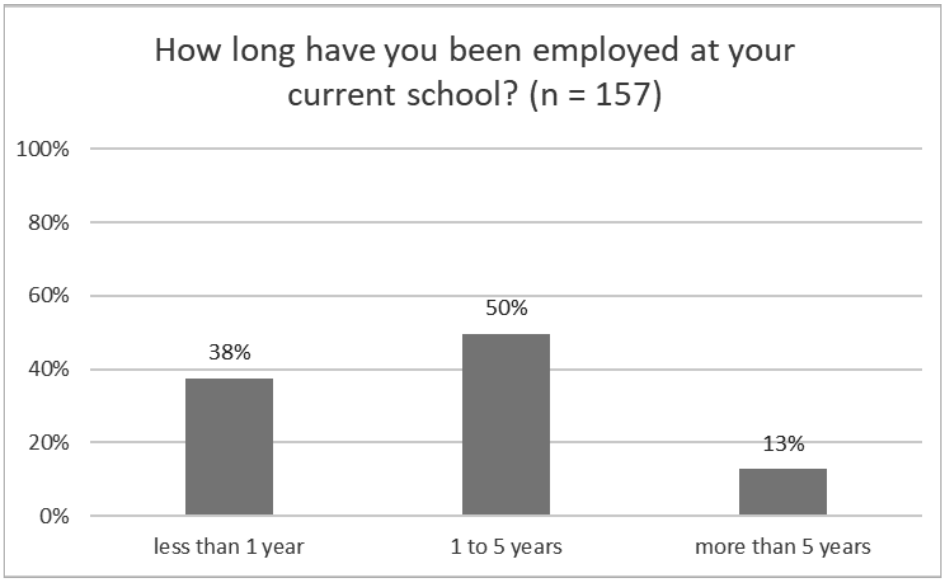

Fig. 5: How long have you been employed at your current school? (n = 157)

For more precise information on their actual employment in school, respondents were first asked whether this corresponded to their training in the subject(s) they had studied: 84% state that they teach a subject for which they were educated in their country of origin (cf. Fig. 6).

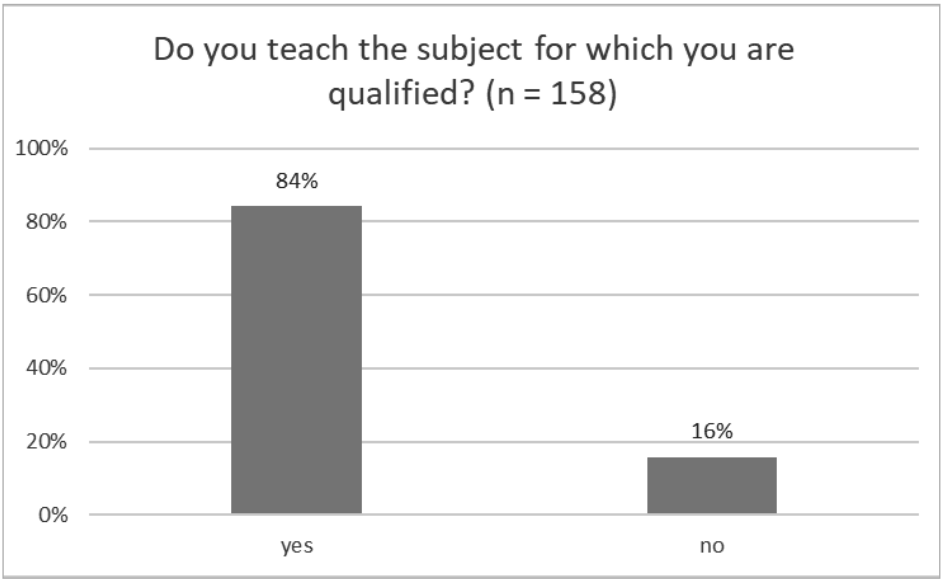

Fig. 6: Do you teach the subject for which you are qualified? (n = 158)

Secondly the respondents were asked at which types of schools they are employed and whether they work in state or private schools. With regard to the types of school, a heterogeneous picture emerged with a focus on the secondary school sector (cf. Table 4). Furthermore, it became apparent that the vast majority of respondents, 87%, are employed in state schools.

Tab. 4: School type

Pre-school education	6%
Primary education	23%
Secondary education	61%
Adult education (non-university teachers)	8%
Non-formal education	2%

When asked about the fields of employment, it became clear that the majority of respondents work as teachers. Teaching is either done independently (62%) or with the support and advice of teachers who have already been employed at the school for some time and/or in the form of a re-qualification programme (42.4%). Other fields of employment are supporting activities in and outside of the classroom and working in the field of inclusion. Almost 33% state that they (also) work in the area of the integration of newly immigrated students, either in regular classes or in international preparatory classes (cf. Table 5):

Tab. 5: How are you employed at your school? (n = 158, multiple answers possible)

Independent teaching	62,0%
Teaching monitored by an experienced teacher/teacher in a re-qualification programme	42,4%
Classroom support or assistance	17,1%
Employment in the field of inclusion	11,4%
Support for newly immigrated students, usually in regular classes	19,6%
International preparatory classes	13,3%
Other support activities	17,1%

When asked about their specific activities, the respondents state that they perform the following tasks to varying degrees at school (cf. Table 6, multiple answers possible). As expected, the proportion of teaching is very high.

Tab. 6: Which of the following tasks do you fulfil? (n = 156, multiple answers possible)

Teaching	92.3%
Participation in school conferences	75.6%
Participation in school development tasks	41.7%
Participation in excursions and school trips	35.9%
Participation in information events	44.2%
Conducting parental talks	46.8%
Support at parental talks with international parents	46.2%
Social activities	51.9%

A semantic differential was used to ask how the international teachers are perceived by their colleagues at school: are they perceived as subject teachers or as international teachers? In a fairly balanced distribution, 36% said they were perceived as subject teachers, 36% equally as subject teachers and international teachers, and 28% more as international teachers (cf. Fig. 7).

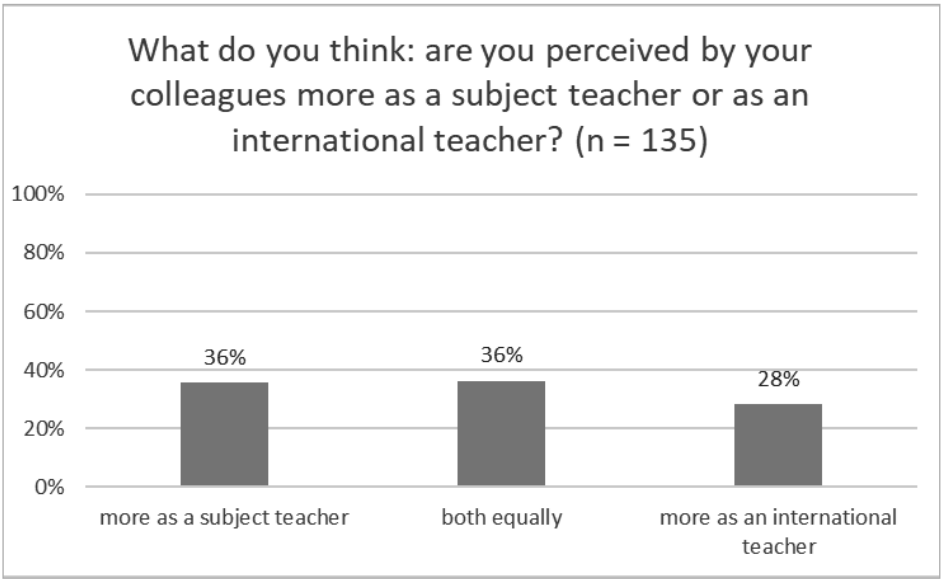

Fig. 7: Perception as a subject teacher or as an international teacher (n = 135)

Furthermore, it was asked how the respondents are perceived by their colleagues: do they make them feel like teachers or like support staff? 43% feel they are perceived as teachers, 34% as both teachers and support staff, and 23% as support staff (cf. Fig. 8).

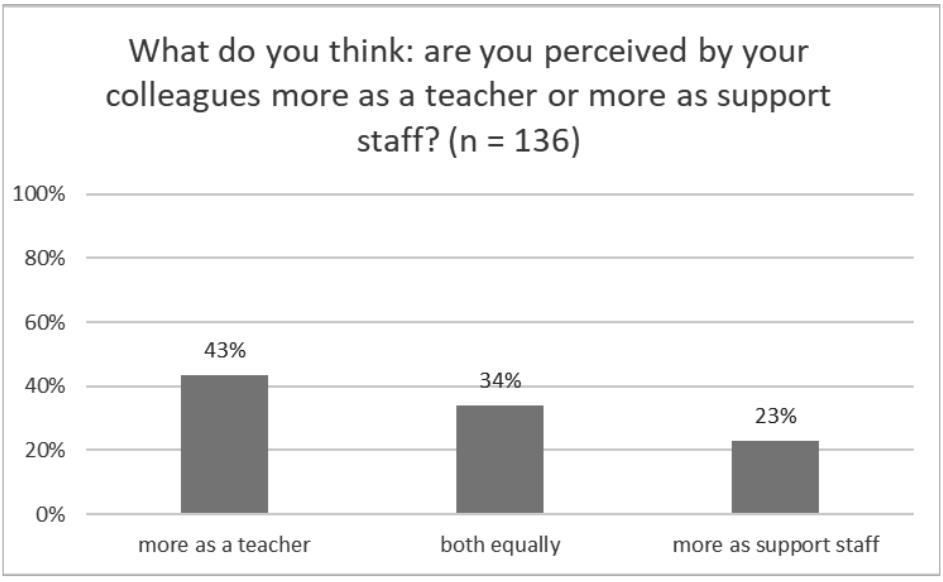

Fig. 8: Perception as teacher or as support staff? (n = 136)

These responses on role perception at school are analysed further in model 2 (see below) in a variance analysis procedure.

As expected, the evaluation of the statistical data and framing conditions shows that international teachers, and thus also the respondents in this study, do not represent a homogeneous group – even if they are often addressed as such in an emphasis on them being migrant others. In the following section, the described characteristics are related in model 3 to different content variables and questions.

5. Findings and interpretation of the results

As described in the introduction, the article addresses the research subjects "Satisfaction and esteem" and "Support". It explores the following related research questions:

1. What factors and conditions contribute to the professional satisfaction of international teachers and promote a sense of esteem?
2. What role does the support for international teachers by the school and the prevailing welcoming culture of the school play?

Several items were combined into indices, which function as target variables with regard to the research questions:

- the index "Satisfaction and esteem", which consists of seven items.
- the index "Support", which consists of five items.

These are correlated as dependent variables in three models each with various other items and content-derived indices, as well as correlated with the statistical characteristics of the sample described in section 4. In this way, it can be determined, for example, what role is played by the personal handling of challenges, the individual understanding of role, the areas of assignment or the framing factors such as gender or age, country of origin or migration cause.

The approach always follows a multi-step procedure consisting of derivation, preliminary assumptions, presentation of the findings and interpretation of the results. The hypotheses, as assumptions guiding the research, influence the evaluations to the extent that attempts are made to confirm or refute them. This multi-step procedure is described separately in sub-sections 5.1 and 5.2.

5.1 "Satisfaction and esteem"

Derivation

In her dissertation, Cihlars (2012) describes teachers' job satisfaction as a "subjective and temporal attitude towards one's own work situation" which is "determined by a multifactorial network of individual, social and organisational factors" (Cihlars, 2012, p. 238). Dammerer (2020) emphasises the job satisfaction of teachers as an important factor for better learning outcomes for students in an extensive research study with 424 teachers. He elaborates, citing Grams Davy (2017), that while people perceive their

work environment and conditions differently, they strive to "adapt their reality so that they feel satisfied in it" (Grams Davy, 2017, p. 25) and to perform their work task as well as possible (ibid.). Important factors for job satisfaction and work motivation are, among others, the factors stress and well-being.

As part of his dissertation, Bieri (2002) also investigated the connection between job satisfaction and stress in the large-scale *Aargauer Lehrkräftestudie* (*Aargau Teachers' Study*). He came to the following conclusions: "Teachers with better stress management strategies experience less occupational stress, complain of fewer psychophysical disorders, are less affected by burnout and at the same time exhibit higher job satisfaction and mental health" (Bieri, 2002, p. 201). He also found that general job satisfaction correlates highly positively with, among other things, general life satisfaction (r = .65), competence assessment (r = .65) and the quality of stress processing (r = .60) (Bieri, 2002, p. 202). With the help of regression analyses, Bieri was able to work out that general job satisfaction depends, among other things, on the following factors: the opportunity for self-fulfilment, low psychological stress and satisfaction from working with children (Bieri, 2002, p. 540).

In connection with the experience of stress, Bieri emphasises the importance of coping styles in dealing with problems and setbacks and the use of corresponding coping strategies. Furthermore, Bieri, referring to Rudow (1994), states that it can be assumed that there is a "dichotomy between experienced (high) job satisfaction as a component of well-being and the simultaneously more pronounced burnout and stress symptoms". This is "due to the fact that job satisfaction is predominantly attitudinal and motivational, while stress and burnout are more dependent on stress factors" (Bieri, 2002, p. 202). Against this background, resilience in working life is also important, i. e. the ability to deal with obstacles and problems in a solution-oriented manner. Eckert and Sieland (2017) describe resilience as a pattern of fundamental characteristics and as the ability "to deal with pressure, change, uncertainty and setbacks, in short with crises in life. […] Individuals with high resilience [take] proactive control of their destiny" (Eckert & Sieland, 2017, p. 148). In this context, it is also helpful for teachers to have a certain degree of self-efficacy (Holzberger et al., 2013). Teachers who exhibit this "have composure in the face of difficulties and feel that they have control over themselves and their emotions" (Eckert & Sieland, 2017, p. 149). In other words, "self-efficacy expectancy is the subjective certainty of being able to handle a new or difficult task successfully even when obstacles stand in the way" (Schmitz & Schwarzer, 2000). Self-efficacious teachers are therefore more convinced that they can teach successfully, they are less stressed and generally more satisfied in their jobs. This is because "job dissatisfaction and job overload as measures of job stress are also close in content to the construct of teacher self-efficacy. Those who feel constantly overburdened and dissatisfied in their professional life are less likely to believe in their own competence to act successfully" (Schmitz & Schwarzer, 2000).

Regarding the professional new beginnings in school of international teachers and teachers with a refugee background, migration-related otherness is often strongly emphasized by the affected persons themselves and their supporters as well as in the

literature and in the academic discourse. The contribution to more cultural diversity of teaching staff is also referred to in the corresponding qualification programmes as well as in the country reports in this volume. The German report (cf. Schüssler et al. in this volume) discusses the ambivalence and balancing act between the assumed cultural enrichment of schools, role models, double perspectives (Ackermann & Georgi, 2011) and intercultural opening of schools (Karakaşoğlu, 2011) on the one hand and, on the other, the expectations and stereotypes of majority societies (Frieters-Reermann, 2020), additional workloads, excessive demands, reinforcement of constructions of difference (Riegel, 2016) and a lack of perception of equivalence and expertise (Höflich, 2021, p. 3) and the associated de-professionalising effects. Against this background, the index "Unilateral responsibility for migration issues" correlated with the professional satisfaction and esteem in the questionnaire survey, consisting of items such as: "I feel that I am seen as a representative of everyone with an international background" or "I feel overburdened by international duties". Likewise, positively formulated attributions were integrated into the "Satisfaction and esteem" index.

In the ITTS survey, these different thematic approaches to professional satisfaction, individual handling of stress and resilience, on the one hand, and the specific challenges and opportunities of international teachers on the other, were combined and operationalised through a series of items under the heading of "Acceptance". The resulting mean values can be seen in Figure 9.

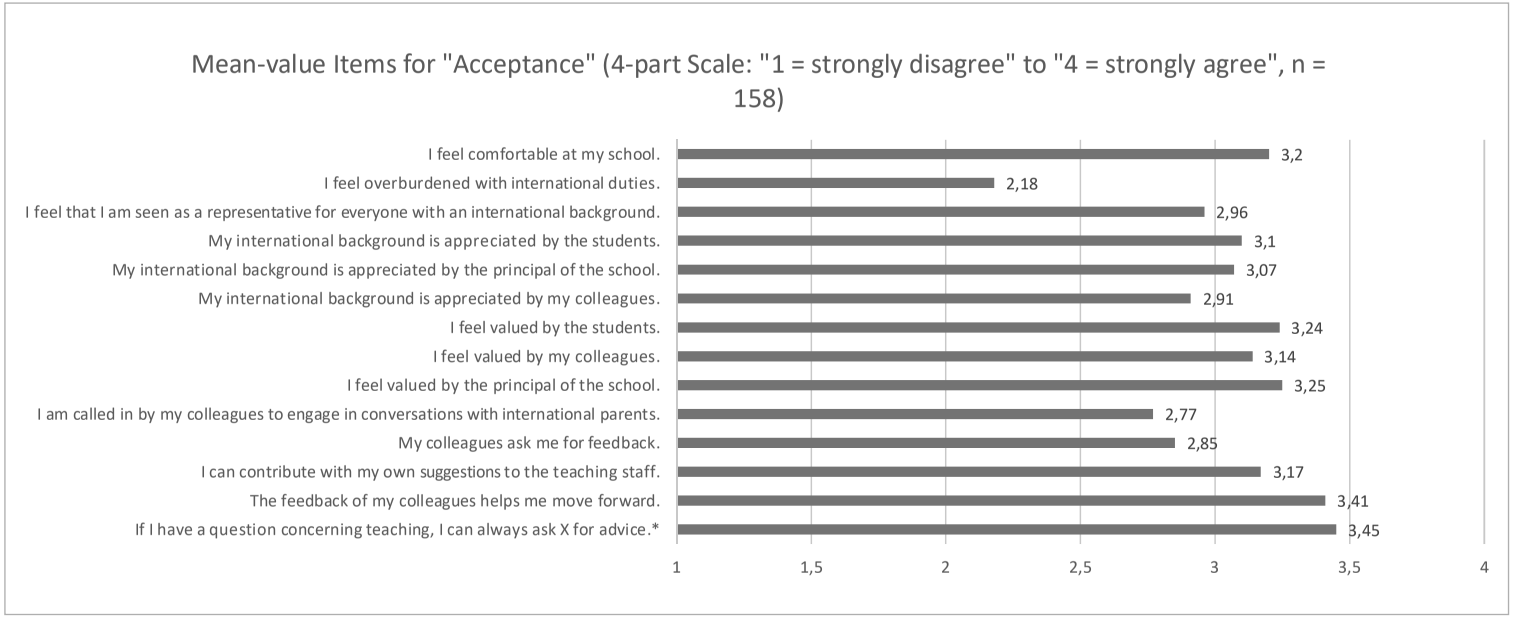

Fig. 9: Mean values of the items on "Acceptance" (n = 158)

* Slightly adapted, the last item was asked of respondents who work as teachers or in another function in two different formulations. These were combined for the descriptive evaluation as well as for the following evaluation steps.

In a consensual negotiation process between the authors, three indices were formed from the set of questions on "Acceptance"[1] and validated with the help of a confirmatory factor analysis[2] (cf. Table 7).

Tab. 7: Indices constructed from the question complex "Acceptance"

Index	N Items	Crombachs Alpha	M	Std	N	Example Items
Satisfaction and esteem	7	0,885	3,13	0,55	158	I feel valued by … My international background is appreciated by my colleagues.
Cooperation between equals	4	0,718	3,22	0,49	158	I can contribute with my own suggestions to the teaching staff.
Unilateral responsibility for migration issues	3	0,488	2,64	0,54	158	I feel that I am seen as a representative for everyone with an international background.

In the following, this article focuses on the index "Satisfaction and esteem" formed from these as the target variable. The measures of location and spread for this index can be found in Table 8.

Tab. 8: Measures of location and spread for the items of the index "Satisfaction and esteem"

Index "Satisfaction and esteem"					
Item	M	Std	Min	Max	N
I feel valued by the principal of the school.	3,25	0,8	1	4	158
I feel valued by my colleagues.	3,14	0,7	1	4	158
I feel valued by the students.	3,24	0,69	1	4	158
My international background is appreciated by my colleagues.	2,91	0,7	1	4	158
My international background is appreciated by the principal of the school.	3,07	0,76	1	4	158
My international background is appreciated by the students.	3,1	0,67	1	4	158
I feel comfortable at my school.	3,2	0,68	1	4	158

Interim result and preliminary assumptions

As an interim result, it can be stated that overall high satisfaction values have been recorded. The respondents state that they feel valued at their school by their school administrators, their colleagues and their students (M = 3.13, Std = 0.55, n = 158). This finding in itself can be seen as a good indicator of involvement in the school. How-

1 This deviated from the proposal of an explorative factor analysis (principal component analysis with varimax rotation, extraction at eigenvalue greater than 1, cumulative variance elucidation at 66.54%), which had proposed a four-part factor structure for these items.

2 Cumulative variance resolution at 58.77%.

ever, it can also be assumed that good social integration is also a protection against possible stress (Bieri, 2002; Dammerer, 2020). From the perspective of the teachers, this could be summed up as follows: once international teachers participating in the study have overcome the obstacles (cf. in detail the country reports in this volume) and gained employment at a school, they have a variety of positive experiences with different constellations of actors, with their colleagues and the school management, with students and parents.

As a starting point for further data analyses, the index "Satisfaction and esteem" is suitable primarily as a dependent variable. In the following, the question of which factors can contribute to a feeling of satisfaction and esteem among international teachers is explored. First of all, a series of hypotheses were formulated on possible correlations of the "Satisfaction and esteem" index with other variables, which influence the evaluations as assumptions guiding the research. The effects of possible correlations were tested with the help of regression analyses.[3] For this purpose, different independent variables were included in the procedure, taking into account three models that build on each other.[4]

In the first model, different factors were used as independent variables, such as "Dealing with challenges", "Conflicts", "Barriers due to system change" and "Fulfilling extra-curricular responsibilities". In the second model, "Understanding the role as a subject (vs. international) teacher" or "as a fully-fledged (vs. assistant) teacher" was added. In the first two content-based models, the following assumptions were made:

The greater the sense of satisfaction and esteem

- the more the challenges at school are perceived as interesting opportunities (model 1)
- the more tasks the teacher has in addition to actual teaching (model 1)
- the more the respondents feel themselves perceived in the role of a subject teacher (instead of an international teacher) (model 2)
- the more the respondents feel they are perceived in the role of a (fully-fledged) teacher (instead of an assistant) (model 2) and
- the more similar the job as a teacher in the country of residence is perceived to that in the country of origin (model 2).[5]

The feeling of satisfaction and esteem is lower

- the more tense the teacher feels due to conflicts (model 1)
- the more emotionally burdened the teacher feels (model 1)

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3 Multiple Linear Regression. Missing Values: Listwise.

4 A plus stands for an expected positive, a minus for an expected negative correlation on the dependent variable "Satisfaction and esteem".

5 The index "Similarity to the teacher role in the country of origin" was formed from the following items: "My role as a teacher is similar to the one I know from my country of origin" and "I imagined the re-entry to school to be more difficult."

- the more linguistic, formal and content-related barriers are perceived due to the system change (model 1)[6]
- the more unilateral responsibility for migration issues is attributed (model 2).

Finally, the effects of dichotomous control variables were examined in a third model. The effects of the countries of residence (only: Germany, Sweden, Türkiye), the countries of origin (only: Syria, Türkiye), the socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, professional experience as a teacher in the country of origin), the question of whether fleeing was the reason for migration, as well as the employment relationship (type of employment, length of contract) were controlled for (model 3).

Findings

Model 1 delivers findings that are largely in line with expectations. The more one sees oneself positively challenged and takes on a variety of tasks in addition to the immediate practical teaching activity, the more one perceives oneself as being valued. The more teachers feel burdened by conflicts at school and the more barriers they perceive due to the system change, the lower the perceived satisfaction and esteem. Only the emotional stress index does not have a significant effect on satisfaction and esteem, not even in models 2 and 3.

Tab. 9: Linear regression for "Satisfaction and esteem" – model 1

Model 1 (n = 158): Corr. R2 = 0,378		
	std. Beta	Sig.
Index Challenges as opportunities	0,274	**
Index Stress due to conflicts	-0,343	**
Index Emotional stress	0,07	n.s.
Index Barriers due to system change	-0,145	*
Index Fulfilling extra-curricular responsibilities	0,301	**

If one adds "Role perception" to model 2, only "Role perception as a fully-fledged teacher" (and not as an assistant) has an effect. Compared to model 1, the – in any case weak – negative effect of "Barriers due to system change" is no longer significant.

6 The index "Barriers due to system change" was formed as a result of the following query: "Various factors can make it difficult to work as a teacher in your country of residence. Please indicate to what extent the following factors are a barrier to you:
- language
- formal requirements/acceptance of degrees
- different system of teacher education
- different role of teachers
- different lesson planning and structure
- different interaction with students."

Overall, model 2 significantly increases the variance clarification compared to model 1, whereby the variables in model 1 remain significant with the exception of "Barriers due to system change".

Tab. 10: Linear regression for "Satisfaction and esteem" - model 2

Model 2 (n = 158): Corr. R2 = 0,460		
	std. Beta	Sig.
Index Challenges as opportunities	0,229	**
Index Stress due conflicts	-0,260	**
Index Emotional stress	-0,005	n.s.
Index Barriers due to system change	-0,094	n.s.
Index Fulfilling extra-curricular responsibilities	0,229	**
Role Perception as subject teacher	0,106	n.s.
Role Perception as (fully-fledged) teacher	0,224	**
Index Unilateral responsibility for migration issues	0,124	n.s.
Index Similarity to teacher's role in country of origin	0,076	n.s.

Most of the covariates considered in model 3, such as country of origin and residence, employment status, age and work experience, have no effect. Two variables are an exception: if fleeing the country is given as the cause of migration, this shows a weak negative effect. Gender is also an exception, with female teachers indicating that they feel less valued. While the effects in relation to "Challenges as opportunities", "Stress due to conflicts", "Fulfilling extra-curricular responsibilities" and "Role perception as a fully-fledged teacher" remain in model 3, the effect of "Barriers due to system change" becomes significant (again), and the "Role perception as a subject teacher" also has a positive effect. Furthermore, contrary to previous assumptions, a weak positive effect of "Unilateral responsibility for migration issues" emerges.

Tab. 11: Linear regression for "Satisfaction and esteem" - model 3

Model 3 (n = 141): Corr. R2 = 0,526		
	std. Beta	Sig.
Index Challenges as opportunities	0,232	**
Index Stress due to conflicts	-0,263	**
Index Emotional stress	-0,033	n.s.
Index Barriers due to system change	-0,144	**
Index Fulfilling extra-curricular responsibilities	0,222	*
Role Perception as subject teacher	0,151	*
Role Perception as (fully-fledged) teacher	0,188	*
Index Unilateral responsibility for migration issues	0,161	*
Index Similarity to teacher's role in country of origin	0,056	n.s.
Country of residence: Germany	-0,161	n.s.

Model 3 (n = 141): Corr. R2 = 0,526		
	std. Beta	Sig.
Country of residence: Sweden	-0,051	n.s.
Country of residence: Türkiye	-0,033	n.s.
Country of origin: Syria	-0,005	n.s.
Country of origin: Türkiye	-0,091	n.s.
Gender (female)	-0,278	**
Age (< 40)	0,055	n.s.
Professional experience in country of origin (in years)	0,072	n.s.
Fleeing the country as migration cause	-0,166	*
Full-time position	0,032	n.s.
Permanent position	-0,109	n.s.

Interpretation of the results

To put it bluntly: once international teachers have found their way into the system, overall satisfaction levels are quite high and they feel valued. In particular, the following factors influence their professional integration, sense of self-efficacy and sense of successful integration in the school.

The first is their full integration as teachers, i. e. that they are not perceived as assistant teachers or other support staff. This is consistent with studies in migration pedagogy that explicitly address the role and recognition of international teachers (e.g. for Germany, George, 2021) as well as with the studies described above on job satisfaction, the experience of stress (Bieri, 2002) and self-efficacy (Holzberger et al., 2013). The significant correlation with the index "Fulfilling extra-curricular responsibilities" also fits in with this, which could be an indication of a more comprehensive involvement in the school: the teachers are then not only responsible for their own subject lessons and their own learning groups, but are also involved in the work of school committees, in school development processes, class trips and school festivals. The study by Schmitz and Schwarzer (2000) also points to a higher self-efficacy of those teachers who are also involved outside the classroom.

On the other hand, the decisive factor for the professional satisfaction of the international teachers interviewed is their personal approach to dealing with challenges and their attitude to the demands of everyday work.[7] Do they see challenges as an opportunity for their own professional development, do they face the demands of everyday work positively, do they deal with problems in a solution-oriented way, do they show a willingness to make an effort and do they believe in themselves? In short,

7 This index was outlined by such items as: "My daily work is interesting with new experiences every day."; "I look forward to every day at school because I am constantly faced with new and interesting tasks."; and "My daily work allows me to broaden my professional competences."

if they are convinced of their self-efficacy, this significantly increases their professional satisfaction and the feeling of acceptance in the school and by the teaching staff. It can be assumed that they have developed a certain degree of frustration- and ambiguity-tolerance and show resilience (Eckert & Sieland, 2017). Analogous to studies on teachers' experience of stress (Bieri, 2002) and self-efficacy (Schmitz & Schwarzer, 2000), this once again shows that international teachers are first and foremost teachers who can (but do not have to) contribute their international background as an asset.

According to the results of the present survey, the question of whether the respondents see themselves as subject teachers or as international teachers does not play a role in model 2. In model 3, however, significant correlations do emerge with the inclusion of the dichotomous variables. Cautiously interpreted, this could indicate that the over-emphasis on the distinguishing of migrant others (e.g. Karakaşoğlu & Schäfer, 2022), which is a theme in the literature, is ambivalent in the perception of the respondents, but less clearly problematic. Follow-up studies would certainly be interesting, ideally with mixed-method designs including qualitative methods that are more specifically dedicated to this complex of questions. Initial approaches for qualitative studies, also on the double perspective (Ackermann & Georgi, 2011) of international teachers, can be seen in interview studies and in empirically designed re-qualification work in the context of *Lehrkräfte Plus* (Hachmeister, 2022). This ambiguity is also supported by the answers to the open questions on the assessment of teachers' own international background.[8] On the one hand, they testify to a variety of positive experiences with regard to an identification and role model function: "I can contribute to diversity and solidarity of school life by being a role model for the students with a migration background"[9] [10] and with regard to problem-solving ability: "In the international class, where the children come from different countries, I can solve many problems." They also point to a special empathy and mediation ability: "I understand refugee children better" or "by helping in parental talks with international parents" (Germany). Some comments indicate that the special commitment to international students has improved their own position at school: "My ability to interact with foreign students and understand their needs and desires […] has increased the importance of my work with my colleagues" (Türkiye). The fact that the experiences are very individual and can therefore be diverse and sometimes diametrically different even within one country is shown by the following two testimonies from Slovenia. The first contribution shows a high esteem of intercultural expertise and the commitment

8 Question: "As an international teacher, you contribute different experiences and competences to your professional life than your colleagues. In which situations are these strengths an advantage for you and appreciated by others?"

9 Also: "Although I have lived in Germany for only a few years, I try to do my job in this country. Another point I would say is that we could be role models at school for the children or young people who come from educationally disadvantaged families."

10 The responses quoted here have been uniformly translated into English from the original languages and slightly adapted linguistically.

to international families: "I enjoy helping foreign students in the process of adaptation and therefore I gain new experiences and skills. It is very much appreciated by the principal of the school, by students and their parents. They are very satisfied and thankful and that's enough for me." The other statement shows clear frustration regarding the dominant ideas of normalcy at school and the resulting one-sided pressure to adapt: "I stopped giving suggestions because I do not feel that many want to change (which is not to say that Slovene educational habits and traditions are weaker than 'international' ones)." Other examples that address the issue of excessive demands[11] go so far as to mention an open rejection of a teacher's international background on the part of parents: "I feel overwhelmed when I think about some difficult parents who don't want an international teacher for their children" (Germany). Another teacher complains about a lack of empathy and patience for herself, but also for students who have linguistic difficulties with the predominant language of instruction: "When foreign students and their teachers have difficulties in understanding each other as far as learning the Slovene language is concerned, teachers sometimes seem to be upset because some e. g. Albanian students still don't speak Slovene (after one or even two years of their schooling)" (Slovenia).

In line with expectations, conflicts with students, colleagues or parents have a negative effect on the feeling of esteem. Not in line with expectations, however, is the fact that no significant connection can be found between the feeling of being esteemed and linguistic competences. The system differences also do not seem to have a significant effect on professional integration, satisfaction and esteem. In view of the quantitative results, one could discuss whether this is due to the large proportion of study participants who have undergone corresponding qualification programmes in Germany (n = 82) and Sweden (n = 26), which give a great deal of space to language acquisition in particular (Jasche, 2022), but also to the reflexive confrontation with the supposed and existing system differences as well as the challenges of system change (cf. among others Schüssler & Purrmann, 2021; Wojciechowicz et al., 2020). In contrast, the answers to the open questions show that individual teachers experience this significantly differently. This is true with regard to language: "I have been in Germany for about 2.5 years. I have been in a school for 10 months. Of course, my language level is not sufficient. Sometimes I can't understand conversations. I am so tired of being looked at and treated as if I am stupid in this situation. I am not stupid, I am just trying to learn a new language. It's always very difficult for me." And this also applies to teaching: "I feel most overwhelmed when I am assigned alone to a class (no double staffing, no team teaching, etc.). This is not about content or subject matter, but about classroom management. Because I find it difficult to react spontaneously to unexpected things during lessons" (Germany). In addition, there are statements about poorer pay and a lack of equal treatment under collective agreements as well as a lack of recognition of degrees: "The fact is that I am required to graduate in teacher education although I already have a Master in Educational Sciences done in Belgium

11 Question: "In which situations do you feel overwhelmed?"

(after my initial studies – Bachelor and Master – in my country of origin). I cannot obtain job security and a permanent position and it is frustrating and overwhelming that my qualifications are not enough" (Belgium). When asked about when teachers feel overburdened, the majority of responses are congruent with studies of teacher stress in general: excessive teaching responsibilities, substitute responsibilities, also in connection with COVID-19, and excessive administrative tasks: "When the amount of administrative work becomes as time consuming as teaching, preparing for the lessons and correcting home assignments" (Belgium). Furthermore, there is also frustration about unfair treatment: "When I am chosen once more (like the past years) over the other teachers to write some extra reports which need a lot of work and is not recognised as work (it is not included in my hours, but it is included in the school duties and I am not paid for these extra hours!)" (Slovenia).

On the other hand, a striking number of respondents also state in the open answers that they do not feel overwhelmed and instead report experiencing esteem in many situations. This explains and illustrates the overall high satisfaction values and self-efficacy experiences of the quantitative analysis. Asked in general terms "In which situations do you receive positive feedback?" there are correspondingly many encouraging examples and cross-references to successful teaching: "For my manner, the learning atmosphere in my learning groups" or "I receive positive feedback from my students every day. That is the most important thing for me". For some, emphasis is placed on subject expertise and experience: "subject expertise, teaching at ease, experience over 15 years". For others on creative approaches in teaching: "Explaining grammatical rules. For example, I explained present perfect in a simple way. I used the door as a prop. The students understood this tense quickly and I was praised by the head teacher" (Germany), as well as outside the classroom: "the ability and willingness to make something out of nothing at little cost" (Poland). Some teachers experience esteem despite still having language difficulties: "My friendly communication with the students is appreciated by my colleagues. Although I still have difficulties with the language, I try to establish a warm and friendly form of communication" (Germany). Others experience a consistently positive school climate: "All the time. In the teachers' lounge, at meetings and in the classroom with the students" (Belgium). Overall, the positive descriptions predominate in the open responses.

5.2 Support and welcoming culture

Derivation

Counselling and support in finding one's way in a new field of work are very beneficial for helping new colleagues to settle into the new school. "Discussing methodological, didactic and other topics with colleagues" (Dammerer, 2020) also effectively supports integration into the teaching staff. In this context, mentors and training officers can make an important contribution to shaping a successful entry into the profession and to promoting the professional satisfaction of new colleagues (e.g. Dammerer, 2020).

Mentoring can be seen as a component of school personnel development and contributes to the promotion of professional satisfaction and teacher health and thus also to a healthy school (Cihlars, 2012).

What applies to the internship phases in teacher training and the preparatory service, but also to the career entry phase of resident teachers, can also be transferred to the situation of international teachers. Due to the special challenges, which have to do with language and system change, among other things, the support of the new international colleagues plays a special role in the new professional start with regard to school climate, teaching culture and coming to terms with new and unfamiliar school processes (Hachmeister, 2022, p. 44). It has been proven that this can make it easier for new international colleagues to find their way around and settle in at the school (Syspons, 2021).

If there are mentors at the host schools, they can make a difference to how international colleagues are perceived at the school and they can mediate in many directions and help to break down barriers and difficulties of understanding – with the teaching staff, with the students and parents as well as with the other school stakeholders. But other teachers who have a lot to do with the new international colleagues due to personal interest and commitment, their own international background, professional affinity or by chance, can also have a positive influence on the school's welcoming atmosphere. The attitude that prevails in the school towards the new colleagues also makes a difference from the perspective of migration pedagogy. Is the counselling and cooperation primarily about a quick, quiet and smooth integration into the established school processes or is there an open, interested and appreciative approach to the potential of the new colleagues? Are possible perturbations of established processes perceived as a threat and disturbance or can they (also) be interpreted as an occasion for reflection and enrichment? For a strength-oriented integration of new international colleagues, "a process-oriented and participation-oriented understanding of professional integration […] is necessary: it is not about a one-sided adaptation of the new teachers to existing habits in the school, but about being open to joint negotiation processes and joint learning" (Hachmeister, 2022, p. 46).

Of great importance for the well-being of international teachers is, therefore, the way in which they are integrated and supported at the school as a place of work. This is the starting point for the second part of this article, which will take a closer look at the support international teachers receive at school. The integration of international teachers at school is not necessarily a foregone conclusion, as their integration into the school can also miscarry or be marked by failure, problems and stress. Accordingly, the participants of the ITTS study were presented with various items in which they were asked to position themselves in relation to statements regarding their activity, role, involvement, perception and support by colleagues and students, but also by school administrators.[12]

12 Surveyed on a 4-part ordinal scale with the expressions "strongly agree – agree – disagree – strongly disagree". Inverted for presentation and indexing.

The index "Support" was operationalised by asking about different activities. In a two-part procedure, the international teachers were first asked how much support they needed in relation to the various school activities and, in a second step, to what extent they already received support. The following activities were chosen: "Preparation and Reflection on Teaching Lessons", "Teaching", "Classroom Management", "Extracurricular Tasks" and "Orientation at School". An index was created for the following analyses.[13] Each international teacher thus has a value that describes the need ("Support Needed") and the receipt of support ("Support Received"). The range of values lies between 1 (no support needed/received) and 4 (strong support needed/received). Overall, it can be seen that the international teachers have heterogeneous support needs and also receive support in heterogeneous forms and to different degrees. In the following, the data on the need as well as the receipt of support is presented (cf. Figure 10 and 11).

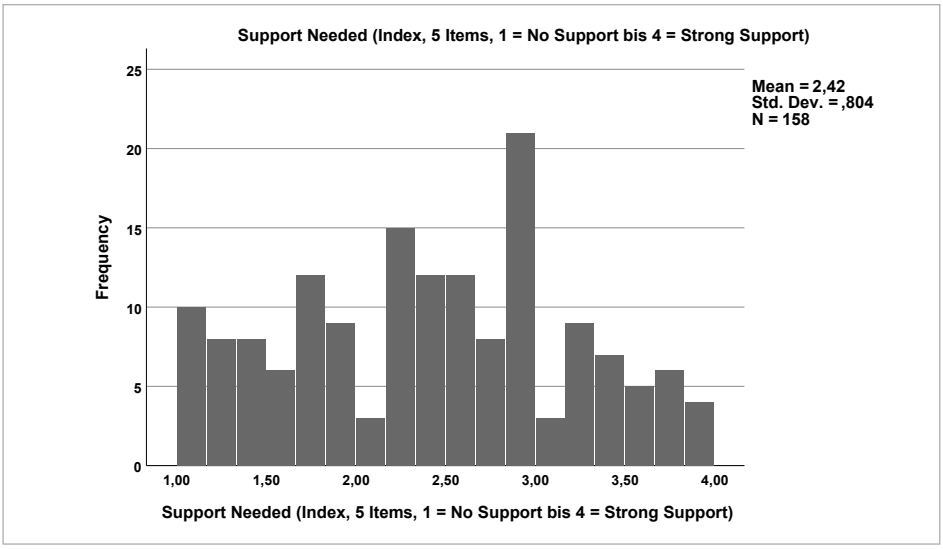

Fig. 10: Frequency distribution of the index "Support Needed" (n = 158)

13 The ordinal scale level (from 1 = no support to 4 = strong support) is treated as ratio scaled for the index formation and the following calculation operations. The index is formed as the sum of the individual items, which results in a value corridor of 5 to 25. Explorative factor analyses result in single-factor solutions in each case. The reliabilities for "Support Needed" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87) and "Support Received" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.916) are very good.

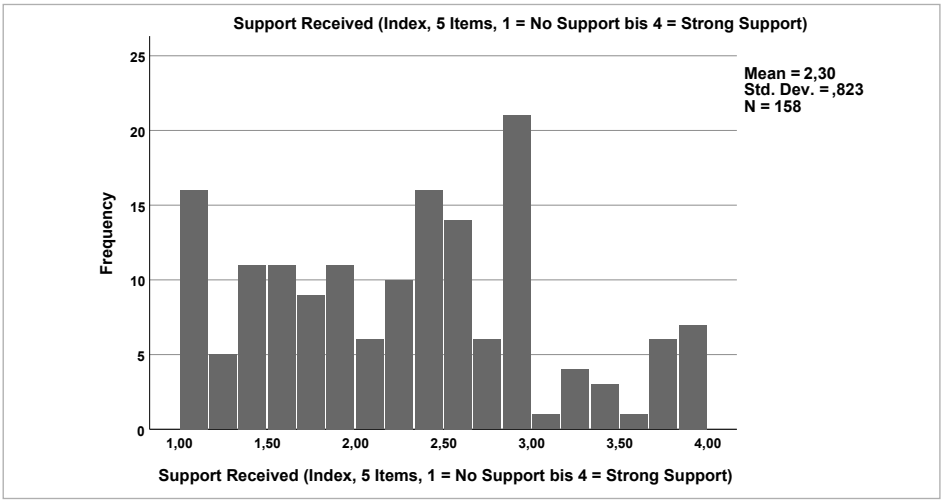

Fig. 11: Frequency distribution of the index "Support Received" (n = 158)

Interim result and preliminary assumptions for further analysis of the data

The need for support is heterogeneous, as is the information on the support they receive. In terms of content, it can be seen that the factors correlate positively with each other (Pearson's R = .647, p>.001, n = 158): the need for support and the receipt of support are positively related. 45.1% of respondents report receiving support from mentors. The international teachers therefore have a need for support, but also receive it.

Analogous to the regression analyses presented above on "Satisfaction and esteem", the effects of various independent variables on "Support needed" are first examined in a multiple linear regression model. The models are based on the following hypotheses:

The more the international teachers state that they need support,
- the more they feel burdened by conflicts
- the more emotionally burdened they feel
- the more extracurricular tasks they have in addition to actual teaching
- the more barriers they perceive
- and the more they are perceived to be unilaterally responsible for migration issues.

The need for support is rated lower by the international teachers interviewed,

- the more they perceive the challenges at school as interesting opportunities
- the more satisfied they are and the more they are esteemed
- the more they experience cooperation between equals
- and the more similar they consider the work as a teacher in the country of residence to the country of origin.

Furthermore, in model 2, effects of the countries of residence (only: Germany, Sweden, Türkiye), the countries of origin (only: Syria, Türkiye), the socio-demographic data (gender, age, professional experience as a teacher in the country of origin), fleeing their country as a cause of migration and the employment relationship (type of employment, duration of contract) are monitored.

Findings

Model 1 delivers findings that are only partially in line with expectations. As expected, there is a clear correlation between the variables "Burden of conflict" and "Number of perceived barriers" on the one hand and "Degree of support needed" on the other. The same applies to "Perception of unilateral responsibility for migration issues". All other variables show no significant correlation with "Degree of support needed". This also applies to the variable "Satisfaction and esteem", which was the focus of the first part of these evaluations.

Tab. 12: Linear regression on "Support Needed" – model 1

Model 1 (n = 158): Corr R2 = 0,248		
	std. Beta	Sig.
Index Challenges as opportunities	0,151	n.s.
Index Stress due to conflicts	0,249	**
Index Emotional stress	0,029	n.s.
Index Fulfilling extra-curricular responsibilities	-0,153	n.s.
Index Satisfaction and esteem	-0,122	n.s.
Index Cooperation between equals	-0,119	n.s.
Index Unilateral responsibility for migration issues	0,285	**
Index Similarity to teacher's role in country of origin	0,038	n.s.
Index Barriers due to system change	0,233	**

Due to the close correlation between the indices "Support needed" and "Support received" described above, it can be assumed that the majority of the teachers surveyed who suffer from conflicts and barriers and state that they need support, also receive it. This is also supported by the results of the analyses of the index "Support received", where a significant correlation is clearly recognisable with precisely these two topics: "Stress due to conflicts" and "Barriers due to system change" (cf. Table 13). All other variables show no significant correlation.

Tab. 13: Linear regression for "Support Received" – model 1

Model 1 (n = 158): Corr R2 = 0,153		
	std. Beta	Sig.
Index Challenges as opportunities	0,063	n.s.
Index Stress due to conflicts	0,255	**
Index Emotional stress	-0,056	n.s.
Index Fulfilling extra-curricular responsibilities	-0,028	n.s.
Index Satisfaction and esteem	0,104	n.s.
Index Cooperation between equals	0,094	n.s.
Index Unilateral responsibility for migration issues	0,143	n.s.
Index Similarity to teacher's role in country of origin	0,051	n.s.
Index Barriers due to system change	0,331	**

If the other covariates are included in model 2, there are no effects of country of origin, employment status, age, gender, work experience and refugee background on the index "Support Needed". The only exceptions are the countries of residence Germany and Türkiye.

Tab. 14: Linear regression on "Support Needed" – model 2

Model 2 (n = 141): Corr R2 = 0,367		
	std. Beta	Sig.
Index Challenges as opportunities	0,036	n.s.
Index Stress due to conflicts	0,155	n.s.
Index Emotional stress	0,079	n.s.
Index Barriers due to system change	-0,215	*
Index Fulfilling extra-curricular responsibilities	-0,004	n.s.
Role Perception as subject teacher	-0,057	n.s.
Role Perception as (fully-fledged) teacher	0,228	*
Index Unilateral responsibility for migration issues	0,029	n.s.
Index Similarity to teacher's role in country of origin	0,2	*
Country of residence: Germany	0,362	*
Country of residence: Sweden	0,01	n.s.
Country of residence: Türkiye	0,282	*
Country of origin: Syria	0,079	n.s.
Country of origin: Türkiye	0,116	n.s.
Gender (female)	0,141	n.s.
Age (< 40)	0,025	n.s.
Professional experience in country of origin (in years)	-0,006	n.s.
Fleeing the country as migration cause	0,036	n.s.
Full-time position	0,073	n.s.
Permanent position	-0,124	n.s.

Results and interpretation

The findings can be interpreted that support is needed and is effective regarding existing conflicts and barriers. Support from mentors (Dammerer, 2020; Hachmeister, 2022) can offer important assistance here. Among the study participants in North Rhine-Westphalia (N = 66), 67% state that they receive support from mentors, in Belgium it is 62.5%, in Sweden and Poland it is still 25%, in Türkiye 21.1%, while in Iceland and Slovenia it is 0%. In the open answers[14], there are some examples of what the support looks like and what is perceived as helpful, such as collegial support that facilitates orientation in new situations or a "guided tour of the school and the necessary information for the smooth beginning of the school year" (Belgium). However, it also emerges from the open responses that the existence of mentoring opportunities is not at the same time a guarantee of its quality, as the following criticism illustrates: "It would be better if we could get a better mentor. It is a pity that there is a mentor who can't help me" (Germany). Mentoring is inevitably bound by time limits. Not all questions can always be answered: "I would like to have a supporter where I can get information about all the activities at school and ask my questions easily. This is the mentor's duty, but this is not always possible" (Germany).

When asked what support the study participants would like to receive, needs related to the language of the country of residence were very frequently expressed: language courses ("I would appreciate accompanying language learning", Slovenia), language coaching, pronunciation training or understanding for non-native pronunciations, more patience, understanding and openness with regard to the fact that the language of instruction of the country of residence is not the first language of the international teacher, as well as more recognition for the teacher's multilingualism. Furthermore, they would like to receive better support for contractual, formal and financial framework conditions: a permanent contract, easier recognition of degrees or financial means for the purchase of teaching materials as well as psychological support for overcoming problems. Likewise, aspects related to teaching, subject didactics and educational science are mentioned, such as support with subject-specific language, and with lesson preparation: "to have been given more structural support in the form of year planning or advice on parental sessions" (Belgium); and with classroom management, especially in dealing with heterogeneous learning groups: "I would appreciate having a pedagogical support sometimes, for example when my class is very heterogeneous, just to help me organise my lesson in an even better way, to improve my teaching through concrete examples" (Slovenia). The wish for further training is often expressed; preparatory and accompanying programmes, as they exist in Germany, are positively mentioned and the wish for more cooperation is emphasised: "more interaction with other teachers" (Belgium); "Support could also be meetings with other teachers working at the same school level to exchange good examples of practice

14 Some of the following statements have been linguistically adapted, while retaining the substance of the statement.

in a concrete way. To have such meetings on a regular basis" (Slovenia) and "I would appreciate consultation with my colleagues as well as team teaching" (Germany).

As expected, the quantitative analysis confirms a correlation between the variables of "Unilateral responsibilty for migration issues" and "Support needed". This corresponds to the assumption that an externally allocated responsibility for migration issues is experienced as burdening, that one is not perceived as a full part of the staff and that this hinders an equal integration into the school (Hachmeister, 2022; Karakaşoğlu & Schäfer, 2022). If the dichotomous variables from model 2 are added, the effects of the variables "Unilateral responsibilty for migration issues" and "Number of perceived barriers" remain, while the correlation for "Burden of conflict" is no longer significant.

Furthermore, international teachers with the countries of residence Germany and Türkiye state that they have special needs for support. In Germany, where the majority of respondents (n = 82) are currently working, this is certainly related to the highly regulated nature of the teaching profession and the associated comparatively high barriers to accessing the profession, as well as the difficulty in comparing teacher training systems (George, 2021; Schüssler et al. in this volume). Most of the interviewees are participants in or graduates of various re-qualification programmes in several federal states. These programmes have come into being in order to overcome these obstacles and to enable a supported restart into the labour market. They are associated with a high degree of institutionalisation of support in the form of school mentors specifically entrusted with this task. These mentors systematically accompany the phase of professional re-entry and receive a reduction to their teaching workload for this. In Türkiye, there is a special situation of *Temporary Education Centres* (TECs) for Syrian students, in which Syrian teachers teach according to the Syrian curriculum in Arabic (cf. Oruç Ertürk in this volume). Here it remains unclear whether the higher support needs relate to teaching in the TECs or to the difficulties of integrating into the formal Turkish education system (cf. ibid.) - the survey participants came from both groups. In the open answers to the question in which situations the cultural background is valued,[15] very disparate answers emerge among the study participants in Türkiye. Some show a high level of recognition: "the ability to interact with foreign students and understand their needs and desires which has increased the importance of my work with my colleagues", "cultural awareness" or "I feel strong because I speak three languages". Others point to extreme frustration and the compulsion to assimilate: "Thinking about it is even funny because talking about differences is forbidden in Türkiye and I even cannot choose my accessories, they try to turn me into one of themselves not only the school but also the students."

The results of the ITTS survey have links to the international study by Bense (2016). This study concluded that the development of support programmes and struc-

15 Question: "As an international teacher, you contribute different experiences and competences to your professional life from your colleagues. In which situations are these strengths beneficial to you and appreciated by others? Please tell us about a specific situation."

tures for international teachers is urgently needed so that they, as well as the school system and the students, can fully benefit from them: "Finally, the development and implementation of adequate support programmes for migrant teachers are an urgent need. Further empirical and cross-disciplinary engagement on the issue of professional support for migrant teachers is mandatory" (Bense, 2016, p. 47). However, it must be taken into account at which point in their migration and professional biography they are because their working and living situation is also more heterogeneous than the grouping in one category "international teachers" would suggest As the following comment from the ITTS survey makes clear, it is therefore necessary to take the specific life and work situation into account so that the demand for or insinuation of a need for support is not perceived as de-professionalising: "I don't need any support. After all, I have been here for more than twelve years. However, the initial guidance was minimally organised at that time" (Belgium).

6. Conclusion

As a cross-national study, the ITTS study has revealed a number of findings. First of all, it is noteworthy that outside Sweden and Germany (more precisely: in some federal states with corresponding programmes) it required enormous efforts to acquire the target group of international teachers in all other participating countries, which were not always crowned with success. This can be interpreted as an indication that the professional integration of international teachers is not yet prominent enough on the political agenda in most participating countries. Furthermore, the ITTS study once again shows that international teachers and thus also the participants in this study are an extremely heterogeneous group of people from one profession who have the most diverse professional experiences and competences, challenges and needs, opportunities and working conditions (cf. the findings in section 4). As the lowest common denominator, one could postulate that they are first and foremost *teachers or subject teachers* whose international background can be, but does not necessarily have to be, an asset.

If international teachers have been given the opportunity to work in the school system of the (new) country of residence, the ITTS study was able to work out high satisfaction values. There are a number of favourable factors for this. The self-assessed linguistic competences and the challenges of the system change have less of an effect on the professional well-being and the esteem experienced than originally assumed. On the other hand, three factors play a special role: the self-efficacy beliefs and the handling of challenges by the teachers themselves, whether they are perceived and taken seriously as teachers (and not as support staff), and the support provided for their professional restart into their new schools.

Thus, on the one hand, it is important that the (international) teachers themselves have a challenge-oriented attitude. Do they manage to face challenges in a self-confident and solution-oriented way and do they believe in their self-efficacy? This shows analogies to corresponding studies (Schmitz & Schwarzer, 2000) as well

as to resilience and dealing with stress by teachers (Bieri, 2002). One conclusion from this would be that when considering the integration of international teachers, both in school practice and in the accompanying academic research, the focus should be more on what they have in common with other teachers, the subject-teaching activity, their understanding of their role, their professional ethos, rather than on designating the migrant other and on migration-specific distinction and demarcation. This is because an "overemphasis on migrant history also runs the risk of reducing teachers to a culturally defined special role, marking them as strangers and exposing them to discriminatory othering processes" (Hachmeister, 2022, p. 46). On the other hand, the open-ended responses of the ITTS study also reveal many examples in which the international teachers emphasise both their subject teaching but also use their cultural background and multilingual competences as a resource, and receive all kinds of positive feedback for this. Again this also applies: "Whether and how the biographical background of immigrant teachers is addressed in the school should be up to the international teachers themselves" (ibid.).

In addition, the study can be used to highlight the importance of the way schools deal with international teachers and the support services they offer. This can be linked to Bense, who points out the importance of support programmes with regard to the effective deployment of international teachers: "Research also highlighted that the success of teacher migration for receiving countries is closely related to migrant teachers' effectiveness in school. This once more underlines the importance of effective professional support programmes in order to ensure a successful outcome for both migrant teachers as well as the receiving countries" (Bense, 2016, p. 47). The need for support is particularly high when there is an attribution of unilateral responsibility for migration issues, when teachers feel overburdened by conflicts and experience barriers. The quality of support must also be kept in mind. More important than partially perceived system differences, which can be taken into account communicatively and reflectively, is an open and appreciative approach on the part of the school to their international teachers. More in-depth analyses and further studies in a mixed-method design would be desirable in order to understand the impact of support services and the question of the school's welcoming culture better and to design them accordingly.

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International teachers and the lack of teachers with a migration background

The case of Flanders

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Abstract: The appearance of the Belgian and Flemish classroom has changed over the past few decades: pupils and students with a migration background are now an integral part of it. It would, therefore, be valuable if the teaching workforce reflected this diversity, but unfortunately that is not yet the case. In this article, we review the literature that has focused on international teachers in Belgium and Flanders. Teachers with a migration background and international teachers – despite all of their assets – face challenges on multiples levels when trying to find a teaching job. Moreover, the Belgian initiatives that support migrants in the job market do not cater specifically to teachers. Due to a lack of systematic data collection, the knowledge on this topic remains scarce. In order to employ a larger number of migrants with a foreign degree, a clear understanding of their wants and needs is crucial.

Keywords: diversity, migration, international teachers, education, foreign teaching degrees

1. Introduction

During the 21st century, and especially since the so called 'refugee crisis' of 2015, students from a range of nationalities, ethnicities and backgrounds have diversified Belgian and Flemish classrooms (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2020). However, the teachers standing in front of these students do not mirror this growing diversity (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020).

Although attention has been directed at diversity in education in academic contexts, earlier studies have primarily focused on diversity among students (Agirdag, 2016; Van Avermaet et al., 2016). This article, therefore, starts from a different perspective, discussing (the lack of) diversity in the Belgian and Flemish teaching workforce.

This article consists of five sections. Firstly, we will contextualise the recent migration flows in Belgium and Flanders. Secondly, we will discuss the (still quite weak) link between migration and education; more specifically between diversity among pupils on the one hand and among teachers on the other. Then, after examining the existing

professional re-integration opportunities for teachers with a migration background, we will shed light on the many assets of those international teachers and their added value for Flemish schools and students. The final section goes into the challenges that teachers with a migration background, and international teachers in general, have to overcome in order to find a job at a Flemish or Belgian school.

2. Migration in Belgium and Flanders

In 2015, more than 1,200,000 people sought asylum in Europe (Eurostat, 2021)[1]. Almost 40,000 of these asylum seekers requested international protection (Geneva Convention) on the part of the Belgian government (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2021). These numbers marked the peak, but not the end, of the European 'refugee crisis'. Between 2016 and 2019, another 85,565 asylum seekers arrived in Belgium due to precarious political and economic situations, making it unsafe for them to remain in their home country.

In 2020, the number decreased in comparison to former years, with 16,910 people asking for international protection. Throughout these years the highest number of requests came from Afghans (18%) and Syrians (10%) (ibid.), which is not surprising given the political situation in these countries. In total, Belgium received only 3.5% of all the asylum requests in Europe (Eurostat, 2021). However, the Belgian population only makes up 1.47% of the European population, so it is safe to say that the migration flows of the past few years have made Belgium a more diverse country.

For the region of Flanders, the data are scarce, but a 2018 report published by the Flemish government claims that 45% of migrants in Belgium came to Flanders, as opposed to 21% to Wallonia and 34% to the Brussels Capital Region. In Flanders there is a clear concentration in the larger cities, more specifically in Antwerp, Leuven and Ghent (Vlaamse overheid, 2018, pp. 43–46). As opposed to the information on asylum seekers in Europe and Belgium, these numbers include migration from the neighbouring countries. In 2016, 7.5 out of 1000 inhabitants were migrants, of whom 2.8 were non-EU nationals. This shows a clear increase in international migration: in 2000, only 3.9 out of 1000 inhabitants were migrants, of whom 1.6 were non-EU (ibid., p. 48).

In short, Europe, Belgium and Flanders accommodate a large number of migrants, both EU-based and non-EU-based, who migrated voluntarily or sought international protection. The number of migrants increased throughout the first decades of the 21st century, even before the 'refugee crisis' of 2015. In 2021, 12.4% of the Belgian population has a non-Belgian nationality, while the European average is 8% (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2020). Almost one in five is Belgian with a migration background[2] (Lefe-

1 This includes both new asylum seekers and people who re-applied after an unsuccessful first application.

2 In Statbel's definition, persons have a migration background when they or their parents (or one of their parents) were not registered in the Belgian population register when they were born, even if they are registered in the Belgian register later in their life.

vere, 2021). In Flanders, one out of ten has a foreign nationality (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2020).

As many of the people with a migration background are still of school age (ibid.), schools are becoming more diverse, especially in big cities with high concentrations of families with a migration background. However, the same does not go for the job market, says the Social and Economic Council of Flanders (SERV). This council advises the Flemish government on socio-economic policy, and it represents a number of trade unions and employer associations. SERV claims that immigrants of working age are not yet fully integrated in professional environments. The employment rate of people with a non-EU migration background is 61.9% as opposed to 75.5% for people without a migration background. In the education sector, there is a similar discrepancy between teachers with and without a migration background (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 9). In what follows, we will show that while classrooms are becoming more diverse, the teaching workforce is not. Afterwards, we will go into the existing opportunities for teachers with a migrant or refugee background and then we will discuss the advantages of hiring a diverse workforce. Finally, we will shed light on why schools largely remain the terrain of Belgian teachers.

3. The Flemish (teacher) education system and available data

The education system in Belgium has a complex structure, based upon the three-tier government that comprises the Federal State, the Regions (the Flemish, Walloon and Brussels Capital Regions) and the Communities (the Flemish, French and German-speaking Communities).

> "Communities and Regions do not follow the same dividing lines; for instance, the Brussels Capital Region has a mixture of both Flemish and French Community schools, while the Walloon Region has French Community as well as German-speaking Community schools. Communities are primarily responsible for person-related matters, such as the delivery of education services, and each has its own autonomous education system. Around 5% of students in Belgium attend schools in the German-speaking Community, with the remainder of the school-aged student population divided between the Flemish Community (58% of students) and French Community (37% of students)" (OECD, 2017).

This section, like the rest of the article, will focus on the specific situation of education in the Flemish Community and the available data.

In Flanders, there are multiple ways to go into teaching. Through a professional bachelor programme you can become a teacher in early childhood, primary and lower secondary education. Universities offer academic educational masters after an academic field-specific bachelor degree. Apart from that, three types of teacher education programmes have been designed specifically for career changers: an associate degree (European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 5) for experienced professionals in subjects for (mainly) vocational education, a shortened educational bachelor degree

for holders of a professional bachelor degree in a specific domain (EQF level 6) and a shortened education master degree for holders of a master degree in a specific domain (EQF level 7). These shortened programmes focus on didactic, pedagogical and psychological knowledge and skills, but not on the specific domain or field knowledge. All the above qualifications are teaching certificates (*Bewijs Pedagogische Bekwaamheid*) and give direct access to jobs in education and are required to obtain long-term labour contracts.

In the context of this country report, it has proved impossible to perform a fine-grained analysis of the available data, due to fragmented data streams and the lack of connected databases within the different administrative services of the Flemish Community. After consultation with several departments within the Flemish administrative authorities, it turned out that the available data on, for example, the nationality of the teaching force, foreign degrees and degree recognition could not be linked, thus complicating the data analysis significantly.

The Agency for Educational Services within the Flemish Department of Education is a. o. responsible for the data governance within the domain of Flemish education. The bottom line question for this research is the presence of international teachers within the Flemish education system, more specifically international teachers who obtained a foreign teaching degree before migrating to Belgium. The available data show that between 2015–2016 and 2020–2021, a total of 216,545 teachers were employed within the Flemish Community: among them were 2,351 teachers with a nationality other than Belgian and 4,125 with a non-Flemish degree. The number of non-Flemish degrees contains both degrees obtained within Flanders but in a foreign language (French or English) and all degrees obtained outside Flanders (outside Belgium or in Belgium but in another region). 1,423 of these teachers obtained a teaching qualification in Flanders, after a non-Flemish degree in another domain. 1,070 of the teachers with a non-Flemish degree have a non-Belgian nationality. It is unknown how many of them obtained a teaching degree outside Belgium. 55% of the non-Belgian teachers in Flanders have Dutch nationality. A small minority of the non-Belgian teachers come from outside the EEA. The number of teachers with a refugee background is unclear.

NARIC (*National Academic Recognition Information Centre)* is responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications in Flanders. There are two different procedures of recognition in place: a recognition of level (NARIC decides on the level of your foreign certificate in Flanders) and a specific recognition (NARIC decides on the specific Flemish qualification to which your foreign certificate is equivalent).

Between 2015 and 2020, NARIC Vlaanderen awarded 330 recognitions of teacher degrees at different EQF levels. 105 of these specific recognitions were applications by refugees. It can be expected that teaching degrees are also present in the applications for a recognition of level, however it is unknown how many.

For EEA and Swiss teaching degrees, obtained by EEA or Swiss citizens, there is a separate procedure in place that goes directly through the Ministry of Education. This means that only non-EU teaching degrees need to be recognized by NARIC (Vlaamse overheid, 2022).

VDAB (*Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding*), the Flemish public employment service, noted 55 clients with a teaching qualification and job aspirations as a teacher in May 2021. There are no data available on job seekers with a teaching qualification but no aspiration to work within education.

In September 2021 SERV and VLIR (*Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad)* launched a joint statement calling on the Flemish government to invest more strongly in the availability, quality, findability and accessibility of government data (Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen [SERV], 2021).

4. Migration and education (2015–2020)

The Flemish government aspires to diversify the teaching workforce in order to reflect society's diversity more adequately. The government believes that well-managed diversity, both in the classroom and in the teachers' staff room, leads to higher-quality education (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, pp. 3–6). From a legal point of view, there are also grounds for improving diversity since the government issued a decree regarding proportionate participation in the labour market on 8 May 2002. According to Donlevy, Meierkord and Rajania (2016, p. 12) "around one in four people aged between 18–60 years in Belgium has a migrant background […]. 15.1% of 15-year old learners have a migrant background […] and 14.3% of learners speak another language at home." As this section will demonstrate and despite political declarations of intent, the teaching workforce does not reflect the diversity of students in Belgium.

The Diversity Committee in Flanders wrote a recommendation stating that the government should monitor and research the diversity among students and teachers (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 6). In Belgium, there is no organisation that systematically collects information on the diversity of the teaching workforce. Nevertheless, both in academia and in politics there is a growing awareness of the importance of clear information and research in order to diversify the education system: Flemish Parliamentarian Elisabeth Meuleman suggested yearly diversity monitoring (Moens, 2017). However, there are no official numbers available with regard to the percentage of teachers with a migration background, although qualitative and quantitative information on this topic is key to taking measures that improve diversity in education (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020; Donlevy et al., 2016, pp. 12–15).

The Diversity Committee has obtained data from a representative sample that gives a general idea of the diversity of the Flemish teaching workforce's. This sample suggests that 5% of the people who teach in the first two years of secondary education have foreign roots[3], but many of these people have their roots in Belgium's neighbouring countries (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 50), so the 5% hardly includes any of the migrants from the past decade's migration flows. The Diversity Committee defines the term 'migration background' as 'people whose current nationality or birth nationality

3 In the definition of the Committee, someone has foreign roots when at least one of their grandparents was not born in Belgium.

is not Belgian or people of whom at least one parent has a foreign nationality or whose birth nationality was foreign'[4]. Unia, the Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities, estimated in 2014 that according to the same definition, the teaching workforce in Belgium includes 4.5% people with an EU migration background and 3.2% with a non-EU migration background[5] (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020).

In line with the Committee's findings, Consuegra (2021) found that less than 5% of Flemish teachers have foreign roots, and that these roots mainly lie in France, the Netherlands or Germany. There are very few teachers with roots in, for instance, Morocco, Türkiye or Eastern Europe (ibid.). This 5% also includes people who have foreign roots but have graduated with a teaching degree from a Belgian university college or university. Her research does not provide information on teachers with a migrant or refugee background in Belgium. However, her research does demonstrate the lack of diversity among teachers in comparison to the diversity in the classroom, which is in accordance with Donlevy et al. (2016, p. 12), who mentioned that the teaching sector accounts for around 10% of total employment of people of Belgian origin, while it accounts for only 4% of people with North African or other African backgrounds. Furthermore, the Minority Forum (*Minderhedenforum*) estimated on the basis of teachers' names that approximately 1% of teaching staff in Flemish secondary education has a minority background (Minderhedenforum, 2014).

Not only in teacher training, but also in other study programmes, students with a migration background run a higher risk of dropping out of higher education than other students: only 19% of students with a migration background succeed in the first year, as opposed to 56% of students without a migration background (Royackers, 2008, p. 30).

VDAB, the public employment service, has started mapping the background information of people registered with them. In a personal interview with VDAB, the spokesperson explained that as they are only in the first stage of the mapping process, their numbers are not at all complete. This means that they also could not tell whether these people had refugee status or not. Apart from that, it is currently not being monitored in which sector former VDAB clients have found a job. In May 2021, 55 people with job aspirations in education were registered with the VDAB. They register after their foreign teaching degree has been acknowledged by NARIC. 78% within this group have a professional or academic degree to teach in secondary education, the remaining people are trained for nursery school or primary education. Nationality-wise, 39 people out of 55 people are Asian, two are African and two are American.[6]

Unfortunately, as shown, the process of obtaining data for the analysis in this article has experienced several obstacles.

4 This definition largely coincides with the European Commission's definition.

5 5.8% is undetermined, 86.4% is Belgian.

6 VDAB bases their nationality classification on larger geographical regions, and does not give out detailed information as to the nationality of people registered with them.

5. Existing opportunities for professional re-integration for people with a migration background and a teacher degree in Belgium

Belgium is a front-runner when it comes to taking initiative to diversify the teaching workforce (Donlevy et al., 2016, p. 58). However, the initiatives mainly aim to attract young people to go into teacher training, so it is not necessarily focused on people who obtained a teaching degree before coming to Belgium. In other words, even as a leading nation, the diversity projects in Belgium for people who migrated after their studies are limited. Generally, there are more projects that focus on diversity among students than projects that address diversity among teachers (ibid, p. 14). This can be attributed to the fact that diversity among pupils and students is a reality already, as opposed to a diverse teaching workforce. Nevertheless, although a sense of urgency about a more diverse teaching workforce is lacking, Flanders does face a precarious teacher shortage, both in primary and secondary education. One week after the start of the school year, on 7 September 2021, the VDAB website published 1,466 job offers for teachers in secondary education, 640 job offers for teachers in primary education, 303 for teachers in adult education and 129 in special education. Furthermore, over 100 job offers related to education (e.g. school principal or support staff) were still open as well (VDAB, 2021).

In an international meeting, the Flemish Education Council (*Vlaamse Onderwijsraad*) addressed the under-representation of people with a migration background who work in education. As the teaching profession seems to be held in less high regard in Belgium (not only among people with a migration background, but in general), these projects aim to make teaching more attractive. The projects, therefore, focus on people who have not obtained their teaching degree yet. For example, *De Baobab* in Brussels gives people without a higher education diploma the opportunity to start working in early childhood education while they study to obtain their degree in the same field. The project includes intensive individual coaching both during and after the four-year programme (Eva bxl, 2021). Support for teachers who migrated to Belgium after studying exists, but it remains very limited. For instance, NARIC, developed an online tool, the Coaching Tree (*NARIC begeleidingsboom*) in an attempt to make it easier for people to understand and undertake the different procedures that are necessary to receive recognition of the educational qualifications that they obtained abroad (Donlevy et al., 2016, p. 14).

Schools hiring new teachers are supposed to give priority to those candidates with the right qualifications (or foreign diplomas recognized by NARIC). However, schools are allowed to hire teachers without such a certificate (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2021c). Since schools have relative autonomy when it comes to hiring teachers, they can decide to hire a teacher with a migration background and a foreign diploma that has not (yet) been acknowledged by NARIC. Schools do hire people without such a certificate (for example student teachers and in-service-trained teachers), but not necessarily when it comes to people with a migration background,

although this could help to counter the growing teacher shortage (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019, p. 28).

For everyone who obtained his or her diploma abroad, the NARIC recognition is a necessary first step towards a job in education (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2021a). Between 2015 and 2020, NARIC recognized 330 teaching degrees, and 105 of these diplomas belonged to refugees. Out of 330 diplomas, 30 were diplomas in nursery education; 54 in primary education[7]; 244 in secondary education and 3 in special education[8]. This means that almost one in four of the education diplomas recognized were in secondary education, allowing for a significant number of teachers that could potentially diversify the workforce. Apart from these recognitions, an undefined number of degrees obtained a 'level recognition', recognizing the foreign degree at a specific level (e.g. bachelor or master), without a domain specification. It is likely that teaching certifications are among those as well but remain unspecified in the numbers above. However, an aspiring teacher needs to meet a number of additional conditions in order to land a job, but these conditions could form an obstacle for migrants and refugees.

A candidate-teacher needs to be a EU or EFTA national or be in the possession of a work permit (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2021b), and they need proof of a C1 level in Dutch. Furthermore, those who want to work in the fifth and sixth year of primary education need to have a B1 level in French reading and writing and B2 in French listening and speaking (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2021d), as children are taught Belgium's second language as of the fifth year in primary education. Multiple types of certification are accepted by the Flemish government, a. o. any degree of a Flemish education programme (with Dutch as the language of instruction), a credit certificate of a C1 level language course in a Flemish higher or adult education institution or a Certificate of Dutch as Foreign Language from the *Nederlandse Taalunie* (Union for the Dutch Language).

Another project that is not necessarily tied to the education sector but still supports migrants and refugees with all kinds of degrees is *MaxiPAC*, which is the acronym for 'Maximizing Previously Acquired Competences'. When a person who recently migrated to Belgium does not receive diploma recognition from NARIC, MaxiPAC comes into play: people can ask for exemptions for certain courses based on their degree, which allows them to start a shortened study programme. In this way, they can get a degree that is valid in Belgium without starting a fully-fledged study programme (MaxiPAC Project, 2018). These shorter programmes are important, for example, to convince the OCMW (Public Social Welfare Centre) that going back to school is a useful investment. Unfortunately, no teachers with a foreign degree are enrolled in such a programme yet (Sanghmitra Bhutani, personal interview, 2021, April 14).

7 One individual had both their diploma nursery and primary education recognized.

8 For the refugees specifically, 9 held a diploma in nursery education, 14 in primary education, and 82 in secondary education.

In its advice, the Diversity Committee lists recommendations for a more diverse teaching workforce. The advice mentions that a school should eliminate prejudices and fix the lack of opportunities for people with a minority background. Moreover, the Committee takes on a holistic approach: it does not only point at actively hiring and offering internships to people from a minority and with a migration backgrounds, it also emphasizes the importance of the entire school's engagement. For instance, the Committee asks each school to implement a diversity policy and a clear reporting procedure for students and teachers who experience discrimination. In that regard, it mentions the importance of a non-discrimination code for everyone involved in the school. In other words, not only attracting diversity is crucial, managing it is also important in order to maintain a diverse workforce. The Committee recommends organizing training and coaching programs, and points out that the school board has the responsibility to convey an inspiring vision and facilitate change. The Committee asks them to set good examples and organize positive actions (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, pp. 22–25). Finally, the Committee mentions that teacher trainers should also be more diverse (ibid., p. 42).

6. Opportunities to integrate refugee and international teachers: for themselves and the participating schools

Diversity – in the sense of people from multiple ethnicities, religions, cultures, and nationalities living, working, and studying together – has often been viewed as a painstaking process and tends to be associated with language and integration issues (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 22). The fact that the Diversity Committee lists a large number of recommendations underscores the idea that diversity in the teaching workforce needs to be managed accurately. However, in this section, we want to focus on what teachers with a migration background can bring to the table.

More diversity among teachers would help the integration of diversity in the classroom itself, as teachers with a migration background can help to break stereotypes. Furthermore, students with a different home language may have trouble expressing themselves adequately in Dutch, even if they have sufficient knowledge on a certain matter. In Flanders, the largest party in Flanders NVA (*Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie*) was against allowing children to speak their home language at school. It claimed that it would negatively affect teachers, students, and the Dutch language skills of the latter. Multiple studies have refuted this statement (Temmerman, 2017). When a teacher speaks the student's home language, this can positively contribute to the learning results of the said student. Although schools and school boards are often not very tolerant towards speaking a different language than Dutch in a Flemish school, research shows that there is no causal relation between Dutch language skills and learning results (Van Avermaet et al., 2016, p. 58). According to some of the teachers interviewed by Van Avermaet, motivation and well-being are more important than language skills to ensure good grades (ibid., p. 54).

Agirdag (2016, p. 10) has shown that teachers tend to have lower expectations of students with an ethnically diverse background, so it is not unthinkable that teachers who are ethnically diverse themselves may counteract this expectations issue. Donlevy et al. (2016) also point to the European Commission's 2009 Council Conclusions regarding the educational needs of children with a migrant background: they point out that one of the most important ways to make children reach their full potential is by "increas[ing] the number of teachers with a migrant background" (ibid., p. 20).

Furthermore, a teaching population that mirrors the student population contributes to the social mobility of young people with a minority background, as their education prepares them for their professional careers later on. This has to do with the fact that teachers with a migration background function as role models for the students they teach. Moreover, precisely because of their background they can more easily connect with their students' parents (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 11). Finally, Ellemers and Rink (2016) have shown that a diverse workforce leads to more innovation, and the Committee is positive that this also goes for schools and the teaching workforce (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 22).

As mentioned before, teachers with a migration background in Flemish education remain scarce and structural change is needed in order to match classroom diversity. However, neither the education networks nor the higher education institutes provide support for migrants or refugees who want to work in education but need help integrating in Flemish (school) culture. It has become a chicken or the egg paradox where the absence of teachers with a migration background is both the cause and the consequence of the lack of structural initiatives. VDAB has developed four efficient models that are meant to facilitate the job search for migrants and refugees with diplomas by offering supplementary training in combination with Dutch language courses. They offer a range of pathway models in order to provide for people with different profiles and backgrounds (so not limited to teachers), and they aim to get people into work as fast as possible.

These VDAB pathway models vary mostly in duration. "Quick Mediation", the first pathway, is for those people with adequate professional competencies and knowledge of the contact language. In this pathway, knowledge of Dutch is not even a prerequisite. "Integrated Pathways", the second model, is more intensive, as the participant follows a minimum of two modules. Once again, learning Dutch is optional. Knowledge of Dutch becomes a mandatory skill for the people enrolled in the third model: "Combined Pathways". They combine Dutch classes with at least one other module, aimed at professional development. The fourth model is the longest one. "Linear Pathways" has been designed for people who need more time to learn Dutch and to develop their professional skills (VDAB, 2017, p. 11). These models offer support for a wide range of migrants; however, once again the language courses aim to improve the participants' knowledge of day-to-day Dutch rather than teaching them the vocabulary and expressions that teachers need in front of a classroom.

7. Challenges for teachers with a refugee background and international teachers

Teachers with a refugee or migrant background are confronted with many obstacles before they can work as a teacher in Belgium. As this section will demonstrate, the existing research has largely focused on the obstacles that people experience *before* they secure a teaching position, which means that not much research has been done yet on the challenges teachers face *while* working in schools. Discrimination is an exception in this regard, as it can occur not only during the job application process but also in the workplace.

One reason why people with a migrant or refugee background are hesitant to work as a teacher is the job's image and rather low salary. In certain communities, migrants look for a job that is more prestigious (Donlevy et al., 2016, p. 13). As the teaching profession is not very well-paid, according to Royackers (2008, p. 99), this may be a deal-breaker for some ethnic minorities, where economic independence is held in high regard. Royackers (ibid., p. 101) also mentions that people with a migration background may have insufficient knowledge about applying for the job, and they cannot rely on social relations and a network to help them get a job in the same way as teachers without a migration background.

Not only is the image of school a problem, so is the image of ethnic minorities. The opportunities for people with a migration background are still limited due to prejudices and discrimination (Donlevy et al., 2016, p. 13). This problem is, of course, not limited to the education sector, as it exists everywhere on the labour market: in the Brussels Capital Region, one in two people with a minority background claims to have experienced discrimination during their job search (Ouali et al., 2005). Teachers, school directors and other school staff should be aware of their own bias and stereotypes (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 31). Not only schools have prejudices about people with a migration background, so do migrants themselves: they self-select based on the fear that their knowledge of Dutch is insufficient (Donlevy et al., 2016, p. 13).

Furthermore, the official rules with regard to language skills may also be an obstacle. A teacher needs to prove that they have (or obtain within 3 years) a C1 level by showing a Dutch-language diploma, or a certificate from a language course at a CVO (Centre for Adult Education), higher education institute, or a certificate of Dutch as a Second Language from the *Nederlandse Taalunie* (Dutch Language Union). School boards who are hiring a new teacher are allowed to deviate from this rule, but only in cases where there is no other candidate. This language barrier can be overcome by offering more accessible NT2 (Dutch as a Second Language) courses and focusing on the specific linguistic needs of teachers (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 28).

The recognition of foreign degrees is also one of the key barriers between the objective of a diverse workforce and reality. This is an issue on multiple levels. Firstly, not all highly educated migrants submit the application to have their diploma recognized, for financial reasons and because it takes up too much time. Donlevy et al. (2016, p. 13) state that only "41% of the highly-educated respondents had submitted an application

in order to have their diplomas recognized." Secondly, after this time-consuming process, there is no guarantee that the diploma will be recognized. The process needs to be streamlined and made more transparent. Next to that, it could also be helpful to give people a conditional approval while they wait for the official recognition (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 27).

Even if a teacher has their diploma recognized and has a language certificate, they cannot start their job search: in Flanders, a teacher needs to have EU nationality or an EFTA nationality. Otherwise, the school has to take the initiative to ask for a work permit or an exemption (ibid., p. 29), which is more work than hiring someone with a Belgian nationality.

Apart from linguistic and bureaucratic barriers, religious and cultural aspects also play a role. In *GO! Education*[9], some schools do not allow teachers (others than those who teach religion) to wear religious symbols, which excludes many Muslim women. GO! Education wants to offer ideologically neutral education, but research has shown that this neutrality reduces the students' capacity to handle diversity, and it can also counteract integration (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2018, p. 57). Just like community education, provincial and municipal schools organize education on behalf of the government, but they are less strict when it comes to ideological symbols (Minderhedenforum, 2014, pp. 1–2). A large number of schools in Flanders are not tied to the government, for example all the schools under the umbrella organisation of Catholic Education Flanders.

In short, there are obstacles on many different levels for teachers with a migrant or refugee background: logistic, administrative, linguistic, cultural … Given these barriers, it is not surprising that the Flemish teaching workforce lacks diversity. However, in order for schools to reflect society's diversity, further research and efficient projects that lead to concrete measures are invaluable.

8. Conclusion

Since many migrants in Belgium are of either school or working age (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2020), diversity in the classroom should be visible both from the smartboard and from the desks with textbooks. However, in Belgium and Flanders this is not yet

9 In Flanders there are three educational networks:
1. GO! Education is the official education organised by the Flemish Community. The constitution prescribes a duty of neutrality for GO! Education.
2. Government-aided public education comprises schools run by the municipal or provincial authorities.
3. Government-aided private education is organised by a private person or organisation. The network consists primarily of Catholic schools. Next to denominational schools it includes schools not linked to a religion, e. g. alternative schools (on the basis of the ideas of Freinet, Montessori or Steiner) which apply specific teaching methods. (Eurydice, 2022).

the reality. There are very few teachers with a migration background, because they lack opportunities and because they face a whole range of challenges before finding a job, despite their many assets.

The Flemish government agrees that the teaching workforce does not reflect the student population and that this needs to change (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, pp. 3–6), but up until now there has been no systematic information collection as to the number of teachers with a migration background or international teachers. It is estimated that about 4.5% of the teachers in Belgium have an EU background, and 3.2% teachers a non-EU background (ibid.). Then again, these numbers still include those people who obtained their degree in Belgium.

When it comes to acknowledged foreign teacher degrees, 55 people with job aspirations in education and a recognized qualification were registered with the public employment service (VDAB) in May 2021. A modest number in itself, and then we have to take into account the challenges that lower their chance of making it into the classroom. For example, teachers need to have either EU nationality or a work permit. They are also discouraged by the job's low salary and lack of social prestige (Royackers, 2008, p. 99). Discrimination (this includes self-selection), linguistic, religious, and cultural differences can also dissuade international teachers (Donlevy et al., 2016, p. 13).

In this way, Belgium and Flanders are potentially overlooking valuable teachers. Research has shown that teachers with a migration background can help to break stereotypes. Furthermore, they tend to expect the same from all their students, whether or not they come from a minority background (Agirdag, 2016, p. 10). This means that the teacher can stimulate social mobility by helping students to reach their full potential.

Over the coming years, the number of people with a migrant or refugee background in Belgium is likely to increase. In order for teachers with a foreign degree to access the education system, the government should be well aware of their needs and wants, so further research is necessary to bridge the gap between the abstract idea of diverse schools, and a reality where migrants and refugees standing at the smartboard are no exception.

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The professional re-entry of international teachers in Germany

Access, perspectives, obstacles and opportunities

Renate Schüssler, Silke Hachmeister, Nadine Auner, Lilith Beaujean & Carina Göke[1]

Abstract: The professional re-entry of international teachers is a topic that has gained importance in Germany in recent years. In the meantime, we can draw on a number of experiences, which are based, among other things, on the use of existing recruitment opportunities and side entry programmes as well as on some re-qualification programmes.

This contribution examines the opportunities and challenges of re-entering the labour market from different perspectives. It shows the ways in which international teachers can return to their profession and points out the opportunities for and the pitfalls in achieving permanent employment. Based on statistical data, it also focuses on the difficulties in recognizing qualifications and the special value of language skills and it argues why the opportunities for sustainable employment must be more strongly uncoupled from the issue of teacher shortages. The professional integration of international teachers is not only important for their personal and social integration, but also offers many opportunities for a modern school in a migration society.

Keywords: teachers with refugee experience, professional restart, school of diversity, migration society, role model, subject teacher, teacher shortage, recognition, multilingualism, equality, participation

1. Introduction

Germany has been a country of immigration (cf. e. g. El-Mafaalani, 2013; Meinhardt, 2005) or a migration society (cf. e. g. Zick & Krott, 2021) for a long time. Arriving in a new country, finding a home, feeling integrated – for adult migrants, this is often related to the opportunity of being able to realise their professional potential and to

1 With collaborative support by Janina Jasche & Kristina Purrmann. Sincere thanks also go to the members of the resonance group of the project ITTS, whose advice has been a valuable contribution.

feel recognised and valued with their resources, qualifications and competencies. Instead of recognising the migration society as a fact and proactively taking into account the opportunities and challenges associated with it, it is still difficult for politicians in all the federal states, even 60 years after the first immigrant arrivals, to develop regulations that systematically facilitate professional integration and recognition of the qualifications immigrants have brought with them (George, 2021). Rather, changes to migration policies, also in the education sector, occur only "cyclically, i. e. only when special situations arise that require decisive action, such as the increased influx of refugees in the summer of 2015" (Wojciechowicz & Vock, 2020b, p. 19) and since 2022[2]. In terms of the obstacles to professional recognition for international teachers, this is even more serious because cultural diversity, which has long been a reality in classrooms, is still not sufficiently reflected in the composition of the teaching staff.

In Germany, education and teacher training are the responsibility of the 16 federal states. In most of them there has been a considerable, if not dramatic, shortage of teachers in recent years (cf. section 4.1). Although this shortage should theoretically create better conditions for a greater receptiveness on the part of the education systems and some things have actually begun to move forward (Bertelsmann Stiftung et al., 2020; George, 2021; Wojciechowicz & Vock, 2020b), professional integration is fraught with many formal obstacles and also poses major challenges at a substantive level for those involved.

The reason for this is that entry into the teaching profession in Germany is highly regulated and heterogeneous among the 16 federal states. Very detailed requirements in several fields and a special form of teacher training (compared to other countries) consisting of two phases, i. e. a university teacher training programme and an in-service preparatory programme, make it considerably more difficult for international teachers trained in their countries of origin to work in their profession. Without support, additional study components or re-qualification or bridging programmes, professional re-entry is only possible in very few cases. The number of applicants for the first re-qualification programmes for refugee (and international) teachers (cf. section 2.1) impressively illustrates how difficult it is to succeed professionally in Germany on one's own. And even after successfully completing these measures, which often

2 This also applies to the handling of the massive new migration triggered by the war in Ukraine. With migration from Ukraine, the political response was much faster than in 2015/16 and measures for the integration of newly arrived students and teachers were quickly initiated. In this context, it was also possible to build extensively on the experience of the last decade. This article was written before the start of the war in Ukraine, so that the specific regulations and initial measures that have been developed for dealing with Ukrainian teachers and students are not yet included. However, current statistics on immigration to Germany and the other ITTS project countries, which take into account the flight from Ukraine since 2022, can be found in the concluding framework article by Hachmeister and Schüssler (2023).

provide an initial start, it is extremely difficult to achieve a lasting perspective in the teaching profession.

Compared to the other countries described in this volume, there is a wealth of data available in Germany as well as a number of professional options and models for professional re-entry (George, 2021; Weizsäcker & Roser, 2020). This is due to the many initiatives that have emerged in recent years for the professional re-entry of international or refugee teachers (Bertelsmann Stiftung et al., 2020; Purrmann et al., 2020a; Siebert-Husmann et al., 2020; Syspons, 2021; Wojciechowicz et al., 2020). In addition, refugee migration and cultural diversity are a social reality clearly reflected in the statistical data and the demographic development, as shown in the introduction (section 2.1). However, when looking at the data, it becomes clear that cultural diversity, which characterises many classrooms, is not yet sufficiently reflected in the teaching staff (section 2.2).

For this reason, section 3 takes a closer look at the challenges for the professional integration of teachers in Germany: What obstacles prevent recognition (3.1)? What opportunities for professional re-entry are provided by the state (section 3.2)? How do re-qualification programmes attempt to bridge the gap between the lack of recognition of qualifications and available career entry opportunities? This is illustrated by three initiatives from different German states (section 3.3). Finally, the question is posed which obstacles hinder a permanent stay in the school system, despite the completion of the re-qualification programmes and the adaptation measures prescribed by the state (section 3.4).

Concluding, it is made clear that a stronger consideration of migration in the recruitment of teachers and in teaching staff is absolutely necessary irrespective of the fact that there is a teacher shortage (section 4.1); in addition we show what chances and potentials are connected with it – both for immigrant teachers (section 4.2) and for schools – in a dynamically changing migration society (section 4.3).

2. Overview: a new professional start in Germany – challenges for international teachers with and without a refugee background

This country report deals with the professional integration of international teachers trained in their country of origin. The focus is on teachers with a refugee background. For this reason, data and background information on the situation of refugees in Germany are given first.

2.1 Seeking asylum in Germany – some data

At the end of 2021 there were approximately 1.94 million protection seeking persons living in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022, table 1.1). In the years 2017 to 2021 most first asylum applications in the EU were filed in Germany, account-

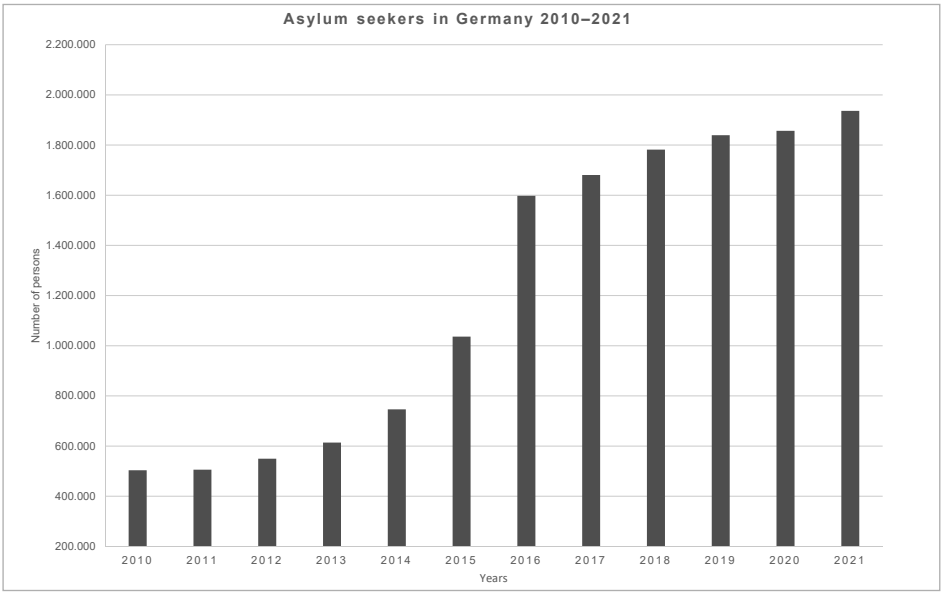

Fig. 1: Development of the number of asylum seekers in Germany 2010–2021 (based on data from Destatis, 2022, table 1.1)
Annot: It is probable that the figures for 2015 are too low, because a lot of the asylum seekers could not be registered before 2016 (Statistisches Bundesamt [Destatis], 2022, table 1.1).

ing for 23.4% resp. 27.7%[3] of all first asylum applications filed in the EU in 2021 (European Commission, 2021b)[4]. A significant increase can be seen especially from 2016 onwards; since then, Germany has been one of the ten main countries to receive asylum seekers (Wojciechowicz & Vock, 2020b, p. 19).[5]

At the end of 2021, of the 1.94 million asylum seekers, there are 1.45 million persons whose asylum applications have been approved, in contrast to 246,030 rejections, of which the majority (215,000) concern people whose obligation to leave the country has, for legal or other reasons, been deferred (Destatis, 2022, table 1.1). In particular, the proportion of temporary recognitions has increased significantly (ibid.).

3 The EU states two different total numbers of asylum applications within the EU for 2021; 535,000 (Eurostat, 2022) and 537,300 (European Commission, 2022).

4 In terms of the whole population, the most asylum applications were filed in Cyprus (1480 per 100,000 inhabitants), Austria (423) and Slovenia (247). In Germany the figure was 178 per 100,000 inhabitants (ibid.).

5 In addition, since 2022 there has been a significant increase in the number of refugees fleeing from Ukraine: as of June 19, 2022, approximately 867,000 people from Ukraine were registered in the German Central Register of Foreigners, 98% of whom had Ukrainian citizenship (Mediendienst Integration, 2022). Since they are free to choose their place of residence in the Schengen area, it is difficult to determine how many Ukrainians are actually staying in Germany (ibid.).

In 2021, the main countries of origin were Syria, followed by Afghanistan and Iraq (Destatis, 2022)[6]. The share of male asylum seekers in 2021 was 60.8% (ibid., table 1.2), and 28.4% of asylum seekers were minors. 71.3% of the asylum seekers were of working age (defined as 15–64 years) (ibid.).

The most current figures for the recognition rate of asylum applications in the European context are from 2021. A total of approximately 275,000 positive decisions on asylum applications were made in the EU in that year (European Commission, 2022). This includes both applications granted at the first instance and all positive final appeal decisions. In both categories, the recognition rate in Germany was slightly over the European average, in first instance 45.1% of the asylum applications were approved (European average 38.6%) and 36.1% (33%) in final appeal decisions.

2.2 International teachers with and without a refugee background

Among the new immigrants there are also many teachers with a university degree and in some cases many years of professional experience. In the first half of 2022, the average share of academics among asylum seekers in Germany was 20% (Heß, 2022a, p. 14). When taking the previous six years into consideration, the rate varied between 15.4% (2016) and 24.1% (2019) (Heß, 2019, p. 13, 2020, p. 14, 2021, p. 13, 2022b, p. 13; Neske, 2017, p. 8; Schmidt, 2018, p. 7). Of the people who fled to Germany between 2016 up to and including the first half of 2022, there were around 22,800 people who had worked in teaching professions previously, including a large number of teachers (Heß, 2019, p. 14, 2020, p. 15, 2021, p. 14, 2022a, p. 15, 2022b, p. 14; Neske, 2017, p. 9; Schmidt, 2018, p. 8). A potential analysis by Syspons (2021, p. 34) assumes an annual potential of applicants for re-qualification programmes of about 1,700 people nationwide, of whom about 1,000 are refugees and about 700 migrate to Germany from non-EU countries for other reasons.

However, professional re-entry is characterized by multiple barriers and obstacles. The first university re-qualification programmes bear witness to the fact that there is enormous potential, but also a great need for support in the professional integration of international teachers. The *Refugees Teachers Program* in Potsdam counted 640 applicants for the 50 places provided in the first round (Wojciechowicz & Vock, 2020c). The North Rhine-Westphalian programmes *Lehrkräfte Plus (Teachers Plus),* which started in Bielefeld in 2017, one year later in Bochum and have been expanded since 2020 to five locations (Bielefeld, Bochum, Duisburg-Essen, Cologne, Siegen), have already registered ten times as many applicants as places (25 each per round) in the fifth round in succession, with around 250 people per application procedure. Accordingly, the number of applicants reflects a high demand for qualified career access opportunities (Syspons, 2021).

6 Diagram: asylum seekers on December 31st 2021 by protection status for the most common nationalities, in %.

If we broaden the perspective and look at international teachers in general, further indicators of a high demand or a large – still largely untapped – potential emerge. In 2018, for example, almost 4,200 international teachers sought advice from a recognition counselling centre of the nationwide *Integration through Qualification* (*Integration durch Qualifizierung*, IQ)[7] funding programme (George, 2021, p. 10., based on BMBF, 2020, p. 20 ff.). Of these, just under 40% had a refugee background and 70% were women (ibid.). For the main countries of origin Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, but also Türkiye, the majority of those seeking advice were male (ibid.).

While classrooms in Germany reflect the fact that it is a migration society, the teaching staff is still very monocultural. This can be clearly seen in the statistics: while 11.7% of students nationwide have a different nationality (13% in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) in the school year 2020/21), only 1.6% of teachers do (0.9% in NRW) and only 0.3% come from the main refugee countries of origin (0.2% in NRW) (Destatis, 2021).[8] In 2019, 26% of the population in Germany had a so-called migration background, meaning that the individuals themselves or at least one parent were born abroad. While they are significantly over-represented in occupational groups with low prestige, such as cleaners or the nursing professions, they are significantly under-represented at 11.1% as teachers at non-professional schools (European Commission, 2021a; George, 2021, p. 11). This figure also includes "special needs teachers, lifeguards and other qualified staff, provided they teach independently" (George, 2021, p. 13). By comparison, in the 2019/20 school year 38.2% of students in NRW had a migration background (Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen [IT.NRW], 2020)[9]. The information in Table 1, broken down by federal state, impressively illustrates the under-representation of teachers with foreign citizenship, and more dramatically those from the most important countries of origin.

7 To put this in context: since 2005, the *Integration through Qualification (IQ)* funding programme has been working at various levels to improve appropriate labour market opportunities for people with a migration background.

8 In addition, at the beginning of July 2022, approximately 146,000 Ukrainian pupils were being educated in Germany. It can be assumed that this number will continue to rise (Mediendienst Integration, 2022). Many of the refugees are teachers. Politicians – more clearly than in 2015 - recognise the potential of deploying Ukrainian teachers (Robert-Bosch-Stiftung, 2022, p. 15).

9 Since the official school statistics only record citizenship (Destatis, 2021) and a migration background is not compulsorily recorded in every federal state, nationwide data on students with a migration background cannot be precisely determined (Kemper, 2017, pp. 164–165).

Tab. 1: Proportion of teachers with foreign citizenship by state (taken from George, 2021, p. 13, based on data from the Federal Statistical Office relating to the 2019/2020 school year)

Federal State	Total full- and part-time teachers in schools providing general education	Teachers with foreign citizenship	Teachers with the nationality of the most important countries of origin for recognition procedures*	Percentage of international teachers	Percentage of the most important countries of origin for recognition procedures	Change in the number of teachers with foreign citizenship compared to 2013/2014
Baden-Württemberg	91,149	1.227	126	1.3%	0.1%	+378
Bavaria	97,077	1.275	11	1.3%	0.1%	+326
Berlin	31,754	1.704	2346	5.4%	1.1%	+772
Brandenburg	20,406	515	254	2.5%	1.2%	+328
Bremen	6,110	132	20	2.2%	0.3%	+9
Hamburg	17,120	635	131	3.7%	0.8%	+288
Hesse	53,456	1,486	199	2.8%	0.4%	+350
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	11,591	135	61	1.2%	0.5%	+87
Lower Saxony	68,754	567	113	0.8%	0.2%	+21
North Rhine-Westphalia	166,806	1,536	375	0.9%	0.2%	+475
Rhineland-Palatinate	34,982	305	89	0.9%	0.3%	-35
Saarland	8,359	83	3	1.0%	0.0%	+5
Saxony	31,108	531	126	1.7%	0.4%	+279
Saxony-Anhalt	15,294	87	30	0.6%	0.2%	+32
Schleswig-Holstein	23,793	447	70	1.9%	0.3%	+65
Thuringia	15,997	158	55	1.0%	0.3%	+100
Germany	693,753	10,821	2,112	1.6%	0.3%	+3,478

*Poland, Russia, Türkiye, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq (Vockentanz 2019).

The figures show the clear under-representation of teachers with a migration background and of teachers of non-German nationality, most of whom completed their education abroad. This imbalance becomes especially clear when compared with the proportion of pupils with a migration background (see also Bräu et al., 2013; Dewitz et al., 2018; Karakaşoğlu et al., 2019; Massumi, 2014). The prevailing "monolingual habitus" (Gogolin, 2008) also leads to a reinforcement of this imbalance. Against this

background, measures to promote the professional re-entry of international teachers take on a special significance.

3. Challenges of the professional re-entry of international teachers

3.1 Which obstacles and regulations impede access to the teaching profession?

> "The counsellor [from the job centre] said to me, I can do anything, any kind of work, except become a teacher. He said that it's too difficult here in Germany to work as a teacher. My degree is from abroad and the language is a big obstacle. He said to me that in his experience and opinion, it is very difficult. I have to forget about it." (Hachmeister, 2022, participant 1, lines 40–43)

Due to the federal structure of Germany and the responsibility of the 16 states for education policy, the regulations and requirements for the recognition of foreign teaching qualifications are very complex and diverse. A detailed overview of the different regulations can be found in a study by the German Education and Science Union (GEW) titled *'Wasted opportunities?!' The recognition and employment practices for migrant teachers in the federal states* (*'Verschenkte Chancen?!' Die Anerkennungs- und Beschäftigungspraxis von migrierten Lehrkräften in den Bundesländern*) (George, 2021), which is based on their own research and materials of the IQ Advisory and Qualification Centre (IQ-Fachstelle Beratung und Qualifizierung) (Weizsäcker & Roser, 2020)[10]. In addition to the diverse legal regulations of each state, it provides insights into how newly immigrated teachers from the EU and from non-EU countries can gain a foothold in their profession in Germany. In addition, a number of programmes, mostly run by universities and partly by civil society organisations, are mentioned, which aim to act as preparation, orientation and a bridge to a new professional start.

A highly regulated profession and the specifics of teacher education and training

The teaching profession is a highly regulated profession, which – if the relevant degree was acquired abroad – requires official recognition. The routes to such a recognition are conditioned by a number of prerequisites. This is especially true for people from non-EU countries, because "citizens from EU countries have at least a legal right to the recognition of their professional qualification acquired in another country of the Union on the basis of a European Directive (Directive 2005/36/EC)" (George, 2021, p. 7). Citizens from non-EU countries, and thus the vast majority of teachers with a refugee background, do not have this legal right.

A common feature of all the federal states is that teacher training in Germany requires a master's degree or a state teaching qualification as well as the study of two to

10 The study "Regulations for the Recognition of Professional Teaching Qualifications Acquired Abroad" (Weizsäcker & Roser, 2020) by the IQ Network provides information on the many details of the regulations as well as recognition practices.

three school subjects and educational science, in some cases of wide extent depending on the school type and the state employer. In order to work as a fully qualified teacher, a 16- to 24-month preparatory in-service training is also required.

International teachers, on the other hand, have usually studied a school teaching subject acquired in an eight-semester bachelor's degree programme, sometimes supplemented by additional pedagogical components or a supplementary pedagogical qualification. Thus training required in several subjects is considered "one of the biggest impediments in the recognition process […], since teachers in other countries are often trained in only one subject" (Weizsäcker & Roser, 2020, p. 11). The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany (Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK) has so far maintained this approach, citing the difficulty of deploying single-subject teachers (Vock et al., 2021). According to George (2021, p. 53) at the time of conducting his study, only four states (Bremen, Hamburg, Saxony-Anhalt and Schleswig-Holstein) are prepared to recognise qualifications with only one school subject and thus offer more favourable entry conditions.

Since, as a rule, equivalence of the relevant teaching qualifications is not established, so-called "compensatory measures" can be provided, either in the form of an adaptation course or in the form of an aptitude test. The purpose of the adaptation courses is to compensate for gaps in the pedagogical, didactic, subject-matter and practical parts of teaching.

Linguistic requirements

Mastering the German language at a level that allows a person to cope with the demands of school and teaching and the complex communicative activities associated with them is considered one of the greatest challenges and a central impediment to professional integration. It is no coincidence that university re-qualification programmes (cf. section 3.4) place a strong emphasis on promoting language competencies with full-time courses to achieve mostly a C1 level according to the *Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and with a variety of courses etc. to promote professional language competencies (Jasche, 2022; Wichmann, 2020).

Language entry regulations are diverse and, in turn, vary according to state and aim. In North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, at the time of finalizing this article, the following language skills are required for the various access routes (OBAS, PE, HSU and adaptation course models mentioned here are described in more detail in section 3.2):

Tab. 2: Required language skills for different routes for returning to work, using the example of North Rhine-Westphalia, as of July 2022, table by the authors

Modality of professional re-entry	Required language competencies for EU citizens	Required language competencies for citizens of non-EU countries
Major side entry OBAS (full in-service programme)	"German language skills required for relevant teaching and educational activities"[11]	
Minor side entry PE (Pedagogical Introduction)	No language-related regulations found in decrees and documentations	
Supply teacher	CEFR level C1	
Teacher of the language of the country of origin (HSU)	CEFR level C1 (university entrance qualification and/or further regulations)[12]	
Adaptation programme	CEFR level C1	CEFR level C2

In some federal states, admission to an adaptation programme is easier because only the C1 level is required. In some cases, however, this only applies to EU citizens (George, 2021, p. 55), although a lowering of the access level to C1 is also foreseeable with regard to teachers from third countries. The table describes the official status as of July 2022 in North Rhine-Westphalia. Since the corresponding directive requires the C1 level for EU citizens to practise a profession, but not for the recognition of the professional qualification, the Federal Republic of Germany is currently facing EU infringement proceedings. Accordingly, in the future, at least EU citizens will presumably only have to prove language skills at C1 level at the time of employment in the school service (ibid., p. 56).

If the C2 level is required (George, 2021, p. 55; Weizsäcker & Roser, 2020, p. 13), it can be proven by the *Advanced German Language Certificate* of the Goethe Institute or the so called DSH-3 Exam. "In this context, level C2 stands for a highly confident expert command of the language, which can only be achieved with many years of intensive and systematic learning. At the same time, sufficient, time-reasonable and specific qualification courses are not yet available" (Wojciechowicz & Vock, 2020b, p. 25). What is problematic about the C2 level requirement is not only the lack of appropriate language courses, but also the suitability of the examinations available to date. A 'mother tongue' level entry criterion is tested, which on the one hand is diffuse and difficult to describe due to a large variance (Davies, 2004, p. 431) and on

11 Ministerium für Schule und Bildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (2022a).

12 "All teachers from a country outside the German-speaking area must provide evidence of German language skills that allow them to work in the classroom and perform all teaching duties. Proofs are in particular: a) the acquisition of the university entrance qualification in German or b) the "Großes Sprachdiplom" ("Advanced German Language Certificate") of the Goethe Institute with at least the overall grade "good" or c) the successful participation in a colloquium conducted by the state examination office for first state examinations for teaching positions at schools or d) another proof of language proficiency approved by the Ministry for Schools and Education" (Herkunftssprachlicher Unterricht. RdErl. d. Ministeriums für Schule und Bildung v. 20.09.2021 (ABl. NRW. 10/21)1, 2021).

the other hand many first language learners do not have to fulfil it. The discomfort with the orientation towards a vaguely contoured 'native level' is supported by a study by Zimmermann and Rupprecht (2013). 28 test persons with German as their first language were compared with 28 test persons with German as a foreign language. It was shown that there is a

> "relatively large scattering of data within the individual groups, especially the group of native speakers is conspicuous in this respect. This also confirms the scepticism about a native speaker reference norm […], which is based on the assumption that this is a homogeneous group" (Zimmermann & Rupprecht, 2013, p. 87).

In addition, the CEFR levels are based on general language competencies and knowledge and do not necessarily ensure the necessary professional and technical language competencies. This is because professional communication in the context of school is complex, since it represents a form of linguistic action that is tied to the profession, purpose, location and situation and follows certain context-dependent rules (Bittner, 2006, p. 88). In the framework concept for language measures of the *IQ Framework 2018* (*IQ Förderprogramm 2018*), it is pointed out that "not all linguistic actions in the professional context are described at a single level" (Haber & Ransberger, 2018; see also Kuhn, 2015). A C2 level is not necessary for participation in a qualification, nor is it necessary for the exercise of the teaching profession except in some special areas. These areas should instead be demonstrated through specific professional language examinations. This is because some language actions can already be mastered at lower levels, others at higher levels. For this reason, the IQ framework concept provides a breakdown of the language activities in the competence areas of educating, teaching/instruction, advising/assessing and innovation and assigns them to the levels B2 through to C2. It becomes clear that many communicative situations in the everyday life of a teacher can already be mastered at the B2/C1 level, while others require a C2 level. In general, it can also be questioned whether CEFR, which defines *general* language skills, is a suitable measuring instrument for subject- and profession-related foreign language competencies and whether there should not rather be more subject-related examination formats (Busch-Lauer, 2017). Therefore, a C2 level as an entry requirement for qualification courses seems to make little sense, since it is a general, not subject-related, language level. However, the training of the necessary technical language competencies should be significantly strengthened in the corresponding qualification measures.

In summary, it can be stated that there is a lack of language courses nationwide that systematically prepare teachers for the required language levels and also take into account the specific communicative requirements of the teaching profession (Haber & Ransberger, 2018; Wojciechowicz & Vock, 2020c). It is important that teachers master the necessary language skills to fulfil their tasks in schools and classrooms. However, given the very high entry barrier of C2, which in some cases might prevent professional integration and even further qualification, the lack of language courses offered, and doubts about the quality standards and subject-matter appropriateness

of the examination, it must be questioned whether monolingual education systems are still appropriate for multilingual migration societies. Instead, there should be a stronger focus on finding ways to create subject-appropriate linguistic standards and entry criteria (Döll & Knappik, 2015). Interesting approaches have been developed in Schleswig-Holstein. In the *InterTeach* programmes of the Universities of Flensburg and Kiel (cf. section 3.4) a corresponding C2 examination for the teaching profession at schools has been developed, in addition to C1 and C2 professional language courses that are designed specifically for teachers. The examination includes reading comprehension, listening comprehension, written and oral expression, which are tested with the help of text types and task types related to the teaching profession. This exam, which is specifically designed for teachers, is intended to meet the content requirements of the profession (Bertelsmann Stiftung et al., 2020).

3.2 What opportunities are there for professional re-entry?

Supply teachers

Many international teachers for whom the path to the adaptation programme is not possible, work as supply teachers, which often involve very short fixed-term contracts of three to six months. These short term contracts make it difficult for international teachers "to gain a foothold, as they have to familiarise themselves in a short time with existing teaching procedures, become familiar with diverse learning groups and their routines, and meet needs largely on their own" (Purrmann et al., 2020b, p. 32). Due to the widespread and in some areas and school types very massive shortage of teachers, supply teaching positions tend to bridge gaps in the system, but do not offer international teachers the opportunity for permanent professional integration. There is a danger that "once a problematic number and duration of temporary employment relationships have been reached in terms of labour law […] this path turns out to be a professional dead end" (George, 2021, p. 59).

Thanks to the widespread shortage of teachers (cf. also section 4.1), more and more side entry options are being used, which – if successfully pursued – make at least permanent employment possible. Since the situation here is also very heterogeneous from one federal state to the next (ibid., pp. 21–50), the side entry options are described using the example of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Side entry opportunities in North Rhine-Westphalia[13]

In North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), a distinction is made between the so-called *major side entry* and the *minor side entry* system. Minor side entry is basically possible for all types of schools.[14] Major side entry in the form of the in-service preparatory

13 Cf. the case studies on side entry in Purrmann et al. (2022).

14 For an overview cf. MSB (2022e).

service OBAS[15], is reserved for lower and upper secondary schools (as of July 2022). OBAS leads to a full teacher qualification within two years. Admission is demanding, since in addition to being able to teach a subject after at least seven semesters of regular study time, a second teaching subject with one third of the regular study portion must be attested, as well as professional experience in Germany. Applicants need a positive prognosis decision for admission.[16] For teachers with a refugee background, who have usually completed a single subject degree programme, the requirements are very difficult to meet. Of almost 100 graduates of *Lehrkräfte Plus* in Bielefeld, only one teacher has so far managed to follow this path right after the *Lehrkräfte Plus* programme and successfully complete it, including the state examination (Purrmann et al., 2020b, p. 32).

A more accessible option is the so-called minor side entry in the form of the *Pedagogical Introduction* (*Pädagogische Einführung*, PE), which does not lead to a full teaching qualification, but at least a teaching permit for one subject. Unlike OBAS, for which there are no subject limitations, the PE in primary education is tied to certain subjects where there is a teacher shortage: currently these are art, music, physical education and English (as of July 2022). The PE requires only one teaching subject after a minimum of eight semesters of study. After a three-month introductory phase, there is a nine-month intensive phase in which the teachers teach lessons themselves and are mentored in the process. In order to participate in the accompanying courses at the *Centres for Practical Teacher Training* (*Zentren für schulpraktische Lehrer*innenausbildung*), participants receive five credit hours towards their teaching obligations.[17] At the end, an assessment is made by the school management, which decides whether the teacher has proven him/herself over the entire duration of the contract "in particular with regard to professional and personal suitability"[18] and can be employed as a single subject teacher for an unlimited period. The pay scale classification is a few pay scales below that of salaried teachers who can prove that they teach two subjects and have a Master's degree. The acquisition of a teaching qualification is not linked to the PE.[19] In principle, OBAS can also be completed after the PE if the relevant prerequisites are met – this is a path that some *Lehrkräfte Plus* graduates have taken successfully.

15 Regulations for the in-service training of side entrants (Ordnung zur berufsbegleitenden Ausbildung von Seiteneinsteigerinnen und Seiteneinsteigern – OBAS). For further information cf. MSB (2022d).

16 MSB (2022a).

17 Pädagogische Einführung in den Schuldienst. RdErl. d. Ministeriums für Schule und Weiterbildung v. 19.12.2011, 2011.

18 MSB (2022c).

19 Further information can be found in the relevant brochure of the Ministry for Schools and In-Service Training NRW (MSW, 2011).

Teaching the language of one's country of origin in North Rhine-Westphalia[20]

Another route to obtaining a temporary teaching position in a relatively short period of time, even if not in mainstream teaching, is to work in first language (i.e. non German) or heritage language teaching. The languages of origin of teachers with a refugee background are not recognised as teaching subjects in most federal states. In some states, however, teaching a language of origin (*Herkunftssprachlicher Unterricht*, HSU) is offered outside of regular classes, as explained here using the example of North Rhine-Westphalia. The teachers are usually employed in the afternoon, often at several schools and sometimes in different municipalities. The prerequisite for working as an HSU teacher is C1 language level (for details see Table 2) and – as one of several entry options – "a foreign teaching qualification for the subject of language teaching or a university degree in the language of instruction in the language of origin".[21] Teachers recruited under these conditions undertake to participate in specific in-service training. Recruitment is "probationary and initially for a limited period of up to a maximum of two years".[22]

The provision of HSU positions is regulated via demand registrations by parents or guardians. Demand was already increasing for the school year 2020/2021, in which HSU was offered to 104,358 pupils in 26 languages.[23] Due to the increased demand, the positions have been successively increased. In addition, new positions have been made available within the primary school master plan, which, with the new state programme *Strengthening primary school education through HSU – multilingualism supports children's educational success (Grundschulbildung stärken durch HSU – Mehrsprachigkeit unterstützt den Bildungserfolg der Kinder)*, take into account a stronger link between HSU and regular teaching.

Adaptation programme: wasted potential or ideal solution?

In order to obtain equivalent admission to the teaching profession, international teachers can apply for recognition; the success rate in the period 2016 to 2018 was 11% (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung [BMBF], 2020). The majority of teachers with a teaching qualification acquired abroad, have the opportunity to complete a compensatory measure in the form of an aptitude test or adaptation programme. With regard to the adaptation programme, the regulations vary greatly throughout Germany. In some states, this option is reserved exclusively for EU citizens (George, 2021, p. 11). In NRW, the adaptation programme has also been opened to teachers from non-EU countries as a compensatory measure since 2021.[24]

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20 Cf. the case study for HSU in Purrmann et al. (2022).

21 MSB (2022b); changes resulting from refugee flows from Ukraine are not included here.

22 ibid.

23 MSB (2022b); changes resulting from refugee flows from Ukraine are not included here.

24 Regulation implementing Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications in the field

If the adaptation programme is also available to persons from non-EU countries, the "two central obstacles […] that remain are the second subject usually taught in Germany and competence in the German language" (ibid., p. 10). However, in a number of (especially northern) states, namely in Bremen, Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, admission is possible with a qualification in only one subject (ibid.). There are also different regulations with regard to language skills, ranging from level C1 to C2 at graduation and in some cases, as in NRW, proof must already be provided at the time of application.

Depending on the prerequisites, the adaptation programme lasts between 6 and 36 months and is usually supervised institutionally in the same way as the second phase of teacher training. Upon successful completion, graduates of the adaptation programme acquire a full teaching qualification in either one, two or more (primary school) teaching subjects or learning areas, depending on the state-specific regulations. Some of the measures are remunerated, others are not or only partially remunerated, so that in some states fees and living expenses become an additional obstacle (ibid., p. 11).

The percentage of successfully completed compensatory measures, i. e. adaptation programme or aptitude test, is statistically recorded for two federal states. In Berlin it is around 10%, in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania around 5% (ibid., p. 65). Assuming an average willingness to be recognised, it can be expected that the figures not recorded nationwide are similarly low for other federal states (ibid.). Overall, George (ibid.) estimates that about "80 percent of teachers trained abroad do not succeed in gaining recognition, in absolute figures that would be 2,000 per year".

And apart from that?

In addition, many teachers trained abroad only have the option of working as volunteers or interns in school-related activities, e. g. in the school integration sector, as homework supporters or in open all-day activities. However, these are usually poorly paid, precarious, compensatory and deregulated (honorary) jobs without long-term prospects, which make employment in and around schools possible, but cannot be compared to working fully in the teaching profession. This is because "the conditions of employment are very heterogeneous and, depending on the respective agency, mostly below the pay scale" (George, 2021, p. 60) and it is usually "by no means an employment option for trained teachers that is commensurate with their qualifications" (ibid., p. 64).

In order to achieve full equality for teachers from abroad in the form of tenure, which is only possible up to a minimum age, German citizenship is required. This is

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of teaching (AnerkennungsVO Berufsqualifikation Lehramt) (2007) (Verordnung zur Umsetzung der Richtlinie 2005/36/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 7. September 2005 über die Anerkennungen von Berufsqualifikationen im Lehrerbereich (AnerkennungsVO Berufsqualifikation Lehramt) (2007).

unattainable for most international teachers, which is why a temporary position as a fully qualified teacher, compared to the other small side entry and substitute positions described, is a goal that is difficult to achieve, but still very desirable.

3.3 Re-qualification programmes

> "And when you see how many people actually come here and who are also really qualified, then it's a shame that they really have to worry about getting into a programme like this at all" (Finke, 2021, mentor, lines 662–665).

Despite the widespread shortage of teachers, re-entering the profession on one's own initiative is generally not crowned with success. The few teachers with a refugee background who are able to take up a position usually find themselves in short-term supply teaching positions. Against the backdrop of the significant increase in the number of people seeking asylum, especially since 2016 (see Figure 1), and knowing about the difficulties of professional integration, the first re-qualification programmes in Germany began in 2016 (Bertelsmann Stiftung et al., 2020; Wojciechowicz et al., 2020). In the meantime, a number of re-qualification programmes have emerged, especially in the northern part of Germany, as figure 2 illustrates.

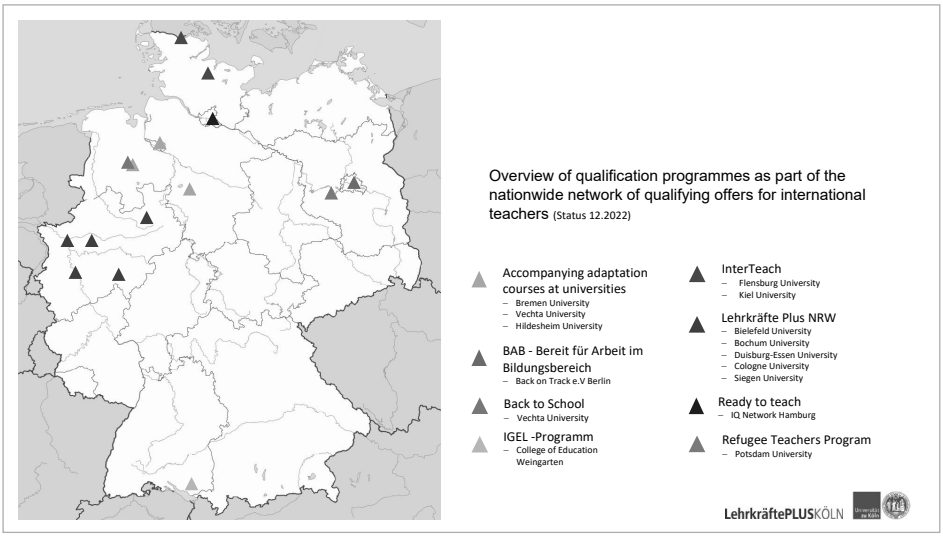

Fig. 2: Overview of re-qualification programmes in Germany, compiled by *Lehrkräfte Plus*, University of Cologne (Netzwerk Lehrkräfte Plus Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2023)

The impact of the re-qualification programmes will be illustrated by three examples:

- the *Refugees Teachers Program* in Potsdam (Federal State of Brandenburg)
- the *Lehrkräfte Plus* (*Teachers Plus*) programme at five university locations, as well as the follow-up programme *Internationale Lehrkräfte Fördern* (*Supporting Inter-*

national Teachers, ILF) of all five local government districts (Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia)
- the *InterTeach* programme in Flensburg and Kiel (Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein)

The Refugees Teachers Program in Brandenburg

The *Refugees Teachers Program* (RTP) at the University of Potsdam has made history as a pioneer programme nationwide. Under the impression of the large arrival of refugees since 2015, it seemed necessary to the initiators that not only the school system, but also university teacher training be prepared for the increasing number of pupils and teachers. The extremely high demand for the first vacancies (640 applications for 50 places) can be interpreted as a clear indicator of the relevance of the opportunities offered.

This full-time programme extends over 18 months and has a clear focus on language support. In addition to the independent language course programme, it integrates elements of the regular teacher training programme, a school internship and a variety of counselling elements (Bertelsmann Stiftung et al., 2020, pp. 56–57). As in the first years, it will also be financed in the second funding phase (2019 to 2022) by funds from the Brandenburg Ministry of Science, Research and Culture (MWFK). This has also been accompanied by a redesign of the content.

In the first years of the programme, after meeting the relevant language requirements, the graduates were able to work part-time as assistant teachers for two years (until 2018) or as pedagogical teaching support staff for one year at general schools (cf. e. g. Wojciechowicz & Kludt, 2020; Wojciechowicz & Vock, 2020c). Since 2019, however, it is only possible to work as pedagogical teaching support staff.

In a new design from 2021, RTP is being implemented as part of a three-stage qualification chain. After the university programme, which now also includes substantial study components in a second teaching subject, graduates can take part in a flexible teaching internship qualification at a school and, in a third stage in the form of an adaptation programme or side entry, try to gain a permanent position in the school.

Lehrkräfte Plus (Teachers Plus) and Internationale Lehrkräfte Fördern (ILF) (Supporting International Teachers) in North Rhine-Westphalia

In North Rhine-Westphalia *Lehrkräfte Plus* (*Teachers Plus*) was developed in 2017 by Bielefeld University and has also been implemented at Ruhr University at Bochum since 2018. From the very beginning, it has taken place in close cooperation with the Ministry of Schools and Education (Ministerium für Schule und Bildung, MSB), which closely monitors its design and management (Feldmann et al., 2020; Syspons, 2021). It systematically supports school-based internships by providing relief hours for mentors, and works together closely with the ILF-programme (*Supporting International Teachers*), a follow-up programme of the district administrations (Purrmann et

al., 2020b). "The MSB has been a positive supporter of the Lehrkräfte Plus programme from the outset. It was also a key driver in the establishment of the follow-up programme ILF" (Syspons, 2021, p. 19). Since 2020, *Lehrkräfte Plus* has been implemented at a total of five universities (Bielefeld, Bochum, Duisburg-Essen, Cologne, Siegen) (cf. also Netzwerk Lehrkräfte Plus Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2023). The initial funding by the Bertelsmann Foundation and the Mercator Foundation was successfully transferred to public funding by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the Ministry of Science of NRW (MKW).

The core components of the one-year full-time programme are language courses, a school internship lasting several months and, as a trademark of the programme, the Pedagogical-Intercultural Qualification (PIQ), which is intended to provide orientation and prepare for the system change. This is supplemented by subject methodology, professional language training and other courses. The drop-out rates are extremely low at one to two persons per cohort (ibid., p. 21), which is partly due to the independent programme tailored to the needs of the participants and the intensive individual support. The different modules of the programmes as well as similarities and specifics of the five locations are described in a joint volume (Netzwerk Lehrkräfte Plus Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2023).

In 2018, the Arnsberg district administration developed a follow-up programme specifically tailored to the needs of the graduates for a supported career entry after *Lehrkräfte Plus*. "Within the framework of the state's own ILF programme, the teachers receive a two-year contract with 17 lessons per week, of which 12 are initially under guidance and then taught with increasing autonomy. The remaining five hours are credited for professional development" (Purrmann et al., 2020b, p. 32). In the meantime, the Ministry for Schools and Education in NRW offers the programme *Supporting International Teachers (Internationale Lehrkräfte Fördern*, ILF) in all five district administrations. The content is closely coordinated with the *Lehrkräfte Plus* programme. The state of North Rhine-Westphalia is actively involved in the selection process of the university-based *Lehrkräfte Plus* programmes through representatives of the district administrations, and there is a wide range of coordination, information and advisory meetings with participants and mentors. After the ILF programme, there is a chance of finding a permanent position through the side entry programme (cf. section 3.2). The district administrations responsible provide support here: "At the end of the ILF programme, teachers are individually supported on the path to a suitable follow-up opportunity with the goal of permanent employment in the teaching profession" (Bezirksregierung Arnsberg, 2020, p. 5).

InterTeach in Schleswig-Holstein

A close cooperation with the relevant ministry is also evident in Schleswig-Holstein, where the *InterTeach* programme of the Universities of Kiel and Flensburg has been offered in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Schleswig-Holstein since 2020 (cf. also Kampa et al., 2022). The aim is to prepare

teachers from abroad specifically for participation in the adaptation programme of the Institute *for* Quality Development (Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung) of Schleswig-Holstein (IQSH), which, unlike in the majority of the federal states, in Schleswig-Holstein can be completed for one school subject instead of two.

InterTeach is made up of the qualification modules of language study, subject study, (subject/subject methodology/pedagogy/practice) and cultural exchange, the focus of the programme is on achieving the C2 language level (Kampa, 2020, p. 47). For this purpose, the programme has developed a specific "C2 examination for the teaching profession in schools" (ibid.). After successfully completing the programme and passing the C2 examination, the graduates apply for the shortened adaptation programme of the IQSH in order to subsequently work as teachers of one school subject in a salaried position at a school in Schleswig-Holstein (Bertelsmann Stiftung et al., 2020, p. 59).

And after the re-qualification programmes: en route to permanent professional integration?!

The re-qualification programmes enable participants to take a first step towards getting a teaching position and take them closer to achieving their goal of working in their new country as a teacher of the subject they have studied. The programmes enable a systematic improvement of German language skills, they provide orientation in the education system, a critical examination of subject-specific, methodological and practical teaching standards and many of them provide a first access to school within practice phases or a mentored initial career entry. Before participating in the programmes, many participants had not succeeded in gaining such an initial career start.

The experiences of these pioneer programmes also show that the goal of temporary employment as a prerequisite for permanent integration into school and society has so far been achieved by only a small proportion of graduates. There are various obstacles to be overcome, which will be illustrated in the following using the three examples described above.

The *Refugees Teachers Program* in Potsdam: According to an internal survey conducted in July to September 2021, of 105 graduates who had completed the programme since 2015 (79 had responded to the enquiry), 35 teachers were employed at school at the time of the survey, 19 with fixed-term contracts and 16 with permanent contracts. Of these 35 graduates, 16 had a contract as a teacher, but only five had a permanent one, eleven as supply teachers. The other persons were employed as classroom teaching assistants, partly on a fixed-term contract (8 persons), partly on an open-ended contract (11 persons) (Wojciechowicz & Vock, 2022, p. 17). As Miriam Vock, the initiator of the programme clarifies, the rules for recognition as a teacher, such as the requirement of a second subject, are too bureaucratic. "In many countries around the world, teachers are 'one-subject teachers', usually associated with a strong identification with their subject. The model of the two-subject teacher, so familiar to us, is the exception internationally" (Vock et al., 2021). She also criticises the fact that there are

too few language courses for the requirements of the target group and that graduates should be better supported by the ministry and school authorities in finding a suitable school (Alboga & Christ, 2021).

Lehrkräfte Plus and ILF in NRW: In order to obtain permanent employment after the ILF programmes in NRW, the transition from ILF to the minor side entry PE (cf. section 3.2) is described as the ideal path, which some of the first graduates have already successfully taken. Since November 2021, it has also been possible to apply to shorten the side entry (PE or OBAS) by half a year after successfully completing ILF. Thus, the side entry offers a path to permanent employment if certain requirements are met. Of the first 70 graduates who completed the ILF programme after the *Lehrkräfte Plus* programme in Bielefeld, Bochum and Cologne, 21 have succeeded in obtaining a PE position. According to information from the contact person at the Ministry of Education, an additional seven people are even completing the major side entry scheme OBAS and thus acquiring a full teaching qualification. Another third (23 people) are working as supply teachers about half a year after completing the ILF programme (as of November 2021). For the remaining graduates, it can be assumed, due to a lack of feedback, that (so far) transition to employment as a teacher has not been possible. In some cases, the schools did not have the opportunity to advertise relevant positions, in some cases the ILF graduates had to compete with fully qualified teachers and could not be hired in these cases – even if the school administration was very interested in keeping them. The situation is most difficult in those areas where there is no pronounced shortage of teachers – which has a certain logic, since the basic intention of the side entry programme is to remedy the shortage of teachers and "to secure the supply of teaching in all subjects" (Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen [MSW], 2011, p. 3).

InterTeach in Schleswig-Holstein: Since the *InterTeach* programme prepares students for the adaptation programme and recognition with only one subject is possible in Schleswig-Holstein, access to a permanent position after the programme is very much a possibility. In addition, there is a concentration on the subjects with teacher shortage: MINT (mathematics, informatics, natural sciences, technology)[25] (both locations) and English as well as technology for primary and community schools (Flensburg), so that the career prospects are comparatively favourable. At the same time, however, this is a limitation because the programme is explicitly designed to provide an answer to the shortage of teachers in these subjects. However, language courses from the C1.2 level up and the professional C2 examination are at least open to teachers of other subjects and subject combinations. A second restriction is that the obstacles to entry at the Kiel location with German level C1 (CEFR) are so high that only three applicants could be found for the eight places originally advertised. In Flensburg, where the entry requirement is level B2, after one year of participation in the programme, three of the first eight participants were able to pass all parts of the specially designed professional C2 examination. In summary, the programme offers a

25 STEM in English-speaking countries.

small number of teachers with the 'right' school subject the chance to achieve the goal of a permanent position.

The examples described show that some teachers with a refugee background have been successful. For many, the path to permanent employment in schools remains blocked as of autumn 2021 or spring 2022. This underlines the claim that the teaching profession is highly regulated with high barriers to entry (cf. section 3.1). In particular, the regulations on the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad represent a major obstacle. Encouraged by the massive nationwide shortage of teachers, but also by the ever louder demands for integration and more diverse teaching staff, with the support of the proactive attitude of some ministries and the commitment of (university) initiatives, three of which were presented as examples, there has at least been some progress towards improving access opportunities in recent years.

3.4 Settling into the school?! What challenges have to be met at school?

The attempt to gain a professional foothold as an immigrant teacher in a new country is characterised by many different challenges. The previous sections explained which barriers or obstacles make initial or permanent entry into the teaching profession in Germany difficult or even impossible. In the following, we will look at the challenges teachers are confronted with, who have entered the system.

Once the step into the teaching profession has been successfully taken, perhaps even into a permanent position, the new work at school and succeeding in finding one's way in the (new) role of teacher is usually not a foregone conclusion. As a trained teacher with 10 to 20 years of professional experience, having to go through a re-professionalisation process can have de-professionalising effects in many respects if there is no accompanying communicative and reflective mentoring process. It is not uncommon for international teachers to be subject to "an externally determined attribution of difference that they cannot influence" (Orgelmacher, 2021) and suffer from the attribution of a lack of professional competence or qualification (Massumi, 2014, p. 91). Their training and professional experience as teachers can be perceived – quite ambivalently – as both a strength and a burden. This is confirmed in an interview study where the interviewees "cited their experiences as teachers in their countries of origin as helpful in the course of their return to the teaching profession" but at the same time as a "complication due to the need to get used to a different school system, which is still new to them, as well as a change in their understanding of their role as teachers" (Orgelmacher, 2021, p. 69). Uncertainties and irritations are inevitable; the need for comprehensive and sometimes lengthy further training "seems plausible with regard to German language skills, but when it comes to didactic concepts and teaching skills as well as the role of the teacher in the new country, it can quickly have an irritating and de-professionalising effect" (Schüssler & Purrmann, 2021). In her research, Rotter (2014, p. 101) points to the "danger of a de-professionalising entanglement in one's own biography".

A resource-oriented, differentiated approach to international teachers must not be blind to the challenges that can arise from differences in educational and professional biographies, e. g. the prevalence of teacher-centeredness and textbook focus in Syria, as confirmed in studies (Economou & Hajer, 2019, p. 386), as well as those that have more to do with individual personalities. Instead, it should take into account individuals and their challenges, be it in terms of their role as teachers and how they are perceived by their students (Wojciechowicz & Vock, 2020a), language challenges or other educational and professional biographical experiences with teaching-learning processes and classroom management (Schüssler & Purrmann, 2021), but also their individual potentials and strengths, such as a high level of subject knowledge, a modern understanding of foreign language teaching or a special ability to empathise (ibid.).

Reflecting on this in the mentoring process for the return to work of international teachers is one of the most important tasks for all those involved, who need to be in possession of openness and ambiguity tolerance. For international teachers, this requires constructive critical faculties and a willingness to reflect and continue learning. For the supporting and re-qualifying programmes and school actors, this also requires constructive critical abilities as well as the need for strength-oriented guidance and counselling. The latter must be capable of perceiving and critically questioning ideas of normality in schools. It requires enabling diverse reflection processes for international teachers – and it requires a fundamental openness and willingness on the part of the majority society to deal with ideas of normality at school and the othering processes experienced by migrant others (Proyer, 2020; Riegel, 2016). This is because the process of othering can create a 'we' and 'the others'; characteristics and behaviours are "interpreted as deviating from the norm and the people belonging to the group are thus excluded. In most cases, however, the other group is devalued in comparison" (Diversity Arts Culture, 2022). This is often an unconscious everyday practice that influences our thoughts and actions and the way we perceive and order the world. School, too, is a place that represents social structures and therefore cannot avoid having discriminatory effects. For example, George (2021, p. 58), referring to an interview with a staff representative, states that "reservations about teachers trained abroad, which at first sight were justified by reference to supposed language deficits, could in fact often be due to unspoken reservations in relation to different school traditions and different pedagogical-didactic concepts". This is also in line with research findings by Döll and Knappik (2015), who were able to demonstrate neo-linguicistic patterns (Dirim, 2010) to justify and legitimise the exclusion of migrants in Austrian classrooms. According to Holliday (2006), such "native-speakerism" follows traditions of thinking that exaggerate first-language linguistic competence while simultaneously disregarding the diverse linguistic competences of teachers with a refugee background.

Therefore, it is also a question of working on the convictions of the whole teaching staff (Massumi, 2014, p. 93) and of the "recognition of difference as well as diversity as enrichment, [which] opens up a more appropriate way of dealing with heterogeneity"

(Höflich, 2021, p. 4). The re-qualification programmes described earlier attempt to take this knowledge into account. In *Lehrkräfte Plus*, for example, the participants "develop their reflective competence in the sense of re-professionalisation and re-locate the practices of teacher action and the teacher role on the basis of their own (professional) biographical experiences and the knowledge gained on the course and during the internship" (Schüssler & Purrmann, 2021). It is a question also, for example, of school basics, teaching and teacher training in Germany as well as a variety of topics related to teaching activities such as classroom management, the role of the teacher, dealing with heterogeneity, lesson planning and reflecting on the internship experience (ibid.). In both the *Lehrkräfte Plus* internship and ILF programmes, the international teachers are accompanied and advised by mentors. These school mentors are supported by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia through a reduction in their teaching load, which also enhances the status of the programmes. In this way, the initial professional phase is closely monitored in the new home country.

In a qualitative interview study in the context of *Lehrkräfte Plus*, Hachmeister (2022) conducted 23 extensive interviews with experts, international teachers, their mentors and school administrators (Hachmeister, 2022). The result is a handout for schools that contains a variety of recommendations on the challenges and the resulting strengths-based integration of international teachers and presents them in terms of the following thematic areas:

- Teaching methods and materials
- Interculturality and language
- Representation and role model function, and
- Cooperation and new perspectives for the teaching staff.

These lead onto conditions for success and recommendations for professional integration. It requires a fundamental open-mindedness and willingness on the part of the teaching staff and the new international teachers to engage in a joint learning process. This requires critical ability and reflection on all sides and demands patience and a high level of commitment. There should be provision for both the supportive familiarisation of the new teacher with the existing structures and the openness to put those to the test as well as a certain amount of individual freedom in order for the teachers to find their own (new) teaching role, to promote possible potentials and thus to support integration in the school (ibid.).

4. Chances and potentials for international teachers and their schools

4.1 Teacher shortage as a favourable framework condition

The opportunities and potentials provided by a greater internationalisation and diversification of the still very monocultural and also monolingual teaching staff (Döll & Knappik, 2015; Gogolin, 2008) are obvious and can be described on different in-

ter-connected levels. George lists three reasons for improved recognition opportunities for international teachers as: "individual opportunities to practice one's learned profession, to earn an adequate income and to participate in society, the possible contribution to alleviating the acute shortage of teachers and the intercultural opening of schools, which should also be reflected in the teaching staff" (George, 2021, p. 67).

Since improved recognition and integration practices for international teachers have an instrumental effect on remedying the existing shortage of teachers, this aspect will be considered in this country report, despite the dramatic situation for schools and families, primarily as a favourable framework condition for a greater receptiveness and flexibility on the part of the system.

Moreover, the assessments and forecasts for the shortage of teachers differ considerably. According to the KMK's (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany) model calculations, there will be a shortage of about 25,000 teachers in 2025 and as many as 31,000 in 2030. Other calculations assume much higher figures, namely "40,000 by 2025 or 85,000 by 2035 (Klemm, 2022) or even 70,000 by 2025 or 156,000 by 2035 (Geis-Thöne, 2022)" (Ständige Wissenschaftliche Kommission [SWK], 2023, p. 6). Accordingly, the renowned education researcher Klemm describes some of the KMK's assumptions as "highly dubious" (Wiarda, 2022). In 2035, there could be a shortfall of around 10% of the target strength of German teacher colleges (ibid.). The shortage is particularly evident in secondary schools, but also in elementary schools (SWK, 2023, p. 6), and there are large differences between subjects.

The shortage of teachers is of such a dimension that it brings about a much greater openness and permeability of the highly regulated entrance procedures to the teaching profession, leading to a partially less strict interpretation of existing regulations. An example of this is the current statement of the Standing Scientific Commission of the KMK (SWK), which recommends simplified recognition of foreign degrees as one of the measures to deal with the acute shortage of teachers, as well as the "renunciation of a second teaching subject, especially if the subject studied is a shortage subject" (SWK, 2023, p. 13). At the same time, the shortage of teachers represents a very good window of opportunity to enable international teachers to gain initial access to the system and to convince school stakeholders that they are experienced teachers and experts in their field.

This opening, which schools are currently experiencing due to the external framework conditions, should be used by the states as an opportunity to proactively promote a more diverse teacher body. However, political will is needed to pave the way for international teachers to enter the profession on a permanent basis. Some international teachers have different skills from those expected so far. This must be recognised in its own right. Otherwise, access to the teaching profession described here will end when the shortage of teachers ends. The system would then have missed a great opportunity because, as explained in more detail in section 4.3, an international background can make an important contribution to a more diverse composition of the teaching profession.

In times of teacher shortages, this window of opportunity should be used as innovatively as possible to open up possibilities for changes in the 16 different education systems in Germany and provide permanent routes into the profession that are also effective independently of teacher shortages. If the opportunities to enter and, above all, remain de facto too closely linked to the shortage of teachers, the windows of opportunity will quickly close again.

4.2 On 'arriving, participating and staying' – re-entry into one's old-new teaching profession as an important criterion for social integration

For many new adult immigrants, professional integration is an important basic prerequisite for settling in the new home country and for their social integration. People "with a higher education qualification who were successful in their careers before they fled their home country want to resume their former occupation as quickly as possible. In doing so, they are quite prepared to start at a lower level of qualification if necessary" (Schiefer, 2017, p. 4). Thus, in 2018, five years after immigrating, about half of the new immigrants with a refugee background are working, but a considerable percentage, especially academics, are employed below the level of their previous occupation (Brücker et al., 2020, p. 10).

The international teachers who succeed in re-entering the labour market have the best chance of becoming socially integrated in their new country. Thus, support for professional re-entry can be seen as an important means to make a real difference not only for the individuals themselves, but also for their families. In NRW, for example, this has been recognised by the state government, which proactively supports the programmes described – according to the external evaluation – also in the wake of integration policy measures:

> "There are strong points of contact with the higher-level (integration) policy goals of the state government, and the programme is politically desired. Under the motto 'Ankommen. Teilhaben. Bleiben' ['Arrive. Participate. Stay'], Lehrkräfte Plus fits in well with the framework of the Conference of Ministers of Integration, which took place in NRW in 2019 and also expresses an integration policy leitmotif of the NRW state government" (Syspons, 2021, p. 19).

The effectiveness of re-entering the labour market is perhaps best illustrated by comparing it with the negative consequences of a lack of occupational integration. Niesta Kayser (2020), who links theories of unemployment with the topic of refugee migration, explains that, among other things, "the painful experience of job loss in the country of origin is often compounded by social isolation and a threat to professional identity for refugees in the country of arrival due to continuing unemployment" (ibid., p. 75). If they do not succeed in re-entering the labour market in a way that is commensurate with their training, they are threatened with feelings of helplessness, the intensification of any existing post-traumatic symptoms, the endangerment of their mental and sometimes physical health, social isolation and a threat to their

occupational identity (ibid., p. 76). Occupational integration can be seen as a "key to establishing personal relationships, integrating into society and asserting dignity and self-respect" (ibid., p. 75), since among the multitude of social roles assumed during a person's biography, "the occupational role is of central importance in modern society" (ibid., p. 71). The positive effects and the opportunity to stand on one's own feet socio-economically, to feel accepted with one's resources and potentials, often not only have an effect on the individual her- or himself, but also have a variety of positive effects on the family and social environment. Integration is "not a coping task for particularly marked groups of people, but a comprehensive social project to enable everyone to belong and live together without violence" (Frieters-Reermann, 2020, p. 43).

Moreover, the effects do not only affect newly immigrated people, but they also have positive implications for society as a whole in terms of shaping how people live together in a migration society:

> "The way host societies deal with refugees and migrants, how they take their resources and potential into account, and how they demand their inclusion and participation in the education system as well, is by far not only a question of humanity, human dignity and the human right to education. The active inclusion of the capacities, competences and cultural capital of refugees also serves, above all, to secure their own social future" (ibid., p. 44).

Because of their role model function, international teachers have an additional multiplier effect in relation to the school community, as will be considered in more detail in the following section.

4.3 Chances for schools in a migration society

The importance of international teachers is apparent for immigrant students, for whom they can act as role models, examples and identification figures (Massumi, 2014, pp. 88–89; Mulalic, 2017; Rotter, 2012, p. 219), and for the entire school community in the sense of an intercultural opening of schools. International teachers function as subject teachers and bring a wide range of language skills and personal experiences to bear in the sense of a "double perspective" (Ackermann & Georgi, 2011). They often adopt a mediating function between pupils, their parents and the teaching staff, as well as showing a special sensitivity and empathy (ibid., Massumi, 2014, pp. 89–90). In addition to the low level of diversity in the teaching staff, refugee children and their families lack role models in the school system as well as teachers with similar biographies and comparable experiences of migration and of being new arrivals.

In this context, many international teachers often find themselves caught up in a tension between (negative) external ascriptions and internalisation, a tension linked to the expectations and stereotypes of the majority society (Frieters-Reermann, 2020, p. 40). The responsibility for intercultural issues is often transferred to the self-concept, which can reinforce the de-professionalising effects of the new professional start described above (Massumi, 2014, pp. 90–91; Mulalic, 2017; Rotter, 2012, p. 217). A

one-sided ascribed responsibility for intercultural issues and conflicts at school can lead to additional workload, excessive demands, reinforcement of constructions of difference and a lack of perception of equivalence and expertise (Höflich, 2021, p. 3). In addition, there is a risk that other teachers may not feel competent or may feel less competent to deal with intercultural issues and processes (Karakaşoğlu, 2011, p. 132).

International teachers, who often appear through their mere presence in a role that is still unfamiliar because it breaks with common attributions, should not be reduced to a function of cultural mediators with special intercultural competences. This is because an over-emphasis on (supposed) cultural differences can, as explained above, encourage practices of differentiation and an emphasis on the migrant other, i. e. "othering" (Riegel, 2016). In this context, "in a certain sense, a balancing act should be performed between avoiding the (re)production of stereotypes and the attribution of foreignness on the one hand and an appreciative and sensitive approach to different life experiences on the other" (Siebert-Husmann et al., 2023).

Or to put it briefly: the teachers want to be perceived as professionals, as subject teachers, with their subject-specific and pedagogical competences – and they can, but should not have to, be effective in the schools of a migration society as an additional *bonus*, in the sense of the potentials presented in Hachmeister's interview study (cf. Table 3). These are diverse potentials of the planned integration of international teachers such as subject- and language-knowledge, possible focuses for identification or the promotion of intercultural competence.

Tab. 3: The potential of international teachers (Hachmeister, 2022)

Potential of international teachers – this is why support is worthwhile
• Teachers' specialist knowledge from studies/training • Professional experience
• Knowledge of the culture of origin • Closeness to and trust in immigrant pupils through > their own migration/refugee experiences > their own experience of integration/arriving in a new society
• Identification and role model function • Multilingualism and language sensitivity
• (Critical) reflection on teaching methods, habits, ideas of normality • Opportunities for comparing systems: as teachers and as parents
• Promoting diversity awareness and diversity-oriented thinking at school • Promoting engagement with pupils' experiences of migration and flight • Challenging and promoting intercultural competencies among teachers and students
• Tolerance of ambiguity and frustration • High motivation and ambition, commitment

In summary, it can be said that it is extremely important not to reduce international teachers to categorical attributions and not to declare them responsible for intercultural processes and social learning on the basis of their origin (Karakaşoğlu, 2011, p. 132), but rather to perceive them as new colleagues in the way they have been

trained and further qualified: as professionally experienced subject teachers. The fact that they are then valued as role models in a school in a migration society (Kalpaka & Mecheril, 2010) for what they may also bring with them as a bonus, combined with their linguistic, experiential and cultural background, because they (can) break up the cultural monotony of the teaching staff, may then also be a positive side-effect.

Some of the re-qualification programmes described above try to take this balancing act into account in the accompanying work with mentors and through the development of corresponding materials. The European project *International Teachers for Tomorrow's School* (ITTS) also tries to promote an explicit confrontation with dominant ideas of normality in schools in the majority society and strength-oriented support for the new international colleagues.

5. Conclusion and perspectives

Being able to work in the teaching profession in Germany as a (newly) immigrated international teacher is neither a matter of course nor a foregone conclusion. The barriers in a highly regulated profession are too great, the requirements too diverse, especially when compared across the federal states. To be employed as teachers on a permanent basis is still only possible for a few international teachers.

The shortage of teachers in recent years provides an important framework for greater openness in the system. The re-qualification programmes that have emerged since around 2016 have increased the momentum. They show what is possible and what is necessary for a strength-oriented integration of new colleagues. In addition, the topic is gaining momentum due to the large number of new refugees from Ukraine and new scope is emerging that will hopefully become effective for all teachers with a refugee background regardless of their origin. In many of the participating schools, the challenges, often linguistic, sometimes in relation to the role of the teacher, are also clearly evident, but at the same time also the enormous potential and the great enrichment that lies in international teachers. Considering the precarious conditions reported by the other country reports in this volume, German education and integration policy has the potential to show, despite the existing hurdles of the highly regulated system, also in a European comparison, that the professional reintegration of international teachers is in most cases, if not in all, a win-win situation: for the teachers themselves, their families and their social environment, for the schools in the sense of intercultural school development, which does not stop at the teaching staff rooms, and for education and integration policies.

Creating better opportunities for people to return to work would also have an effect on society as a whole, because "it is precisely those societies that recognise diversity as a resource and potential rather than as a risk and problem that appear to be the most sustainable in a globalised world-wide migration society" (Frieters-Reermann, 2020, p. 44). To what extent the "new beginning in migration and integration policy […], which does justice to a modern country of immigration" (SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, FDP, 2021, p. 137), promised in the coalition agreement of the federal

government, initiates a paradigm shift and policy change in the practice of the professional integration of international teachers and whether an accelerated and simplified recognition of foreign qualifications in the teaching profession (ibid., p. 96) will also become apparent in the different states, remains to be seen in the coming years.

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The professional re-integration of international teachers

Barriers and prospects in the Greek context

Vana Chiou & Electra Petracou

Abstract: Professional integration is considered to be a challenging process that affects various aspects of people's lives. Research shows that international teachers encounter barriers and restrictions to their successful professional re-integration in international environments due to a wide range of factors, such as a different way of life, a foreign language, bureaucracy and institutional barriers and discrimination. This paper aims to outline the migration policies developed for the professional integration of international teachers in the Greek education system and describe relevant legislation provisions. Moreover, challenges and barriers are discussed with regard to international teachers' professional re-integration based on recent research data and initiatives relevant to the EU and Greece.

Keywords: re-integration of professionals, international teachers, education system, Greece

1. Introduction

European countries have been experiencing refugee movements especially since the end of the Cold War. In the EU, refugees and asylum have been important public issues since at least the 1990s. Asylum and refugee movements, especially from Syria, were an important issue in European Union member states from 2015 until the EU-Türkiye Agreement in the spring of 2016, which had an impact on the relocation schemes, cooperation and joint responsibility among the members of the EU. EU asylum policies, the global financial crisis and inequalities between countries, the dual labor market, and advanced transport and communication networks have had an effect on the formulation and implementation of migration policies within Europe (Asadi et al., 2017).

According to official data of the European Commission (2021b) on migration to Europe, out of the 477.3 million inhabitants that live in European Union countries, 23 million are non-EU citizens and nearly 37 million were born outside the European Union, most of them holding residence permits for family and work reasons.

Focusing on refugees, Mediterranean countries were the main entry and route for high numbers of asylum seekers, due to the EU policies concerning border manage-

ment, the categorisation of first asylum and/or safe countries (safe countries of origins and safe third countries) and visa policies, in addition to the factor of their geographic proximity to Asia and Africa, with the latter dominating the policy and media discourses. According to the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees database (UNHCR, 2021, last update November 7) from 2014 till 2021, 2,280,874 people arrived in Mediterranean countries while 21,869 were deemed to be dead or missing.

In 2015, a large number of refugees entered the EU via Greece, as compared to other Mediterranean countries. Greece was one of the main entry points and a bridge between refugees' home and settlement countries via land and sea. According to official data (ibid.), during the period of the (in EU terms) so-called "refugee crisis", 1,266.825 people entered Greece (1,206,187 by sea and 60.638 by land) whereas 2,051 are considered as dead or missing.

According to Asylum Information Database (2021), 40,599 refugees applied for asylum in Greece during 2020: 68.56% men and 31.44% women. Among them there were 14,490 children and 2,799 unaccompanied children. In total at the end of 2020, 57,347 applications for asylum were pending. During the same year out of the 81,052 decisions on asylum applications, 42.35% were positive (32% receiving refugee status and 10% subsidiary protection) and 28% were negative. The UN Refugee Agency mentions that by 2021, there were 112,032 refugees in Greece, 49,709 asylum seekers, and 4,705 stateless people. On the basis of the valid residence permits issued by the end of 2021, the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum (2021b) reports in total 965,749 legal migrants in Greece: 231,016 people from other EU countries and expatriates, 693,517 people from non-EU countries, and 59,216 beneficiaries of international protection. UNICEF (2020) also states that 42,500 migrant and refugee children were estimated to be living in Greece in 2020, of whom 13,400 of school age (4–17 years old) were enrolled in formal education.

Without doubt, the lack of solidarity and responsibility among the member states in the EU, the consequent failure of the EU relocation scheme and the connection of refugee and migration issues with nationalist and racist issues, imposed a significant restriction on the protection of rights of thousands of asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, Greek and EU policies concerning the entry and reception of asylum seekers and the implementation of a geographical restrictions policy had as a consequence that some areas on the borders of the EU, mainly Italian and Greek islands (i.e Lesvos), are overcrowded while the capacities of host centers for asylum seekers and refugees were limited resulting in inadequate measures for their integration.

The policies of member states on the integration of migrants and refugees are considered by the EU as essential for European societies despite the fact that the EU and individual member states have focused mainly on border management, migration control and deterring asylum seekers from entering the EU (European Council, 2023).

In the light of these developments, EU emphasizes the importance and the benefits of integration from the social and professional point of view migrants and refugees in EU countries, and supports such policies in member states through funding (ibid.). Furthermore, many studies indicate the positive effects a migrant workforce has on

the economy of the host countries (Finotelli & Ponzo, 2018; Noja et al., 2018; Zografakis & Kasimis, 2014). Thus far, relevant initiatives have been promoted and much attention paid by policy makers to setting social and professional re-integration high on the European Commission's agenda for migration (European Commission, 2020b), targeting the promotion of social cohesion, economic prosperity, human rights and values. Notwithstanding the formulated action plans, the priorities of the EU and its member states, poor local infrastructure and the financial crisis in many European countries has led to poor results in achieving the above mentioned tasks.

The goal of this paper is to outline the different initiatives and policies formulated and/or implemented during the last years concerning the (re-)integration of migrants who were already teachers in their countries of origin (from now on referred to as international teachers), as teachers in the Greek education system. Moreover, it presents the employment situation for international teachers[1] in Greece and their professional perspectives along with the obstacles they face.

The main research questions presented here are as follows:

- What policies have been designed for the professional integration of international teachers in Greece?
- What are the provisions and the legal framework for the professional integration of international teachers in Greece?
- What are the employment horizons in Greece for the professional integration of international teachers?
- What challenges and barriers do international teachers face for their professional integration in the Greek education system?

Even though the above questions are key issues in the subject of the (re)integration of migrant teachers from the professional point of view, the relevant literature concerning the Greek case is small and inconclusive. One of the main aims of this study is, therefore, to fill this gap by presenting the Greek situation and emphasizing the special characteristics of the Greek case, focusing on the applicability and effectiveness of EU policies for professional integration in Greece, the role of the Greek legal framework and difficulties and obstacles that international teachers face in entering the Greek education system.

The current paper is structured as follows: section 2 presents the employment challenges faced by international teachers. Section 3 focuses on the professional integration of immigrants in the European Union in general and Greece in particular, including international teachers. Section 4 outlines the legal framework and the provisions for the professional re-integration of international teachers in the Greek edu-

1 "International teachers" are considered to be those teachers who teach students in schools or institutions situated in other countries than their country of origin. In some works, alternative terms are used such as "migrant teachers" or "immigrant teachers". The terms "migrant teachers" and "international teachers" will be used synonymously in this paper to refer to teaching professionals who have moved to Greece from non-EU countries.

cation system. Section 5 presents the employment horizons for international teachers in the Greek education sector. Section 6 concerns itself with the challenges and the barriers that the international teachers face in Greece. Finally, section 7 summarises the findings and introduces the prospects for international teachers' professional integration.

2. The employment challenges for international teachers

The professional integration of international teachers in other countries than the country of their citizenship and the consequent challenges they face through this transition have gained some attention in the last years. However, research focuses on migrant teachers who have moved to other countries mainly for work reasons. There is a literature gap regarding the employment challenges faced by refugee teachers, indicating that there are possible obstacles to investigating this aspect generally. The non-existence of a database providing details on international teachers who have moved to Europe and other continents is a significant barrier to investigating in depth the needs and professional challenges they face during their transition to other education systems.

A review of the literature shows that international teachers in general encounter a number of professional integration problems and discrimination as newcomers in different education systems. One of the most common problems that they face refers to the process of the recognition of their academic and professional qualifications. Bureaucracy is reported by many teachers as a significant barrier for their smooth re-entry into the education system of the countries of residence. It is usually a long-term and costly process that prohibits them from quickly re-activating their professional life and their specialties in the host country (Bense, 2016; Niyubahwe et al., 2013).

Thus, employment problems are also reported as a significant obstacle for migrant teachers, even for those who have their qualifications successfully recognized. Issues related directly to employment, such as work permits, also affect the employment status of migrant teachers. It is interesting that even though they manage to enter the education system of the country of residence, their working status is usually unstable, characterized by restricted, fixed-term contracts and low skilled tasks and responsibilities (Bense, 2016). Other factors that affect their employment perspectives are language and other cultural barriers (Niyubahwe et al., 2013; Schmidt, 2010).

Furthermore, the professional integration problems of international teachers have been attributed to cultural differences between the home and residence country. As Roskell (2013) argues, cross-cultural transition is a "distressing life changing" situation due to the unfamiliarity with the new environment that may lead to a "culture shock". Conducting a study with international teachers, she stresses that they had experienced a "double cultural shock" trying to adjust to the different way of life of the settlement countries such as food, weather, transport, local people and environment and work culture.

Difficulties in the adjustment of international teachers to a new school culture and teaching tasks are also recorded in relevant works. In particular, issues related to unfamiliar curricula and teaching practices, classroom management, interpersonal interactions and communication with parents, colleagues and staff, as well as administrative regulations, were found to have a negative effect on how teachers fit into the new school system (Bense, 2016; Niyubahwe et al., 2013).

Finally, a recurrent finding of relevant studies is the discriminatory attitudes and racism towards international teachers (Bense, 2016; Niyubahwe et al., 2013; Schmidt, 2010). It is worth noting that xenophobia, the hatred of foreigners based on fear and the belief that foreigners are outsiders (Bordeau, 2010), has also been reported during interviews with entrepreneurs in Greece as a restricting factor for refugees' professional re-integration (Kotroyannos et al., 2021).

3. The professional integration of migrants in Greece

According to the European Commission's Action Plan (2020a) on the integration and inclusion 2021–2027, the successful integration and inclusion of immigrants will foster social cohesion and build inclusive societies for all in EU member states. Migrants' smooth and successful professional integration in the European labor market has been a crucial plan and big challenge for the European and national institutions in view of the widespread discrimination, the lack of diversity policies and the financial crisis that many European countries have experienced during the last years. Papademetriou and Benton (2016) argue that

> "The most important vehicle for full integration is finding sustainable employment. Work helps new arrivals become self-sufficient, (re)gain a sense of self in a new place, bridge ethnic and cultural divides, and learn about the host-country society. As such, work can be a gateway to other dimensions of integration".

3.1 Policies for the professional integration of international teachers

It can be argued that Greek policies have prioritized the management of borders and migration control while neglecting the formulation and the implementation of integration policies. As a consequence of the settlement of migrants and refugees in Greece, the Greek Government, with support and funding by the EU, formulated its first integration policies in 2002 without actually implementing them (Triandafyllidou, 2005).

According to official statements, policies are holistic and prioritize mainly the promotion of social policies for third-country nationals in Greece. International teachers living in Greece can benefit from EU and Greek professional and social integration policies designed for all migrants and refugees independently of their profession. Examples of social policies are described in the following.

The Directorate of Social Integration, which operates as part of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (2021a), established by Law 4376/2016 (Νόμος 4376/2016) and in accordance with Presidential Decree 106/2020 (Προεδρικό Διάταγμα Υπ' Αριθμ. 106) consists of the following Departments: Policy and Program Planning, Intercultural Mediation, Socio-Economic Integration, and Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection. Its major goal is to monitor, plan and promote social policies for third-country nationals. In collaboration with a variety of agencies, organisations and institutions, the Directorate of Social Integration is responsible for planning projects for facilitating the integration of migrants and refugees in Greek society and their access to the labor market, education, health, etc., facilitating their enrollment in Greek language courses, promoting their job readiness, supporting them by providing intercultural mediation services including an Integration Help Desk in order to facilitate the submission of inquiries.

In collaboration with the Social Offices of the local authorities, Migration Integration Centers (M.I.C.), supervised by the Directorate of Social Integration, offer support and information to migrants about social integration issues while also providing lessons in the Greek language and culture, informatics as well as job counselling sessions.

The main integration project for the beneficiaries of international protection is called *Helios* (Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection) and was activated in July 2019 and monitored by the Directorate of Social Integration (Greek Council for Refugees, 2021). Its main purpose is to facilitate the integration of refugees and their families into local societies by providing support for attending language courses, accommodation support and employability support. From 2019 till November 2021 the Helios project supported 6,730 job counseling sessions to refugees (42.3% female and 57.7% male). Regarding their professional experience, 36.22% of beneficiaries had 1–4 years professional experience, 32.04% 5–10 years, 14.83% 0–1 years, 14.1% 11–20 and 2.82% 21 years and more.

Another EU project for the integration of refugees in Greece operated through the Online Linguistic Support (OLS) platform, which was designed in the framework of the Erasmus+ Program in order to initially enhance the linguistic skills of Erasmus+ participants and the European Solidarity Corps. Following the entry of refugees into Europe, OLS was open free of charge to 100,000 refugees in EU in a 3-year period aimed at supporting their integration in the training and education systems and developing their language skills in a European language: Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, German, Greek, English, Estonian, Spanish, Finnish, French, Irish Gaelic, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Maltese, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian and Swedish. In the framework of OLS, refugees could take part in courses, tutoring and MOOCs and assess the language level they had attained. The Greek National Agency of Erasmus+ Program (IKY) participated in this initiative by distributing OLS licenses to refugees, mainly via higher education institutions.

It is worth mentioning that language courses are also offered to migrants and refugees by non-governmental organisations, Greek language centers, solidarity organ-

isations and other institutions (Kourtis-Kazoullis et al., 2020; Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2023).

3.2 The EU action plan for integration and inclusion for 2021–2027

The improvement of employment opportunities and skills recognition is one of the three axes of the EU action plan for integration and inclusion for 2021–2027. The main goals of this plan are to fully value the contribution of migrant communities, with a focus on support for women and entrepreneurship, and making it easier for employers to recognize and assess refugees' skills (European Commission, 2020a, 2020b). More specifically, among others the European Commission aims at

- faster and easier recognition of qualifications acquired in non-EU countries;
- stronger cooperation at EU, national and local level between key labor market actors and the migrants themselves;
- providing more support through easier access to finance, training and advice to migrant entrepreneurs;
- a more effective and faster assessment of migrants' skills.

3.3 Statistical data

Considering the large number of public and private agencies operating in the arena of statistics and census every year, surprisingly we did not detect a database providing statistics on teachers' mobility in Europe or globally. As Caravatti et al. (2014) argue, this can be attributed to the differences in the process of data collection for teaching professionals that occur among different government or research agencies and educational organisations. Undoubtedly, the lack of statistics significantly affects the picture we have of the numbers, specialties and needs of mobile teachers coming from non-EU countries.

Despite the lack of statistics focusing exclusively on international teachers, official databases provide us with much information on the generic immigrant employment in EU countries. Based on recent data (European Commission, 2021b), in 2020 8.6 million immigrants were employed in the EU labor market corresponding to 4.6% of the total number for a single year. Employment rates in EU during 2020 reveal that the majority of immigrants were employed as a work force in the accommodation and food services (11.4%), construction sectors (8.6%), administrative and support services (7.1%), and domestic work (6.5%). In terms of occupations, out of the total number of immigrant employees, 11.9% were cleaners and helpers, 9% personal service workers, 5.1% personal care workers, 5.8% building workers, 5.6% laborers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport, 2.7% food preparation assistants, and 2.6% agricultural and fishery laborers (1.3%).

It is worth noting that low rates of immigrant employment are found in human health and social work activities (7.6%), education (3.7%), public administration and

defense, compulsory social security (1.2%), and financial and insurance activities (1.1%). Immigrants showed low representation as teaching professionals (2.5%), business and administration associate professionals (2.5%), general and keyboard clerks (1.4%), science and engineering associate professionals (2%), and market-oriented skilled agricultural workers.

In Greece, the rate of unemployment is high. There is a lack of conclusive and recent statistics concerning the employment of migrants in general, let alone as teachers. However, some partial data could provide us with a picture of the employment scene in Greece. According to Statista, in 2020 the unemployment rate concerning the general population in Greece was approximately 16.85% placing Greece at the top of the EU countries. As far as the immigrant population and its employment in Greece is concerned, it is estimated that before the financial crisis almost one million immigrants were active workers in Greece. However, after a few years many of them left Greece due to the slump in labor market and it is estimated that in 2014, 75–80% out of 708,054 immigrants were economically active (European Commission, 2021a).

Based on official data (Eurostat, 2021) the highest unemployment rates for persons born in a different member state were recorded in Greece (22.8%) for the year 2020, while unemployment rates were generally higher for the population born elsewhere in the EU than they were for the native-born population, with a difference of 7.4%. Asylum seekers and recently arrived migrants are not included in the sample.

Migrant employees, as in other countries, are over-represented in low-paid and low-skilled jobs, as well in the so called black market (Papademetriou & Benton, 2016). They are found mainly in sectors such as construction, agriculture, tourism, domestic work, and so on (Zografakis & Kasimis, 2014). A quantitative research project with 108 refugees on Lesvos island in 2018 revealed low rates of high skilled professionals: 34.6% of the participants had completed only primary education and 17% not even this. Moreover, 22.1% had finished high school, 23.5% lyceum (secondary education), and 2.5% vocational school. Only 14% of people completing secondary education held a university degree (Kotroyannos et al., 2021). In other research also conducted on Lesvos Island, Tzoraki (2019) found that only 7% of the refugees held a university or college degree and 1% a master or PhD degree, revealing the low rates of high skilled immigrants among newcomers.

Aimed at shedding more light on the professional (re)integration of immigrants in Greece, DiaNeosis (2020) conducted a survey with participants from Albania, Georgia, Afghanistan and Syria. Their findings show that earlier immigrants (n = 373) had a higher educational level compared to later ones (n = 411) and in particular more than half (54%) held a university degree (45% a bachelor degree, 8% a master degree and 2% a PhD degree) compared to only 12% of recent immigrants. Recent immigrants are considered those who have settled in Greece since 2010. A relatively high percentage of recent immigrants (64%) stated that they do not possess certificates and qualification titles to prove their professional skills, compared to 14% of older immigrants. This obstacle is more intense among Afghans than among Syrians (70% vs. 63%). Concerning the current employment status of recent immigrants in Greece,

DiaNeosis' findings show that only 9% of recent migrants have been employed while 77% of older immigrants are better integrated in the Greek labor market.

More recently, data from the Helios project show that out of the 4,440 totally profiled migrants, only 63 had obtained a bachelor degree, 38 a master degree and 2 a Ph.D. degree (Greek Council for Refugees, 2021).

However, as Papademetriou and Benton (2016) mention that "education is also no guarantee that newcomers will flourish" because skilled immigrants also face unemployment. It is very characteristic, they report, that migrant university graduates are 10% less likely to be hired in relevant work compared to similarly educated natives in southern Europe, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

The aforementioned data indicate significant barriers in immigrants' professional re-integration in highly skilled and highly paid jobs. It is also evident that teaching professionals are under-represented among migrant employees compared to those working in low-skilled works.

4. Provisions and the legal frame for the professional integration of international teachers in Greece

International teachers wishing to be employed in pre-school, primary and secondary education in Greece must meet the necessary legal requirements regarding the formal qualifications they must have. The three basic requirements – citizenship, recognition of qualifications, the Greek language – are outlined as follows:

4.1 Citizenship

According to the Greek legislation (Law 4735/2020), applicant teachers for working in Greek public schools should be: (a) Greek citizens; or (b) nationals of countries outside the European Union, who have acquired Greek citizenship by naturalization; or (c) citizens of a member state of the European Union; or (d) Northern Epirotes, Cypriot expatriates and expatriate foreigners, coming from Istanbul and from the islands of Imbros and Tenedos, and expatriates from Egypt, provided that their status as Greeks is proved in other ways in accordance with the provisions of legislative decree (Law 3832/1958) in its current form without requiring a certificate of Greek citizenship.

4.2 Recognition of foreign higher education qualifications

Teachers graduated in foreign higher education institutions (HEIs) intending to work in Greece must follow the provisions of Greek legislation for the academic recognition of their degrees and qualifications. The Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Center (Hellenic NARIC – D. O. A. T. A. P), supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, represents the official Hellenic body for the academic recognition of titles and qualifications awarded by foreign HEIs (D. O. A. T. A. P., 2021).

The requirements for the successful academic recognition of foreign qualifications are relevant for all graduates from foreign HEIs irrespective of their country of origin and scientific subject area and are described in detail in Law 3328/2005 (Νόμος 3328/2005). More specifically, according to Article 3, a foreign higher education institution is recognized as equivalent to the Greek HEIs, if it is recognized by the competent bodies of the country where it is based. The two basic requirements for the recognition of foreign HEI qualifications as equivalent to the Greek ones are: a) that the duration of studies, the teaching and learning process and the students' grades and graduation process meet the requirements of Greek universities; b) that the entire study programme has been completed in an accredited HEI, and at least half of the program has taken place at the institution awarding the degree.

4.3 Certification of the Greek language

In 1998, the Greek Ministry of Education, in the framework of migration policy, determined the procedure and the official bodies responsible for the issue of certificates of Greek language proficiency. The Greek language certificate, is necessary for migrants who wish to be appointed to the public sector, for other professional purposes, for studies, or for naturalization in Greece (Centre for the Greek Language, 2023). Consequently, international teachers regardless of their specialties should be qualified with the certificate of Greek language, denoting proficiency at C1 level in Greek, in order to be able to work in Greek schools. Non-Greek graduates from higher education departments other than English, French, German, Spanish and Italian language departments, wishing to teach in private foreign language centers in Greece must have been qualified with a Greek language certificate at B2 level in accordance with Ministerial Directive No. 6117/A5/08-02-2017 (Υπουργική Απόφαση Αριθμ. 61167/A5/08-02-2017).

The aforementioned requirements are essential for all international teachers wishing to apply for teaching positions in the public or private education sector in Greece. International teachers not holding these requirements are not able to apply for teaching jobs in Greece.

5. The employment prospects for international teachers in Greece

The educational system of Greece is highly centralized. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is the official body that decides on a wide range of educational issues such as curricula and teachers' employment in public schools. It is divided into three levels: a) primary education including pre-school education (2 years) and primary schooling (6 years), b) secondary education including lower secondary schools (3 years) and high secondary schools (3 years) and c) higher education. Education is obligatory for all students till the successful completion of the 3 first years of secondary education.

Initial teacher training in Greece is the responsibility of state higher education institutions. According to Greek legislation, all teachers must hold at least a bachelor degree from a university department. More specifically, kindergarten teachers must hold at least a pre-school education degree awarded by a department of pre-school education and primary school teachers from a department of primary education.

Teachers in other specialties must be graduates from a department of the relevant subject area, having also attended pedagogical courses decided by their university (during first cycle studies) or the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPAITE). Alternatively, they can have a master degree or Ph.D. degree in education studies, or have attended the Pedagogical Training Program (EPPAIK) at the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education.

International teachers could be hired in Greek schools in the framework of employment calls for teachers if all the conditions mentioned in section 4 are fulfilled: Greek citizenship, recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and certification of Greek language competence at C1 level.

Another employment option for migrant teachers in the Greek education system are international (foreign) schools operating under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. According to Ministry data, thirty international schools are open, recognized and operating in Greece. As can be seen, most of them are the schools of EU countries or American schools and only three schools are from non-EU countries (Katipunan Philippines Cultural Academy, Iranian School of Athens, and Libyan School of February 17). These schools adopt the philosophy and the curricula of their countries of origin, and most teachers are incomers who work exclusively for these schools, having received work and residence permits. This means that these teachers, although having moved from non-EU countries, are actually employed by their country's educational system. Nevertheless, these schools can also hire teachers from other countries if they hold work and residence permits in Greece. In this case, recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and the certification of Greek language competence can be waived.

Private foreign language centers also appear to be a possible option for international teachers in Greece. Our personal research and contacts with owners of private foreign language centers in Greece have revealed that many of them hire immigrants for teaching non-EU languages like Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, etc. In this case, residence and work permits are essential as well as the recognition of academic qualifications and certification of Greek language competence at B2 level. Employment in private foreign language centers seems to be more flexible in view of the fact that the decision for hiring is based on the needs of the centers and there is no intervention by the government in these decisions. On the other hand, the private foreign language centers conform to Greek legislation, and are not permitted to hire teachers not fulfilling these requirements.

The same opportunity is also provided by non-governmental organisations which teach migrant children and are active in Greece. Here the hiring process is more in-

dependent and flexible. Finally, there is also the choice of freelancer as long as the provisions of Greek labor legislation and bureaucracy are adhered to.

6. Challenges and barriers for the professional integration of international teachers in Greece

This section describes the challenges and the barriers that international teachers encounter in their attempt to achieve professional integration in the Greek context. The challenges described are directly connected with the teaching employment opportunities offered and the Greek legal provisions.

The prerequisite of Greek citizenship in order to participate in the public sector is one serious barrier for integration of international teachers in the Greek education system. Greek naturalization is a condition for being hired in Greek schools. However, it is a lengthy and costly process. According to article 3 of Law 4735/2020, international teachers, like other foreigners wishing to acquire Greek citizenship by naturalization, must speak the Greek language, have sufficient knowledge of Greek history and geography, Greek culture and customs, as well as the functions of Greek institutions. They also must be able to participate actively and effectively in the political life in Greece and to be integrated into the economic and social life of the country. The afore-mentioned conditions are checked via a written examination and interview.

For the verification of the applicant's financial integration, occupation in a stable job in Greece and in general his/her economic activity are taken into account, as well as the continuous fulfillment of tax and insurance obligations towards the state. For the verification of the applicant's social integration, special consideration is given to the formation of kinship with a Greek citizen, acquaintance with Greek customs and traditions, as well as participation in voluntary activities, sports groups, municipal activities and civil society events.

Concerning the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, the application process period can range from 1–2 months minimum to 8–9 months maximum depending on the academic sector, type and level of degree and qualifications, according to the information provided on the Hellenic NARIC website (D. O. A. T. A. P., 2021). In addition, the process of recognition is not provided free of charge, but different fees are applied based on the level of the qualification to be recognized.

The large amount of bureaucracy, the duration of the recognition process and the charge for the services provided are obviously a significant barrier for migrant teachers aiming to accomplish their professional re-integration in the Greek education system. Furthermore, the possibility that they have not brought their qualification documents with them or have lost them on their journey to Greece, as well as the difficulties for the Greek authorities in contacting the awarding institution in cases where they have not been recognized as equivalent to Greek qualifications are factors preventing the academic recognition of foreign qualifications.

Language is also a significant barrier for immigrants, not only for their effective social communication but also for achieving their professional integration in the new education system. If not all, the vast majority of immigrants do not speak the Greek language when they firstly arrive in Greece, so that consequently they will need to spend a long period learning the new language. Taking into consideration that proficiency in the Greek language is a formal qualification for being hired in Greek schools required by Greek legislation, it is obvious that linguistic barriers play an important role in migrant teachers' professional integration. It is not surprising that a review conducted by Bense (2016) revealed that migrant teachers prefer to move to countries with cultural commonalities such as speaking the same language, or whose language they already speak (e.g. USA, United Kingdom, Australia, etc).

Additionally, the financial crisis that Greece has experienced during the last years is still evident (Statista, 2021) and has created a shortage of new positions in the education sector in Greece, which also affects the native graduates of teacher education departments (OECD, 2019).

Last but not least, prejudices, discrimination and racism may also be a significant obstacle to the hiring of migrant teachers. A national research conducted in 2019 by DiaNeosis (2020) revealed negative views on the integration of migrants in the Greek society and economy. For instance, 44.8% of respondents believed that the number of migrants in Greece is extremely high and 40.4% rather high. Also, 40.2% of respondents expressed a negative opinion about migrants' impact on the Greek economy, 16% rather negative, 23.2% neither negative nor positive, 9.9% rather positive, and 8.6% positive. Moreover, 57.6% of the respondents thought that the presence of migrants in Greece is a transformative danger to national identity.

Findings show that contextual factors may hinder the professional re-integration of migrant teachers. These barriers will possibly become more difficult to overcome for asylum seeking migrant teachers with regard to their social and professional integration in the Greek education system in view not only of their difficulties in dealing with a large number of bureaucratic issues but also possible psychological factors affecting their well-being following their departure from their home country.

At this point of the discussion, it is worth mentioning that despite the inflexibility of the Greek education system regarding the professional integration of the international teachers due to the complicated bureaucratic processes described above, the situation is not the same for students coming from other countries to Greece, regardless their status. The Greek education system is open and accessible to all children and adolescents of school age (4–17). However, the large numbers of refugee children arriving in Greece during the last decade have created new needs and challenges in the Greek education system. With the ultimate aim of meeting the educational needs of all students living in Greece, with Law 3879/2010 the Greek government since 2016 has established Educational Priority Zones (ZEP). These Zones are regional directorates of primary and secondary education that can accommodate ZEP reception classes (TY) in order to facilitate the integration of students who do not hold the required level of attainment in the Greek language (European Commission & Eury-

dice, 2022). The teaching staff of Reception School Facilities for Refugee Education (DYEP) is either permanent, temporary or part-time, is appointed by the Ministry of Education, and must fulfil the requirements mentioned above. It is quite interesting, though, that recent research revealed that teachers in DYEP report obstacles in successfully supporting the refugee students because of communication difficulties and a lack of skills in providing students with psychological support (Mogli et al., 2020). Other non-formal education options are offered by NGO volunteers.

We may assume that international teachers would play an important role in facilitating the smooth integration of refugee children in the Greek education system. However, without a doubt, migrant teachers need time to fulfil the appointment requirements introduced by Greek legislation.

7. Conclusion

The participation and the professional integration of international teachers in the European education system is a challenge for themselves as well as for policy makers in both the EU and national states.

This paper attempted to describe the policies designed for the integration of international teachers in the Greek education system, the legislation provisions and the existing employment prospects for international teachers in Greece, focusing also on the challenges and the obstacles they face during this process.

International teachers face various obstacles in their re-integration in the European education systems, as indicated by existing research data. Language and cultural barriers, acquaintance with a country's citizenship requirements, and recognition of academic qualifications are three of the most visible challenges that international teachers face with regard to their professional integration and adjustment in the Greek education system.

There is a limited amount of research focusing on the professional integration of international teachers in new education systems because of difficulties for researchers in identifying international teachers among other professionals or as employees in the European education systems. It is surprising that we did not find publications on the professional integration of international teachers in Greece despite the large number of people with migrant profiles resident in Greece. This can be attributed to a variety of reasons mentioned above that prohibit them from being hired as teaching professionals in the Greek education system.

Thus, for the successful professional integration of international teachers, the creation of a database recording the numbers and teacher specialties would be of great value and relevance as well as supporting services and job counseling adjusted to their needs.

Notwithstanding the European Union and Greek migration policies for social and professional integration of immigrants, this work revealed several barriers to the creation of a welcoming and inclusive scene for the professional re-integration of immigrants in their specialties, mainly due to legislative restrictions and bureaucracy.

Critical reflection on the existing policies should be performed in order to create new horizons for a simpler and smoother professional re-entry into a new education system, by providing support and prospects.

It seems that Greece has a lot of ground to cover towards the achievement of the professional integration of international teachers in the Greek education system. Inclusive action plans should take into consideration the different legislation frames in the countries of the European Union with the ultimate aim to promote social cohesion, equality and equity in all life sectors.

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Interculturalism and education in Iceland

The benefits of teacher diversity in a diverse school

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Abstract: This contribution examines the role of international teachers in Iceland. The focus is on teachers with a teaching qualification obtained outside of Europe, including teachers with a refugee background. The paper discusses the possibilities of expanding this role, facilitating the integration of international teachers, and the limitations and obstacles to this expansion in the context of the Icelandic education system. It also addresses migration issues in general and interculturality within the Icelandic education system.

Keywords: education, immigration, intercultural, international teachers

1. Introduction

1.1 Limitations and constraints

There are limitations and constraints in the provision of any comparative analysis between national policies and demography involving Iceland due to the small population, in that the population of Iceland is like that of a medium-sized town in many European countries (for example Coventry in the UK has a similar population). Actual numbers provide the first limitation; the second is the ability to identify individuals despite employing procedures of anonymity. The use of a patronymic naming system where males take their father's name with the suffix 'son' and females the suffix 'dóttir' means that it is generally, although not precisely, possible to identify non-Icelandic teachers via publicly available school staff lists. An examination of high school staff lists identified fewer than 50 teacher names that were not Icelandic in origin and the majority of these were Scandinavian. Of these names it transpired that the majority were European or English as first language speakers and only circa 10 likely to be immigrants with a possible refugee background, although this included Spanish teachers whose most likely origin would be Spain in Europe and thus not in the target cohort. Despite employing a range of methods of contact, including emailing all headteachers at Icelandic schools, it was not possible to locate a single teacher with the target background who was able to be approached directly. Interviews with two key experts from the Directorate of Education and the Red Cross (who provide most of the refugee

support in Iceland) failed to identify any persons in the target cohort to provide a case study or interview.

A literature review identified Lefever et al. (2014), who present the case studies of 6 Icelandic teachers of whom only one met our target cohort and that individual already spoke Icelandic. Currently and partly due to the constraints outlined above there is scant research on the experience of refugees and non-European immigrants in relation to professional labor markets such as teaching. Overall, there is a degree of negative experience for refugees or immigrants, differentiated by group – for example those practicing Islamic faiths are the recipients of Islamophobia not experienced by other groups. Problems for migrants may not be as acute as in neighboring countries due to very low unemployment and a comprehensive welfare state. However, in some respects all immigrant populations experience prejudice and inequality as evidenced by Pétursdóttir (2013), where immigrants reported a higher level of everyday discrimination than non-immigrants, often on a daily basis. Whilst Iceland often appears to rate highly on popular lists of country attributes such as gender equality, happiness, or low crime rate, the 'per capita' impact of low numbers must be accounted for and it is not a paradise, particularly for immigrants. It is obvious that a white, English speaking, economically active, Icelandic learning immigrant has a very different experience to that of an asylum seeker of color with no English or Icelandic. These matters will impact on the experience and choices made by international teachers coming to Iceland.

1.2 International teachers in Iceland

Iceland has a high number of teachers relative to the population with circa 45 per 1,000 (ILOSTAT, 2019) with one of the highest teachers-to-student ratios and consistently spends one of the highest shares of GDP on education. Statistics Iceland (2019) indicates around half of those with a degree in education work as teachers. Currently, the healthcare, construction, IT, and tourism sectors have a shortage of professionals; however, there are few teacher vacancies registered. On the other hand, whilst there may be few teacher vacancies currently, the teaching population is facing possible problems in coming years with the average age rising annually – in 2019, 34% of teachers were over 50 and the average age was 46, which is higher than average across OECD countries (OECD, 2019). Around half of all graduates of the university teaching programmes are not working as teachers three years after graduation. Thus, it seems logical that attracting people into teaching, especially those with prior experience and qualifications, and more particularly those with diversity of origin and teaching experience, would be an enrichment of the Icelandic education system as their presence would not only reflect the student population better but would more effectively facilitate intercultural education.

Whilst there is evidence of exploitaton of immigrant labor in some sectors, there is less room for such exploitation where English is a first language. For example, in terms of teaching, the universities have graduate and undergraduate programmes taught

in English, specialist texts are predominently in English and in common with other universities as they have a long-standing tradition of visiting teachers, who are often employed on a temporary basis rather than intending to settle. For other migrants with teaching qualifications and professional experience the main barrier is language, as Icelandic is the language for primary and high school, although English, Danish and Spanish feature on many curricula and first language teachers often fill these posts with Icelandic as a second language.

As is detailed later in this report Icelandic education environments are quite informal and less rigid and hierarchical than many others. Given the place occupied by Iceland in comparisons and measurements of education attainment it would appear to be a working strategy and has commonality with other approaches found in Scandinavian education systems. For teachers used to a very formal system with an emphasis on obedience and conformity, the Icelandic system is strikingly less formal and more focused on friendly relationships between students and staff. In many schools using an intercultural approach there is considerable adjustment and according to our observations a likely training need. Additionally our observations indicate that the training need for intercultural methods exists across the board, not just for immigrant teachers. Furthermre, the absence of selection or formal summative assessment until higher levels (with the exception of law and medicine) and the ability to repeat courses or change direction combined with a more egalitarian system (there is almost no private sector) leads to a different, less competitive or status driven environment. This, of course, requires a high level of resources and continues to be the subject of discussion in terms of efficiency at the education level, though there is little doubt that the resource allocations to the benefit of education are likely to be represented as savings elsewhere in terms of social and individual costs.

It could be argued that the lack of diversity in terms of internationality within the teaching population, which fails to reflect the diversity of the learner population, is a barrier to real and meanigful intercultural education.

There have been several studies (Gunnþórsdóttir et al., 2018; Westra & Egilsdóttir, 2019) concerning migrant and refugee children in education and there is evidence emerging that in some respect immigrant populations experience prejudice and inequality – which of course is known anecdotally, through self-report and other avenues. The school dropout rate amongst young immigrants is higher than the EEA average; however, fresh evidence in 2021 suggested that this is improving. Overall, the dropout rate in Iceland is high in comparison with other European countries at around 25% annually against a European average of 10.2% (Eurostat, 2021a). As education at the higher level is free and it is possible to re-enter education at any time, there may be some degree of drop out to employment and then a return to education. The availability of unskilled, yet well-regulated employment undoubtedly impacts on the high rate. The age profile of students at university in Iceland is older than the EU average and Iceland has one of the highest rates of women in the 30 to 39 age group participating in higher education (OECD, 2020). It could be argued that increased numbers of international teachers would provide role models for migrant students

and lead to a greater understanding throughout the teacher population of the issues that impact particularly on learners with a migrant background.

There are benefits to education in general with a diverse teaching population as this provides a greater width of experience and background, brings critical positions to accepted wisdoms and methods and can provide greater knowledge and experience formed through working in alternative educational systems and teaching methodologies. Furthermore, teachers with an international background can provide narratives of lived experience to the classroom and give learners a wider, more global viewpoint. Klein et al. (2019) dispute the idea that migrant learners derive any benefit from the presence of migrant teachers. However, Goldhaber et al. (2019) provide a wide range of evidence across a range of measures showing that all learners benefit from teacher diversity. It is highly likely that those with a refugee background who have managed forced travel will have a high level of intercultural skills such as resilience, initiative, flexibility, and other associated attributes.

2. Historical aspects and current situation of immigration and interculturality in Iceland

The population of Iceland as of 1st January 2021 was 368,792 inhabitants (Statistics Iceland, 2021b). The population is primarily urban with 63% living in the Reykjavik capital region (ibid.). The population centers are primarily coastal with the largest area, the Central Highlands, being largely uninhabitable and lacking infrastructure. The remaining population lives in small villages and a few towns all of which are small by European standards There are significant numbers of remote communities mainly dependent on agriculture and/or fishing and who travel long distances to access education, healthcare, and other services, although there is an established tradition of outreach in terms of essential services. The notion of the peripatetic teacher was the norm in remote communities until the post-war period. The landscape and distances between remote communities might prove challenging for some international teachers, though for others it could offer fascination and interest.

Before 1960 records of immigration trends are sparse and are mostly held as Iceland census records in the national archives; 1961 being the year when Iceland first published migrant figures. Currently, some data sources are not categorised by ethnicity due to the possibility of identifying individuals. Despite the economic crash of 2008 there has been a somewhat rapid rise in living standards, economic successes, development, infrastructure, welfare, and social indicators such as life expectancy (female: 84 years, male: 79.9 years) (Macrotrends LLC, 2021a). The median age is 37.5 and population density is 3 per km. Aside from the 2008 crash, GDP has been steadily increasing (Worldometer, 2021).

This is a stark contrast to the situation pre-1945 when there was almost no welfare state; for most people education was patchy as was healthcare, and for those without land to farm or boats to fish life was little more than working for your bed and board.

Resources and infrastructure were meagre until World War 2 when Iceland became a strategic outpost for both the US and UK military which led to military infrastructure such as roads, airport and employment; and provision of services to the military brought modernization and economic growth to Iceland. The relationship with the military during World War 2 and later with NATO was and is not without tension. In recent years this has been mirrored by the debates over use of natural resources such as geothermal energy for steel production where economic growth must be viewed alongside environmental considerations. The presence of renewable geothermal energy is undoubtedly a boom to the economy although it is, of course, a product of an unpredictable active volcanic island.

Between 1960 and 1990 the number of immigrants was relatively low. In 1990 total immigrant numbers were 9,584, 3.76% of the population (Macrotrends LLC, 2021b), of whom the majority were mostly from Scandinavian countries. For example, in 1986, out of 662 migrants, 183 came from Denmark, 113 from the USA, 79 from the UK, 60 from Sweden, and with 124 from 'other'. Incidents of immigrants arriving in Iceland were fews, and mostly due to international crises.

There were clear links between Iceland and Denmark due to Iceland being under Danish rule until 1918, although it was not until 1944 that full severance was made. There was a small degree of immigration relating to the occupation by UK and US military between 1939 and 1945 although the net impact was of emigration from Iceland to the US. The largest immigrant group currently is that from Poland (Statistics Iceland, 2020). Immigration increased after accession to the EEA in 1994 and again after entry into Schengen. Further there was an economic boom in the early 21st century and a significant increase in tourism, which required labor supplies not possible to meet within the Icelandic labor market. Trading relationships with the Eastern Bloc had been strong during the Cold War period between 1947 and 1991 and Poland had a labor force with the skills required to develop the infrastructure that the economy required – roads, hotels, offices, banks, housing, state institutions etc. Thus, it is unsurprising that the largest minority group in Iceland is of Polish heritage and comprises around one third of all migrants. Due to a continuing labor shortage immigration is projected to increase and some estimates indicate that this could mean circa 15 percent of the total population by 2030. There has been a degree of return to country of origin by European migrants during the period of global pandemic with 1985 Polish and 618 Lithuanian persons returning to their home country (Statistics Iceland, 2021a).

Polish migrants are to be found within the education system, however, in support roles rather than teaching. This is true for almost all migrant groups except for Scandinavians and Americans. There is a clear connection between the labor market and the migration process and in 1999 the Central Bank of Iceland expressed the view that shocks to the Icelandic economy were asymmetric compared to those in other countries, wages being stable, and migration limited. After the recession of 2008/9 Iceland embarked on a programme of robust economic growth, which led to labor shortages that were then supplemented by immigration. In 2005 6% of labor was immigrant

based, which by 2018 had increased to 16% (Ólafsdóttir, 2020). Most growth was in labor intensive sectors such as construction, tourism, and hospitality and the level of growth would not have been possible without migrant labor.

In addition to planned personal migration, the international community in Iceland is increasingly made up of refugees. Prior to 1956 there is sparse data on refugees in Iceland. The first significant network of support for immigrants appeared in 2001, when Reykjavik municipalities later joined the Icelandic Red Cross to open an Immigrant Resource Center, offering interpreters and assistance (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, 2021).

Until 1996 most quota refugees accepted were from former Soviet bloc countries and Vietnamese (in response to the so-called Boat People crisis). Since 2007 it has been policy to accept 25 to 30 quota refugees in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Refugee Council, the Icelandic Red Cross, and the Municipalities receiving the refugees. In certain years there have been exceptions, notably 77 refugees from Kosovo in 1999. In addition to quota refugees there has been an intended increase in non-quota refugees. In 2020/21 the Committee on Refugee Affairs announced an agreement to take 120 refugees from Afghanistan (Fontaine, 2021) and in 2021 September 39 Syrian refugees arrived with a planned further 39 to follow shortly afterwards. These numbers are in addition to quotas (Macrotrends LLC, 2021b).

In addition to quota and non-quota refugees there are asylum seekers whose refugee status may or may be recognized. In 2020 there were 620 applications received and to date 127 have been accepted and 151 rejected, although as acceptances may be counted in years other than the application year this is only partial information. Iceland has a record of one of the highest acceptance rates for applicants in Europe (Eurostat, 2019). This may be due to political will from largely Social Democratic governments and an ongoing and frequent need to expand the working population.

Due to language and location the numbers of asylum seekers are low compared to other parts of Europe. However, numbers are increasing as up to 2014 there had been fewer than 200 per year, rising from 35 in 2000 to the latest figure of 654 for 2020 (Directorate of Immigration, 2021). The Social Science Research Institute of Iceland (Alþjóðamálastofnun Háskóla Íslands, n. d.) carried out a survey among refugees who had the right to reside in Iceland between 2004 to 2015. The target population was 255, all aged 18 and over. The findings are of limited validity. Despite varied methods used of data collection the survey only received a 15% response rate. This could indicate refugees' wariness of responding, for fear that any answers could be used against them in relation to their status or the possibility of information being passed on to other parties.

Prompted by the survey, the Institute recommended that the Directorate of Labor should be more involved in the integration process (they cite Sweden and Norway which have work related language courses), and more interpreter services, to ensure good refugee services (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, 2019).

Subsequently it appears there has been more help from the Directorate of Labor with learning Icelandic, and reports of more immigrants learning Icelandic to increase their chances of finding a job. Refugees are entitled to free Icelandic language classes.

Unemployment, financial insecurity, and loneliness are more prevalent among immigrants than native Icelanders. This has been a consistent finding in various studies. The trade union Efling commissioned research that found:

- One in four foreign nationals struggle to make ends meet.
- One in five foreign nationals would not be able to deal with unexpected financial expenditure.
- 39.4% foreign nationals live in their own home, compared to 77.4% native Icelanders.
- 49.3% foreign nationals rent, compared to 11.1% of native Icelanders.
- Unemployment is consistently around twice the rate for immigrants than for native Icelanders.
- In 2019, when the unemployment rate was 3.6% overall, 36% of those registered as unemployed were immigrants. More research showed that 41% of all unemployed people in Iceland belong to a foreign national group, despite only making up 14% of population.
- Whilst numbers of migrants and refugees with teaching qualifications cannot be identified and are, given the total of all migrants and refugees, small to non-existent, the general barriers, conditions and issues can be extrapolated to be issues impacting on them, where they exist.

This increased immigration has seen a commensurate rise in the number of migrant children within Icelandic schools and, other than in support roles, this is not reflected in the diversity among teachers. (Pálsdóttir et al., 2021).

3. The politics of integration and asylum in Iceland: opportunities for immigrants to work within their professions and jobs

Workers in Iceland have a high level of representation in terms of trade unions and structures exist for this representation across most sectors. The majority of Icelandic workers belong to a trade union and salaries, rights etc. are published and enforced to a high degree. High membership, clear benefits, recognised structures and a history of successes has led to highly effective trade union representation in comparison with other European countries. In 2004 the Icelandic government enacted legislation to ensure that migrant workers had the same rights as native workers. There is a tendency for stated rights in terms of employment to suffer from a gap between intention and representation and reality. Insecure workers are less likely than those who feel secure enough to complain when necessary. Recourse to public funds such as employment benefits can negatively impact on citizenship claims. There is evidence that some employers take advantage of migrant labor (Pálsdóttir et al., 2021).

A survey of immigrant workers in 2019 by four major unions showed half of all claims of abuse originate from hotel/restaurant/tourism sectors. This is very likely an underestimate, as most of the respondents to the union survey were members of a union and educated, some to university level. All spoke English (Ólafsdóttir, 2020). Common complaints were: no sick pay, no holiday, no payslip, no job contract, wage related irregularities (i.e. overtime pay disputes).

As the survey goes onto say, the most precarious cases are out of sight/underreported. Reasons for this include: no work permit, no kennitala (national ID number), no bank account, language difficulties, lack of knowlege of nominal rights; in addition to an imbalance of power between employer and employee. Housing is often a part of the wage packet, leaving migrant workers dependent on their employer for food and lodging. These factors can be used as a tool for extortion, resulting in a fear of possible employer retaliation if the employee pursues their rights (ibid.).

Our observations and checks of published learning programmes show that for all levels of education, apart from some graduate and post-graduate courses, the primary language of teaching is Icelandic. Whilst limited Icelandic may be the exception for some language teaching posts (English, Spanish, Danish, German), unless there is a specific difficulty in filling posts, discussions with relevant educators reveal they are unlikely to be open to those without a good level of Icelandic.

Iceland is increasingly easy to navigate if you are an English speaker, with many banks and government services offering both English and Polish language communications. The language requirement for citizenship is basic conversational Icelandic and generally is represented by around 240 learning hours (Collective Bargaining, 2019).

One of the areas consistently identified in studies of migrant and refugee satisfaction with life in Iceland is language teaching and learning. Hoffmann et al. (2020) surveyed around 5% of total immigrants to Iceland and found that after 3 years of residence 1/5th had not attended any language classes. Around half considered their language level to be poor and only a quarter expressed satisfaction with the teaching quality. This was said to be related to training deficits with the teachers who were less prepared for speakers of other languages; however, in 2016 a Master's Programme at the University of Reykjavik was instituted and this should bring improvements. There are significant costs associated with achieving a level of language learning above that of conversational or Level 2 and that fluency, especially of the levels required to enter professions.

Whilst there is support for Icelandic language learning from the state for refugees and for workers in some areas, the cost of language courses may be a barrier, as may be location and work patterns. There are a number of options ranging from university-based intensive courses, school-based classes and private or state-subsidized or NGO options, in addition to online options. Living with Icelandic speakers, working in an Icelandic environment, freedom to travel to classes and affordability are issues for some migrants and refugees who are likely to be in low paid occupations with limited networks.

For international teachers, however, a high level of language proficiency is required. Icelandic is a category 4 language as determined by the US Foreign Service, on average taking a native English speaker 1100 hours to reach fluency. It belongs to a subgroup of North Germanic languages, which include Norwegian and Faroese. Many refugees in Iceland, however, come from areas where primary language systems belong to Aramic-Syriac language family, thus creating an even greater language barrier. For teachers, the linguistic demands of discourse related to specialist subject areas and higher level skills such as analysis there is a need for language skills above those of simple fluency. In Lefever's study a migrant who was a prospective teacher explains that she spent around 18 hours a day learning Icelandic (Lefever et al., 2014). For those in low wage work this level of study is not possible.

The Department of Education, Science and Culture together with the University of Iceland Research Liaison Unit provide the possibility to 'match' non-Icelandic qualifications with those of Icelandic professions with the aim of ensuring that the skills, competencies, and qualifications of migrants are visible and usable in Iceland. The National Academic Recognition Information Center system is used; in some cases special consideration has to be given when documentation needs to be translated into English/Icelandic or validated by the awarding institution. For example, a refugee fleeing persecution may not wish their current location to be revealed to their old workplace or place of study and may not be able to access documents. This process was instituted in part to resolve some of the barriers to professional transfer into the Icelandic labor market. These considerations and matching processes apply to both professional occupations and for entry into higher education (Government of Iceland, 2015).

4. The Icelandic education system

The system of education in Iceland is divided into four levels: pre-primary or kindergarten, compulsory primary, upper secondary and higher. Education is compulsory for children aged 6–16. Most institutions are funded by the state often via the local authority. Private education is extremely rare and the majority of disabled (physically or intellectually) are in mainstream education as inclusion is the norm. Iceland spends a larger proportion of GDP on education than most European countries at around 17% and is frequently in the top 5 of global GDP share spent on education. There is a 99% literacy rate (Macrotrends LLC, 2022).

The initial institution of education in Iceland consists of informal, play-based kindergarten or pre-primary schools which around half of all one-year-old children and 95% of all children between the ages of 2 to 5 years attend. There is a large discrepancy in attendance between regions with only 11% of one-year-olds attending in the Southwest due to distances and the sparse population. This represents almost 19,000 children in total. Parents pay around 30% of the cost at pre-primary level and children generally attend for a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 9 hours per day. Children of

single parents and students are given priority, as are disabled children (Government of Iceland, 2021).

Recent changes in the landscape of pre-primary education have been the planned, campaign-led, increase in male staffing, which has risen by 16.4% (although this translate to only 6.6% of staff in childcare professions).

The second major change has been the increase in children with a non-Icelandic mother tongue, consisting of 13.7% of pre-primary children. Polish was the most common language followed by Spanish, Lithuanian and English. Those speaking other languages were fewer than 100 children (Statista, 2020).

There is no demand during this stage of education to perform cognitive tasks of reading, writing or mathematics unless the child shows an interest and play, especially outdoors, and creative play is the focus alongside relationships and physical development. There are no compulsory attainment tests or measurements. The second level is compulsory and for ages 6 to 16. At this level there is often no transfer between schools just between sections of a building in the same location, for example. Students often remain in the same school for the whole ten-year period. In some rural areas schools may have fewer than 10 pupils and around 50% of schools have fewer than 100. All are mixed gender. The school year lasts 9 months. The National Curriculum which is set by government and implemented via local authorities has provisions for learning Icelandic for those who do not have it as a first language. The inclusion of disabled pupils and the absence of private education means that schools are diverse in terms of socio-economic and health status. There is an emphasis on diversity of teaching methods, equality, and the environmental aspects of education: "A fundamental principle of the [Icelandic] education system is that everyone should have equal opportunity to acquire education, irrespective of sex, economic status, geographic location, religion, and cultural or social background" (UNESCO, 2012). It is notable that the term for classmate is class brother or -sister.

Compulsory education covers 10 years and over that time subjects are generally: Icelandic, mathematics, arts and crafts, modern languages, social and religious studies, physical education, natural sciences, ICT, home economics and life skills. There are some schools with a specific emphasis on specialist areas such as music.

Assessment is formative although it differs between schools and is generally based on a feedback-improve-feedback system whereby achievements in work units are collected and graduation to the upper secondary level is dependent on the accumulation of specific sets of units which also lead to certification of the completion of primary/lower secondary education. This is required to enter upper secondary school. This level is not compulsory, however it is a right for those who have completed compulsory education or its equivalent. Completion of the four-year course is evaluated generally by formative assessment leading to completion of a specific number of units or modules. There may be examinations, but these are teacher-set and regulated, not standardized, summative or national examinations. It is possible to combine vocational and academic programmes and students may add academic modules should they wish to enroll in specific university courses. In addition to general education, both academic

and vocational, there are some specialist schools for arts, music, agriculture, and technical education. The completion rate for entrants into upper secondary was 61% for non-immigrant students, dropping to 57% for immigrants moving to Iceland before the age of 7; 57% for second generation immigrants and of those moving to Iceland after the age of 7 only 32% graduated from upper secondary school (Eurostat, 2021b). This has been identified as a problem and improvements have been made since 2015 (Statistics Iceland, 2021a).

The first university in Iceland was founded in 1911. There are 7 higher education institutions in Iceland. The two Reykjavik Universities provide around 80% of all higher education. Smaller universities include Akureyri in the north, Bifrost, largely an online institution, the university at Hvanneyri in western Iceland and Hólar University college in northern Iceland, which both offer BA and MA degrees in agriculture, tourism, and resource management. Statistics Iceland (2019) found that women made up 63% of all first-degree students. They outnumbered men in all fields of study except the sciences, mathematics, computing, engineering, manufacturing, and construction. 86% of students in health and welfare were women, with 37.5% in engineering, manufacturing, and construction. This gendered difference indicates that despite being rated highly in gender equality tables Iceland still has work to do. Graduate salaries do not compare well with salaries possible within some male dominated areas of the fishing industry and this has been proposed from various sources as a primary reason for male under-representation in higher education.

Around 10% of BA students are international, mainly from Europe. For degrees in more specialized areas such as architecture or simply to experience other environments around 20% of Icelandic students study outside of Iceland, frequently in Canada and Denmark, and study loans are available for this. However, universities in Iceland are tuition cost free and attract increasing numbers of overseas students yearly. One in every three doctoral students have been international and since 2011 the numbers of doctoral students from outside Iceland have doubled.

Since 2008, there has been an emphasis on egalitarian social reform, a key to which has been to improve the teaching profession in terms of training – initial and ongoing, practice, and conditions. Since then, a 5-year BA-MA is required to become a teacher. The School of Education at the University of Iceland is the main provider of teacher education and provides teacher education at pre-primary, primary, upper secondary levels within three faculties: Sport, Leisure and Social Education, Teacher Education and Education Studies. In common with other university programmes, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and qualification matching are in used and 'top up' credits are also possible. Qualifications are commensurate with specific teacher roles and education levels. There are a variety of routes open to teachers. For early years, where non-specialization and single teacher classes are the norm, the BA in Teacher Education and for pre-primary the Pre-Primary Teacher Education BA is required. For those holding a first degree in a curriculum subject a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education or a Master of Education are available. Other specializations include BAs in Education and Science, Leisure Studies, Social Education and MAs in Sport

and Health Science, Leisure Studies and Special Education. International Studies in Education is also available at both the MA and BA level and there is a further MA in Education with an emphasis on the Philosophy of Education (University of Iceland, 2020). In 2012 an Academic Council on teacher professional development was established and it undertakes projects in relation to lifelong learning and continuing professional development (CPD) for pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. The Teachers Union also has funds to support CPD.

There have been several initiatives in recent areas to improve education, underpinned by a stated desire to ensure a system that has a focus on equity. These include a more equal gender balance and some improvements have been made in pre-primary levels with an increase in male teachers. There has been an enrichment of the teacher training opportunities and efforts made to improve aspects such as qualification matching, credit conversion, diversity of entry points and CPD in intercultural education provision. There are, of course, a range of definitions of intercultural education which in turn inform practice – for example the University of Iceland offers Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on intercultural competencies. Intercultural Iceland has offered training courses in circa 30 schools. These considerations acknowledge the increasing diversity of students. It has not been possible to identify any policy other than generic support to locate immigrant graduates and ensure awareness of teaching as a career through additional training. Teachers are required to have a teaching degree or post-graduate qualification in teaching. In 2017 a survey found that 8.6% of the 5,140 teaching staff were not teacher qualified: 'without license'. The distribution of unqualified teachers was uneven; for example in Reykjavik 5.8% had no license but in the Westfjords (a more remote area with great distances between small population centers) this rose to 27% (Statistics Iceland, 2018).

5. Internationality and interculturality among pupils and in pupils' education

There are many definitions of intercultural education/interculturalism/intercultural understanding. Sadly, there are still those that purport to offer training or advice in this area and who do little more than perpetuate the stereotypes which others feel interculturalism attempts to move away from and highlight the problematic nature. For example, there are still opportunities to learn about 'how to greet a Chinese person, what a French person eats for breakfast, how not to offend an Australian' etc.

As has previously been mentioned, there are opportunities for CPD for teachers in the form of training in school, via Erasmus etc., online with MOOCs or other providers and in Iceland interculturalism does feature within teacher training programmes. However, this is a relatively new development and, as has been previously noted, the bulk of teachers were trained some decades ago.

Whilst it is true to say that the term 'intercultural' does feature frequently in government plans and reforms in relation to integration and matters of equality it is hard

to drill down and know exactly what it is that is meant in terms of detail. It could be argued that it is the detail that matters. As outlined in Pétursdóttir (2013, 2018), teacher training in Iceland has featured intercultural education for some since 2005. This definition is based on the acceptance that 'no one can do everything, everyone can do something' and that interculturalism is not a special hour, or a class, or a festival but an underpinning principle running throughout the institution and defining relationships between all the individuals within it; that diversity is a strength not a problem to be solved; that culture is not dictated by nationality and that all classrooms are intercultural irrespective of location and demography. Nationality is only one facet of diversity (there is likely to be as much diversity within national groups as there is between them when culture is defined broadly and critically); religion, health, housing, socio-economic status, gender etc. are all aspects of the diversity of individuals to be found in the classroom. Further to this is the idea that the concept should permeate teaching methods, approaches and materials and that intercultural skills of creativity, critical thinking, resilience, independent working, empathy and so on are not only prerequisites for living in a diverse world but are essential for cooperation between students, to help them understand and appreciate the diversity between them. Intercultural teaching and learning within this concept of the term not only ensures that stereotypes are avoided, and diversity is seen as an advantage, but additionally class peers become activated to assist and support with issues of language and in doing so learn intercultural skills themselves. Furthermore, the atmosphere of the class moves away from competition to cooperation and a much wider range of skills become important within the learning environment and these skills are the skills that are required for working and living in diverse societies.

Gay (2000) asserts that the term intercultural competence is associated with culturally responsive education where intercultural competencies are understood as a combination of attitudes, skills and knowledge applied via action that requires mindfulness and fairness toward others. Giroux (2009) stresses the importance of democratic and ethically based educational practices that facilitate learning and entail critical thinking around cultural discourses, for example, the use of 'them, us, others' which can be used to manipulate and present hierarchies of knowledge and experience.

The notion that intercultural approaches are reserved for minority students and special classes is dismissed by Kohli (2009; as cited in Lefever et al., 2014) and Santoro (2013; as cited in Hahl & Paavola, 2015) and Pétursdóttir (2018). Thus, it is argued that there should be teachers in all schools who are trained in intercultural education and have intercultural competences, not only to teach students with migrant backgrounds, but to teach all students. Additionally, teachers should reflect the diversity of the learners. Currently this is not the case.

6. International teachers in Iceland – conclusion

It is not possible from available data to either support or refute the statement that there is a lack of international teachers in Iceland or to give empirical data to show to what extent the teaching population attains the same levels of diversity as the learner population. We can establish that the following is likely:

- The teacher population is less diverse than the student population although there is potential for change amongst second generation immigrants.
- It is likely, that internationally qualified teachers work outside of the education sector.
- It is likely, that internationally qualified teachers do not yet have the language proficiency required to work as a teacher.
- It is likely, that internationally qualified teachers work in the education sector in support roles.
- There is a need to recruit international teachers to achieve similar diversity as found in learner populations and to contribute to intercultural dimensions within the classroom.
- It is likely, that the age profile of qualified Icelandic teachers will prove problematic for teaching populations in future years.
- The Icelandic Government, Trade Unions and associated others are currently working toward improving access to language education and increasing the scope of levels of provision and alternative methods of delivery and making them more flexible and affordable.

In terms of being a destination for teaching careers there are a range of push and pull factors. The small society factor could be seen as both. The language aspect could be seen as a problematic issue due to its limited usage and its status as not being a second language, like French, German or Spanish for learners in other educational systems. This factor limits those who can enter the Icelandic system and perhaps proves a brake on the mobility factor for international teachers. The time spent on learning a language that has such limited portability is undoubtedly a block on those wishing an international teaching career. The cost of living in Iceland could also be an impediment for international teachers. There may also be a reluctance to live with unpredictable weather and the conditions and events associated with a volcanic island, although, of course, for some this could be a pull factor.

Some of the key elements of intercultural education are present in the Icelandic system with its lack of exams and selection, the relative importance of social subjects, the emphasis on creativity and play through the early years and beyond, and accessibility across ages and stages. There are a range of CPD opportunities for teachers to examine and apply intercultural techniques and receive state support for movement toward an increasingly egalitarian system and intercultural education as an integral element of teacher education. There are opportunities present in this small society to monitor policy closely and institute changes, for example, the provision of fast

track and advanced language learning opportunities for immigrants with professional qualifications, 'add on' teaching qualifications where there are levelling deficits and a proactive approach to future teacher number deficits.

If the idea of intercultural education and the benefits of diversity are accepted, then it follows that there is a need to have an international teacher population that reflects the diversity of the learner population and the population in general.

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International teachers in Poland

Qualification recognition and employment requirements

Maria Aleksandrovich & Grzegorz Piekarski

Abstract: The history of Poland after the Second World War had made the country relatively homogeneous, both culturally and ethnically. Nowadays, there has been a significant increase in the number of migrants arriving in Poland. For example, in 2017, over 200,000 migrants applied for residence permits in Poland, 22% more than in the previous year. And in 2020, over 457,000 migrants were issued residence permits in Poland, an increase of eight percent compared to the previous year (Sas, 2022b). All children staying in Poland have a constitutional right to education. That is why nowadays in Polish schools and universities there are more and more pupils, students and teachers with a migration background. This diversity is a new challenge for the Polish education system. While there is a lot of research concerning the situation of migrant children in Polish schools, there is little information available about international teachers in Poland. Therefore, it is crucial to take a deeper look at this.

The aim of this article is to present the situation of teachers with a migration background and international teachers in Poland in terms of the recognition of qualifications and employment requirements.

Keywords: diversity, migration background, international teachers, Polish education system

1. Introduction

Poland is a country with one of the lowest percentages of people of non-native origin in Europe. The changes to the Polish borders after WWII and the resettlement of German, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian and Polish populations have made Poland a relatively homogeneous country, both culturally and ethnically (Koss-Goryszewska & Pawlak, 2018).

Nevertheless, the analysis of migration trends in Poland has shown dynamic change in recent years (Domalewska & Żakowska, 2019). That is why a lot of attention has been directed to the study of diversity in educational contexts, but these studies have primarily focused on diversity among school children and students. Therefore, it is a challenge to start a new study, a new discussion on diversity in Polish educational contexts from the perspective of international teachers.

In this article, we will review briefly the migration processes in Poland, report on the Polish education system and analyse the challenges that international teachers have to overcome in Poland on the path to recognition of their qualifications, as well as the employment requirements they have to fulfil.

2. Migration to Poland

In Polish history, there have been several large migration processes – some of them were forced for political reasons, others were due to economic factors, the latest being the massive emigration of Poles to Great Britain after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. The change in the economic and political situation and the general increase in prosperity in Poland in the last decade has also made Poland an attractive country for immigrants, especially those from outside the European Union (Koss-Goryszewska & Pawlak, 2018).

Since Poland joined the European Union in 2004, it has been experiencing a persistent transformation from a country of emigrants (years 1944–1989) to a destination country for a growing number of immigrants (Domalewska & Żakowska, 2019) (see Figure 1).

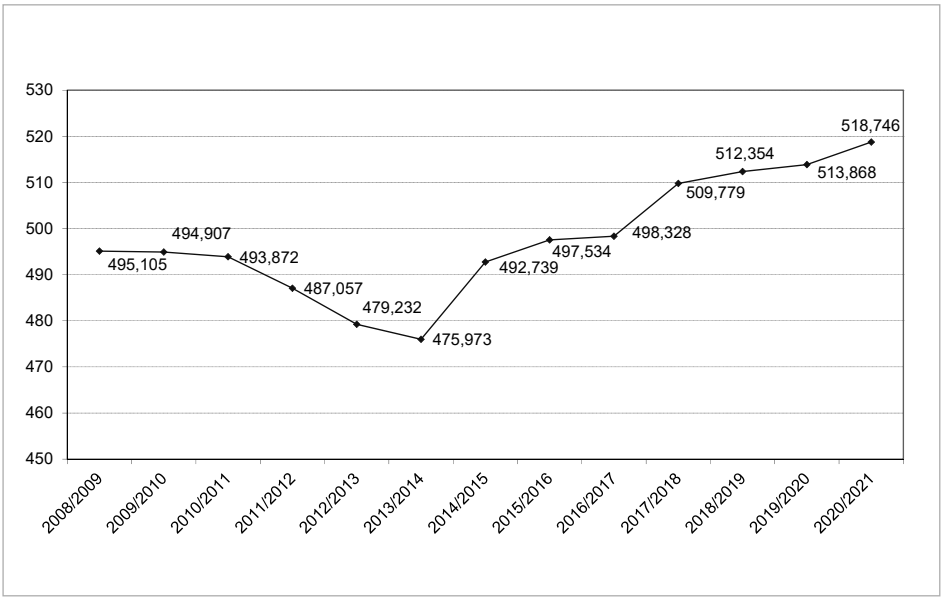

Fig. 1: Immigration to Poland from 2000 to 2020 (Sas, 2022a)

The number of migrants living in Poland reached an all-time high of 423,000 at the beginning of 2020, according to figures released by the Polish Office for Foreigners (UdSC). In 2020, over 457,000 migrants had valid residence permits in Poland, which is an increase of eight percent compared to the previous year. In 2022, a clear majority with more than 381,000 were people originating from Ukraine (see Figure 2).

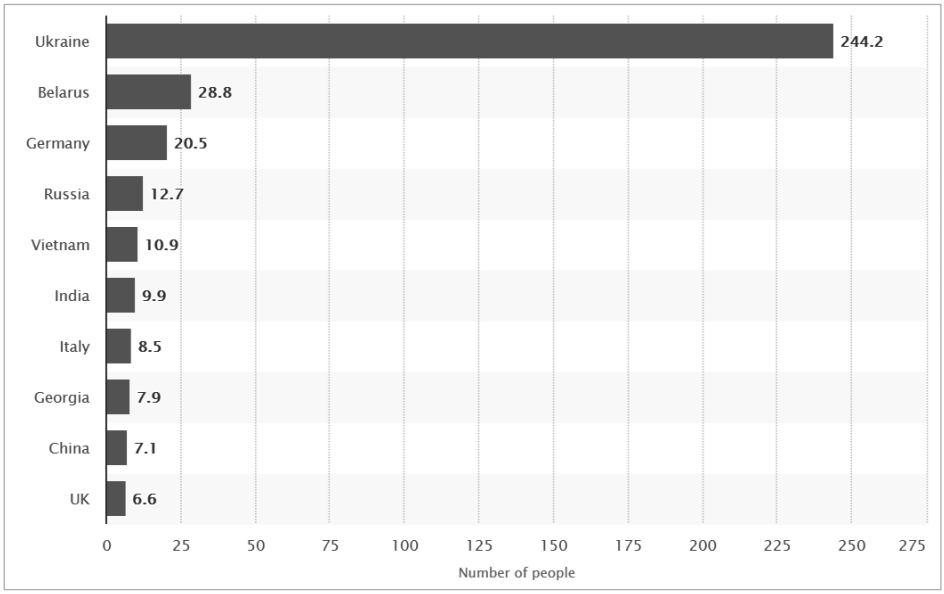

Fig. 2: Number of foreigners holding valid residence permits in Poland in 2021 and 2022 by nationality (in 1,000s) (Sas, 2022b)

Polish migration policies have also been influenced by events such as the aggravated crisis of the European migration policy, beginning in 2015, the huge migration after mass political protests in Belarus in 2020, the Polish-Belarusian border crisis in 2021, as well as the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

When it comes to the European refugee policy crisis, Poland's ruling party "Law and Justice" (PiS) has distinguished itself with significant anti-refugee rhetoric (Eyre & Goillandeau, 2019). But a few days after mass protests started all over Belarus in August 2020, the Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki introduced a plan named "Solidarity With Belarus", which included commitments to provide help to Belarusian victims of repression, a simplification of entry procedures for people coming to Poland and also a simplified access to the labour market, as well as scholarships granted to expelled students, support for Belarusian independent media and Polish NGO's supporting Belarusian civil society (Homel, 2020). Later in March 2022, the Polish parliament passed an act on assistance for Ukrainian nationals in connection with Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine. It covers Ukrainians who left Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression, came directly to Poland and then declared their intention to stay. They now have the right to legally stay in Poland for 18 months, to obtain the right of residence, to gain many social benefits such as full access to the Polish labour market (no work permit is required) and the Polish health care system. Children from Ukraine have the same rights to attend school as Polish nationals, and university students from Ukraine similarly to attend institutions of higher education. The new law also applies to spouses of Ukrainian nationals not holding Ukrainian citizenship who came to Poland directly from Ukraine as a result of the war (Lesinka, 2022).

The high number of Ukrainian immigrants has made Poland the largest provider of first residence permits in the European Union. Other sizable minorities in Poland include citizens from Belarus (28,800), Germany (20,500), Russia (12,700), Vietnam (10,900), India (9,900), Italy (8,500), Georgia (7,900), China (7,100) and Great Britain (6,600).

Poland has become a preferred destination for a growing number of immigrants because it has had steady economic growth and an inclusion policy with respect to migrants. However, the legal status of immigrants in Poland depends on their country of origin. If they come from a European Union member state, the legalisation of their stay, access to the labour market, education, health care system, social benefits and various integration programmes are quite straightforward. If immigrants come from a non-EU member country, their entry and stay is strictly regulated, and frequently requires a visa (Domalewska & Żakowska, 2019). There are three categories of immigrants: 1) people holding the status of long-term residents of the EU; 2) immigrants granted refugee status or subsidiary protection; 3) other immigrants whose legal status is not regulated by the inclusion policy (Godlewska, 2013).

After obtaining refugee status, migrants have the right to work without special approval. After five years, they can apply for a permanent residence permit, and after a further three years, if they meet the requirements, they can be granted Polish citizenship. Foreigners may acquire Polish citizenship in two ways: 1) granted administratively (requirements: Poland as place of residence, integration into local society, good command of Polish, financial independence, living in accordance with the law); 2) granted by the President of the Republic of Poland who is not bound by any conditions (Domalewska & Żakowska, 2019).

Poland's migrant population aged 25–54 born in another EU member state had the highest share of completed tertiary education (67.9%), followed by Estonia (65.0%) and Sweden (62.4%) (Eurostat, 2021).

Among the reasons for immigration to Poland the most frequent are employment and study. In 2017, more than 680,000 migrants received legal residency in Poland. Almost 90% of all visas are work visas; student and other visas constitute the remaining 10%. Many immigrants do unskilled work as replacements for Polish nationals, who either refuse to do lower-paid jobs, or have migrated elsewhere to Europe, chasing higher salaries. The number of international students is growing every year (Eyre & Goillandeau, 2019).

3. Immigrant children in the Polish education system

Everybody in Poland has a right to education and free access to education in public schools and higher education institutions, which is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. In Poland, education is compulsory until the age of 18 (Kolanowska, 2021, p. 16). Public authorities ensure equal access to education and provide financial and organisational support to students. Poland has adopted the position of the European Union in connection with the education of migrants. Such an

approach creates equal educational opportunities for non-EU citizens regardless of their country of origin and status or other circumstances. Based on this approach, younger children are entitled to education, and so are children between 7 and 16 years of age. They may enrol in primary or secondary schools under the same conditions as Polish citizens. Furthermore, all children from every immigrant family who attend public schools in Poland are eligible for special programmes and assistance provided by the school (Domalewska, 2018). It is important to enrol immigrants as fast as possible into the educational system because each immigrant generation affects the educational attainment of the next generation, although this influence is inconsistent across generations and ethnicities (Rong & Grant, 1992).

One of the most important goals of immigrant education is acquisition of the Polish language. The Polish language is not easy to learn, while the degree of mastery of the language determines both academic success and the economic integration of immigrants. Independent of the locality, the inability to communicate in the local language limits the possibility of employment and affects earnings (DebBurman, 2005).

That is why, in order to help immigrant children to achieve school success, schools can organise preparatory language classes, in which the teaching of Polish and remedial teaching are combined. Additionally, it is important to take into account that some migrants have problems with their integration because they escaped from a war-torn country and have experienced severe trauma; they also have to overcome the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Żakowska, 2018).

Polish educational policy aims to create a cooperative, friendly and safe study environment. The process of education is oriented towards universal values, such as brotherhood and respect for other cultures (Domalewska & Żakowska, 2019; Gawlik-Kobylińska et al., 2016; Urych, 2013). Such an approach makes schools open for well-educated, competent and open-minded international teachers. In Poland the number of teachers has been increasing since 2013/2014 (see Figure 3), and the number of international teachers is also growing every year. In 2020 616 international teachers received work permits in Poland. Around 300 of them also gained recognition of their qualifications (see Figure 4) while 369 of them are foreign languages teachers. In 2020 most international teachers came to Poland from Ukraine (173), the United States (125), South Africa (77), Belarus (22) and Canada (22).

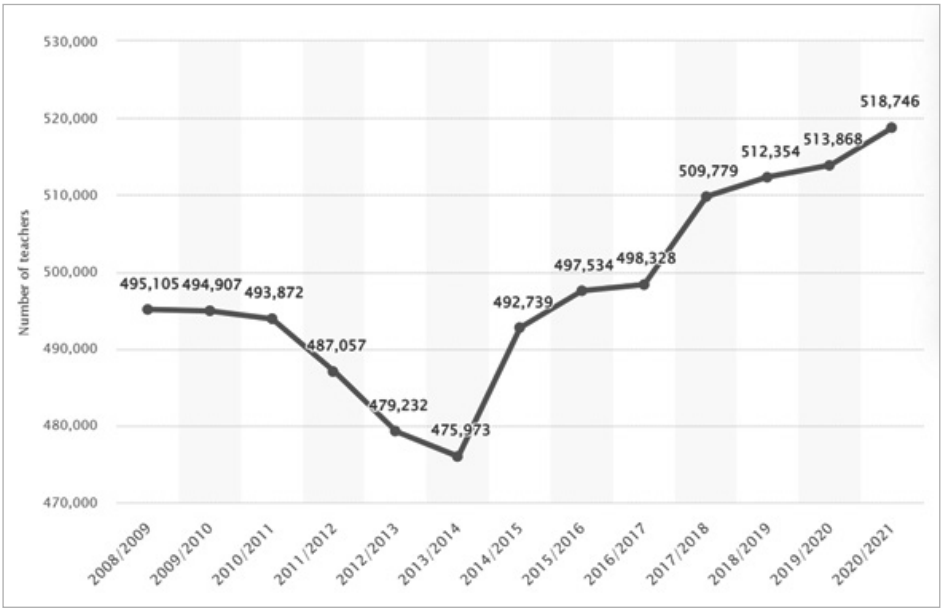

Fig. 3: Number of teachers in Poland from 2008 to 2021 (Sas, 2021)

Furthermore, the number of international academic staff in Polish universities is growing as well. A total of 93,200 academic teachers were employed in the universities (44,300 women), including more than 2,100 international academic staff. Almost 30% of foreign academic staff came from Ukraine, the rest came from the following countries: Germany (6%), Italy (5%), Slovakia (4%), Belarus, (4%), Great Britain (4%), Russia (4%), the Czech Republic (3%), Spain (3%) and India (3%) (Adamska et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, one of the biggest problems in Polish education is a lack of teachers in schools. Almost half (46%) of head teachers complained about difficulties attracting teachers (Najwyższa izba Kontroli, 2021). The subjects in which teachers were hardest to come by were physics (mentioned by 33% of headmasters) and maths (32%), followed by chemistry (24%), English (20%) and IT (18%) (ibid.). The main reason for the limited interest in teaching is low salaries. Initial stage teachers earn around the minimum wage in Poland (Walczak, 2021). Such a situation in education creates a lot of challenges for teachers of Polish origin, as well as international teachers in Poland.

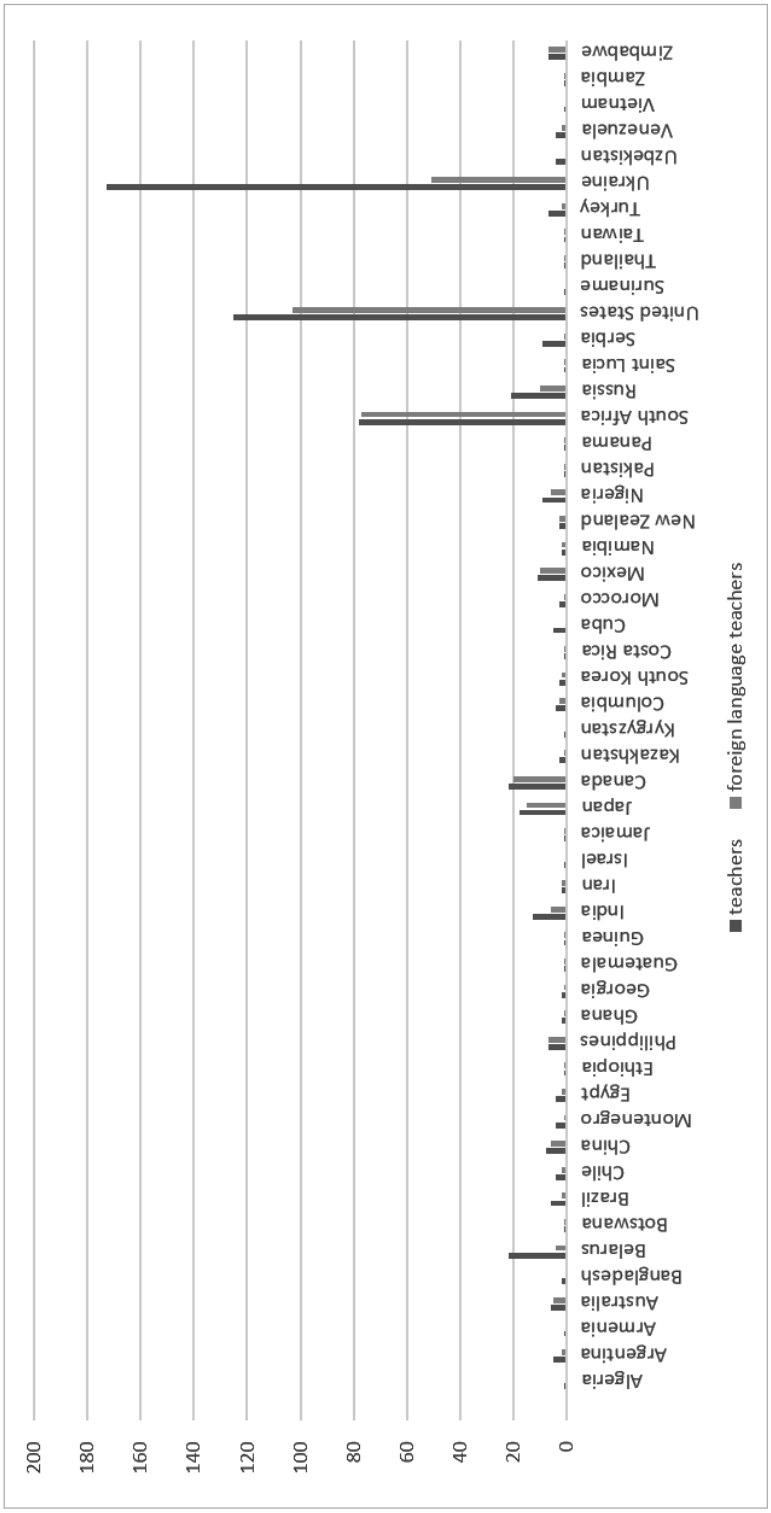

Fig. 4: Number of work permits issued to international teachers in Poland in 2020 (Sas, 2021)

4. Recognition of teaching qualifications and employment requirements

In the case of professional qualifications obtained abroad, their recognition takes place in Poland in accordance with national regulations. The equivalence of a higher education diploma may be confirmed either on the basis of international agreements or (if there are no such agreements) by means of nostrification (the procedure by which foreign qualifications are compared with their Polish equivalent)[1] (Euraxess Poland, 2021). In Poland the national legislation distinguishes between:

- school teachers: teachers working at all educational levels except higher education;

and

- academic teachers: teachers working in higher education.

Different regulations are in place for school teachers and academic teachers (Eurydice, 2022). Below we discuss these different regulations.

The teaching profession in Poland (together with archaeologists, lawyers, doctors, architects, tourist guides) belongs to the so called regulated professions, i. e. those for which you need to have special qualifications or licenses (Euraxess Poland, 2021). This means that a teacher who holds a diploma issued abroad must first receive official recognition of his/her diploma before being able to apply for professional qualifications, in accordance with the regulations governing the teaching profession in Poland. Additionally, if the teaching profession is not a regulated profession in the international teacher's country of origin, he/she must additionally document that they have worked in this profession for one year on a full-time basis, or for an appropriately longer time on a part-time basis in the last 10 years. It is important to underline that the process of recognizing teaching qualifications depends on the country of origin. At the moment the teaching qualifications required are regulated by the Regulations of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019 on the National Standards for Initial Teacher Training Programmes (Dz.U. z 2019 r. poz. 1450 ze zm.)[2].

A teacher who is not a Polish citizen may be employed at school if a need arises. The employment relationship with such a teacher is established on the basis of an employment contract under the terms specified in the Act – the Teachers' Charter (Karta nauczyciela – PL). In the case of international teachers, the provisions of the Teachers' Charter for teachers employed under contract are used, unless there are other provisions regulated by international agreements. Foreign language teachers who work in kindergartens, comprehensive schools, and other educational institutions may be employed without the need to obtain a work permit (Lorens, 2021).

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1 Detailed information on the process of diploma recognition can be obtained from the National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA): https://nawa.gov.pl/en/

2 https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190001450

To be issued with a work permit, an international teacher should be in possession of the same qualifications as a teacher who is a Polish citizen. A teacher position can be offered to a person who:

- graduated from a higher education institution in the field of pedagogy or in the specialization corresponding to the classes conducted, at the level required to hold the relevant position in a given type of school or type of institution and has had pedagogical training or
- graduated from a higher education institution in any major (specialization), at the level required to hold the relevant position in a given type of school or type of institution, and has taken post-graduate studies in the subject field, and has had pedagogical training, or
- has the qualifications required to hold the relevant position of a teacher in a given type of school.

The conditions paced on a head teacher for employing a foreigner as a teacher:

- current needs at the school justify the employment of a foreigner;
- consent to such employment is given by the leading authority;
- the candidate is in possession of the full legal capacity and full public rights of a teacher;
- the teacher can provide proof that he or she is not subject to criminal proceedings resulting from an intentional crime prosecuted by public indictment or disciplinary proceedings;
- the teacher can provide proof that he or she has not been convicted by a final judgement for an intentional crime or an intentional fiscal crime;
- the teacher can provide proof that he or she has not received a disciplinary penalty of qualified dismissal in the period of three years prior to the commencement of the employment relationship or expulsion from the teaching profession.

Additionally, a school headmaster should:

- receive a declaration of full legal capacity and full public rights from the candidate for employment;
- verify that the foreigner does not appear in the Central Register of Sexual Offenders;
- require from the candidate that he or she provide information about absence of criminal records from the National Criminal Register.

School teachers in Poland are required to develop their professional skills in line with the needs of their schools. Participation in continuing education and further professional development is necessary for promotion and salary increases. The assessment of professional achievements, conducted as part of the promotion process, covers the extent to which the teacher concerned has implemented an agreed professional de-

velopment plan (Eurydice, 2022). The same requirements must also be fulfilled by international teachers.

In Poland, international teachers have a clear path to career advancement. There are four professional promotion grades for teachers: 1) trainee teacher, 2) contract teacher, 3) appointed teacher, 4) chartered teacher; in addition there is also the honorary title of school education professor awarded to outstanding chartered teachers. To be promoted, a detailed procedure needs to be followed. This includes a catalogue of (recorded) practical experiences, confirmed professional achievements and strong recommendation given by the head teacher.

Academic teachers from abroad are employed at universities on the same terms as academic teachers from Poland, however, taking into account specific legal provisions relating to the manner of employing migrants from both member states of the European Union and non-EU states. These provisions mainly concern the validity of a residence permit entitling the recipient to stay in the territory of the Republic of Poland or a visa with the right to work (Euraxess Poland, 2021). National legislation does not specify initial training requirements or paths for academic teachers. The employment of prospective academic teachers is based on qualification requirements which are laid down in the legislation for individual positions available to academic staff. Academic teachers are not required to complete pedagogical training or hold a pedagogical/teaching qualification. But academic teachers are required to develop their professional skills on a continuous basis (Eurydice, 2022).

Unfortunately, in practice it may turn out to be impossible for many refugees (e.g. people fleeing the war) to go through the procedure as described for the school system. First of all, it results from the necessity to provide numerous documents, inter alia, confirming the qualifications obtained in the country of origin. However, there is a possibility to waive the qualification requirements. When employing teachers who are not Polish citizens, the competent authority may depart from the qualification requirements specified in the provisions on teacher qualifications – in terms of education and pedagogical preparation – only if such an organisational need arises at a school. Such a solution can be used only when it is necessary. However, such deviation from the qualification requirements is not possible in non-public schools and institutions. These regulations apply only to public schools. When hiring a teacher, the head teacher of the institution is obliged to check his or her competence so that they comply with the detailed qualifications required of teachers to conduct specific classes and teach specific subjects. In all other situations, if the head teacher wishes to employ a foreigner in a public or non-public educational institution, the provisions of the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions (Ustawa, 2022) apply. Pursuant to these, a foreigner is entitled to work in Poland, if they meet at least one of the conditions listed in this provision:

- have the refugee status granted in Poland,
- have subsidiary protection in Poland,
- have a residence permit for humanitarian reasons,

- have a permit for a tolerated stay in Poland,
- take advantage of temporary protection in Poland,
- have a valid certificate issued under the Act on Granting Protection to Foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland.

5. Conclusion

All over the world the important structural features of the teacher labour market, such as recruitment and selection processes and terms of employment, shape the teaching workforce and, as a consequence, have potentially strong implications for the quality and equity of education. That is why, on the one hand, it is crucial to understand the teacher labour market, including the factors shaping the demand for and supply of teachers, such as the responsiveness of teachers to incentives, the trade-offs governments face in defining the number of teachers needed, and the mechanisms that assign teachers to institutions (OECD, 2022). On the other hand, it is important to take into account the increasing pace of migration and changes in the labour market in each particular country. It is crucial to initiate a system change in every country as an occasion for intercultural school development and mutual learning to support the professional re-integration of international teachers, who already work in schools in their new countries.

Polish education authorities are dedicated to hiring highly qualified teachers. To work as a teacher in a public and private school, international teachers must have a master's degree in the field of pedagogy or in the specialization corresponding to the classes conducted and strong references. The expected level of classroom experience is normally at least one year. International teachers have good chances for re-integration in Polish schools, because, generally speaking, Polish educational policies aim to create a cooperative study environment. Despite some political turbulence, the Polish government is trying to simplify and unify the process of recognizing teachers' qualifications, as well as trying to make more transparent the employment requirements for teachers.

At the moment, international teachers wishing to start working in Poland must first find an employer in Poland who is willing to apply to the authorities for a work permit and only after receiving it will a potential employer be able to hire a foreigner. The citizens of the European Union member states are exempt from the obligation to obtain a work permit (Lorens, 2021).

Educational policy not only needs to ensure an adequate supply of teachers that matches demand, but also that the best available candidates are selected for employment and making sure that effective teachers stay in the profession. Terms of employment and working conditions, including opportunities for career advancement, play a key role here (OECD, 2022). In Poland international teachers will find a clear way of career advancement, which consists of 4 levels and has a detailed procedure that needs to be followed. Unfortunately, there is a lack of teachers in Polish schools due to ageing staff and low salaries. The payment for teachers is low in Poland and it is one of the

reasons why at present interest in teaching in Poland is limited. A positive exception to this is an increasing interest in foreign languages in Polish society, which leads to the increasing number of foreign language teachers (see Figure 4). Current statistics show that most of the international teachers in Poland have positions in public and private language schools, thus receiving better payment. The minimum basic month salary for teachers employed in public schools is determined by the ministry of education each year. According to these guidelines, in 2021 a trainee teacher earned PLN 2949 gross, a contract teacher earned PLN 3034 gross, an appointed teacher earned up to PLN 3445 gross. A certified teacher could count on the highest salary of PLN 4046 gross. The private schools offer hourly rates of PLN 45–80 per hour gross and monthly payments between PLN 5000 and 6000 gross; however, these schools do not pay salaries during the holiday months (Sobolak, 2021).

Poland is the eighth largest economy in the European Union and one of the fastest growing economies in Europe. Its 38-million sales market is one of the largest in the European Union (Eures, 2022). Among the European Union member states, Poland's migrant population aged 25–54 born in another EU member state has the highest share of completed tertiary education (67,9%), followed by Estonia (65,0%) and Sweden (62,4%) (Eurostat, 2021). On the one hand, every year more and more migrants, including international teachers, come to Poland (183 persons in 2018 and 616 persons in 2020), where their teaching qualifications are recognized and they find employment in private and public schools. On the other hand, every year more and more pupils with a migration background come to Poland and are enrolled in the Polish education system as well. That is why more and more head teachers see the advantages of employing international teachers in Polish schools.

To address the challenges of the huge migration resulting from the war in Ukraine, as well as global migration tendencies and to increase the quality of the teaching force, the Polish government is now seeking more flexible approaches to the education system. Diverse schools in Poland are now a reality in which we have migrants and refugees on both sides of the educational process. We think that now it is crucially important to support international teachers and international pupils, as well as head teachers and politicians, by conducting research and introducing the findings into everyday school practice.

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International teachers in the Slovenian school setting

Mihaela Brumen, Jerneja Herzog, Matjaž Duh & Tomaž Zupančič

Abstract: This paper explores one of the great challenges of today's multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious global societies, namely the process of professional integration of international teachers with an own migration background into the host country's school system. We provide an overview of the process of their inclusion within the school system in Slovenia. First, the article presents the migration context and some statistical data on the migrant population in Slovenia. Then, it explores the practices employed to integrate migrant children in primary and secondary schools in Slovenia. A special emphasis is placed on integration policy, inclusion and some experiences of international teachers in the Slovenian school setting. Finally, the report introduces a situation analysis of international teachers at Slovenian schools obtained through school principals' perspectives, and a personal perception of an international teacher collected by means of a semi-structured interview.

Keywords: migration, teachers, school principals, integration, Slovenian schools

1. Introduction

The professional re-integration of international teachers who have recently arrived in a new school setting is a challenge for countries all over the globe. Putjata (2017, p. 14) has established that global transnational mobility opposed by a monolingual and monocultural mind-set at schools has led educational researchers across the world to call for a greater multilingual and multicultural orientation. Niyubahwe et al. (2013, p. 280) emphasized that the entry of international teachers into the teaching profession of the host country is beneficial not only for recently immigrated teachers but also for the children of immigrant families. They are perceived as bridge-builders between students, teachers, parents and the school community, and as experts on multilingualism and intercultural communication (Putjata, 2017). Erel (2010) also pointed out that positioning immigrant teachers not as refugees in need of help but rather as experts and equals to their colleagues could at the same time help to enhance economic integration and prevent the chronic underemployment of new migrants.

A review of research on international teachers in other countries (e.g. Israel, Canada, Australia, USA) shows very few studies on their professional re-integration into the host country's school system. Researchers are faced with a restricted data corpus

(Jhagroo, 2016; Niyubahwe et al., 2013; Putjata, 2017; Yoon Young, 2018); their findings, therefore, offer only impressions of the situation rather than generalizations that could be beneficial for their socio-professional integration into the new school environment. Jhagroo (2016) also notes that these findings cannot be generalized because practical experiences are individual and personal in nature, and also depend on the school context of the host country.

2. The Slovenian migration context

To understand the migration context in Slovenia and the process of collecting contacts to international teachers later on, first, some statistical data will be presented. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (November 2021), about 2.1 million people live in Slovenia. Of these, only 8% are people of other nationalities, which (according to European Commission, 2019) places Slovenia among the last quarter of EU countries in terms of the share of immigrants in the population.

The number of immigrants in Slovenia has been growing from year to year (e.g. on January 1st 2020, there were 156,351 foreign citizens in Slovenia, and a year later, on January 1st 2021, 168,651 (SORS, 2021)). Most people immigrate to Slovenia from former Yugoslavia. In 2019, 78.5% of all immigrants who came to Slovenia came from that area. The largest share of immigrants from former Yugoslavia in 2019 consisted of persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina (56.9%), Serbia (16.3%) and Kosovo (14.2%) (SORS, 2020). They emigrated to Slovenia for economic reasons, because of their desire for a better life.

Slovenia is, therefore, faced with the question of how to integrate migrant children into the regular Slovenian school system. The country is involved in European initiatives that address the issue of interculturality and the integration of migrant children in Europe and in Slovenian schools; for example, the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Action project – '*Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe*' (MiCREATE). The overall aim of the project was to promote the inclusion of diverse groups of migrant children by adopting a child-centred approach to their integration at educational and policy levels (Medarić et al., 2021).

A review of the literature shows that in the last two decades several publications have appeared regarding the policy and practice of the integration of migrant children in Slovenian schools (Dežan & Sedmak, 2020; Medarić et al., 2021; Sedmak et al., 2020; Vižintin, 2014). However, only some publications focus on the development of intercultural competencies in teacher training (Bešter & Medvešek, 2016; Peček & Skubic Ermenc, 2016; Rutar et al., 2018). According to our available resources, there exists only one study on the integration of immigrant teachers in the Slovenian school system (Vižintin, 2009).

Based on the above-mentioned studies we first summarize the integration policies and related practices for migrant children in primary and secondary schools in Slovenia. Then, the teacher training with regard to the intercultural awareness and

professional integration of international teachers in the Slovenian school setting will be discussed.

3. Integration of migrant children in Slovenian schools

Medarić et al. (2021, p. 759) report that the foundations for the integration of migrant children within the school environment in the Republic of Slovenia were laid in 2007 with the Strategy for Integrating Migrant Children, Pupils and Students in the Education System in the Republic of Slovenia by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. This document concerns migrant students in pre-school, primary and secondary education. Based on the Strategy, the National Education Institute of Slovenia (the leading national research, development and advisory institution in the field of education) prepared the *Guidelines for the education of immigrant children in kindergartens and schools* in 2009 (Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo, 2009). The afore-mentioned document included approaches, work adjustments and ways to engage and involve children and their parents to facilitate their entry into the education system. These guidelines were complemented in 2012 by the Guidelines for the Integration of Immigrant Children in Kindergartens and Schools (Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo, 2012) and the Code of Intercultural Dialogue for Educators of Adults (Vrečer & Borka Kucler, 2010), both of which aim to equip educators with skills for teaching in multicultural classes. The most recent document on the integration of migrant children is a Proposal for a programme of work with immigrant children *in the field of pre-school, primary and secondary education* (Rutar et al., 2018). The proposed programme is based on inclusion as a guiding principle and interculturality as a pedagogical-didactic principle (ibid.). It is also based on system support, mechanisms for recognition of experiences, evaluation of knowledge, individual action plans, first-language learning and intensive initial learning of the Slovenian language. The focus is on education, the training of teachers/educators for the development of intercultural competencies, which are considered crucial for teaching in culturally and linguistically heterogeneous groups and classes (Peček & Skubic Ermenc, 2016; Rutar et al., 2018, p. 7). In accordance with legislation (as stated by Medarić et al., 2021, p. 760), migrant children residing in Slovenia have the right to attend primary school under the same conditions as the children of Slovenian citizens. However, in upper secondary education, only citizens of other EU Member States, without Slovenian citizenship, and refugees can enrol under the same conditions as Slovenian citizens. The right of other third-country nationals is based on the principle of reciprocity (on the basis of international treaties, the Minister of Education determines the number of enrolment places for these students) (ibid.).

However, as reported by several researchers, there is still a significant gap between Slovenian education policy documents, which generally recognize the importance of interculturality in education, and daily practice in schools (Medarić et al., 2021; Sedmak et al., 2020; Sedmak & Medarić, 2017; Vižintin, 2014). These reports point out that the Ministry's guidelines and directives are not binding (Medarić et al., 2021, p. 766).

There is a lack of stable and long-term funding for integrational programmes. Most initiatives are funded through projects (of the Ministry, NGOs and research organisations). As these documents are not binding or financially supported, they are not effectively implemented in everyday school life.

In particular, there is still a lack of a holistic, standardized, systematic and long-term approach to the integration of migrant children in Slovenia. This results in a variety of ways schools approach the process of integration (Medarić et al., 2021). The introduction of systematic monitoring and evaluation of the integration process is necessary. Only such steps could effectively contribute to establishing equal opportunities for all migrant children, reducing social inequalities, and enabling long-term and successful inclusion in the host society (ibid.). Moreover, the implementation of the principles of child-centred intercultural education depends to a large extent on the individual schools and to an even greater extent on individual educational staff, as reported by Medarić et al. (ibid, p. 766). In their daily work, a number of educators from different schools in Slovenia devote a lot of time, knowledge, effort and ingenuity to facilitating the process of integrating migrant children (Sedmak et al., 2020), often developing grass-root initiatives that introduce and enhance the changes determined at the state level.

As the number of migrant children continues to increase in Slovenian schools, it is implicitly assumed that national and international teachers have intercultural competencies and knowledge about the integration of migrant students in the school setting. Namely, the teachers must ensure that students (and eventually adults) from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds do not hold stereotypes or prejudices against other groups. Keenan et al. (2016) suggest that students who exclude others based on prejudicial views are more likely to become adults with similar embedded ideologies based on those biases and unfair stereotypes acquired during childhood. The potential negative impacts of children being a victim/target of prejudice and discrimination include low academic achievement, anxiety, a decreased motivation to interact with peers, social exclusion, and low self-esteem (McGuirk & Kehoe, 2013, p. 14). Teacher training on intercultural competencies and their characteristics should, therefore, be organized to support them in developing interculturally oriented classroom communication. Some attempts within the Slovenian context are described in the next section.

4. The training of educators and intercultural awareness

Due to various recent interventions of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia, several large-scale national projects have been launched to raise awareness among the educational community, about the presence of multiculturality, to promote intercultural coexistence and increase teachers' competencies to cope better with the challenges of integration of migrant children (e.g. *Interculturalism as a new form of coexistence, 2013–2015, Facing the challenges of intercultural coexistence, 2014–2020, Enriched foreign language learning project, 2013–2015, and Only (with) others are we,*

2016–2021). National projects launched by the Ministry are thus making a difference (Medarić et al., 2021).

As stated by Dežan and Sedmak (2020, p. 564), the policy documents (Guidelines, 2012 and Proposal, 2018) widely recognized the need for and importance of training for school professionals that would follow the principles of inclusion and multiculturality. The content of training should focus on the process of migrant children's language acquisition, and the interculturality awareness and knowledge, intercultural sensibilisation of teachers, etc. Appropriate intercultural training should be introduced for future professionals and teachers who are expected to work in the field of the education of migrant children's as well as for teachers already working in schools. In this respect several national projects were launched to organize training for schools and teachers who expressed interest. In addition, in accordance with the Guidelines (2012) the state should regularly upload teaching material on the webpage of the National Education Institute of Slovenia and identify professionals and (non-) governmental institutions competent to help teachers with multicultural dilemmas and to organize professional training (Dežan & Sedmak, 2020, p. 564).

Dežan and Sedmak (ibid., p. 570) in their study revealed that teachers at primary and secondary schools often lack the necessary knowledge to address multiculturality appropriately, the cultural awareness to recognize migrant children's needs and discrimination, and intercultural competencies to tackle these issues effectively. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that during their study years, trainee teachers received almost no training related to cultural diversity and interculturality. Moreover, no compulsory or regular intercultural training was organized for active teachers. In recent years, national projects have been oriented towards improving school staff skills through workshops, short-term courses, lectures, etc. Involvement in such training was voluntary and depended on the priorities of the school professionals. Consequently, it was always the same teachers who attended such courses. Usually the participants were educators who already had a special affinity with the issues of managing cultural diversity and the challenges of the integration of migrant children (ibid.).

As mentioned above, the number of migrants in Slovenia is growing from year to year. Amongst them there is a certain portion with an academic background, some of them educators and teachers. For this reason, Slovenian integration policies, inclusion and some experiences of integrating them in the Slovenian school system will be presented here.

5. Integrating international teachers in the Slovenian school setting

In Slovenia, the question arises of how to register and activate international teachers among asylum seekers particularly, to teach immigrant children in Slovenia, their host country. In accordance with Rules on the education of teachers and other profes-

sional workers in vocational and professional education (2011), all Slovenian teachers, including international teachers, must master the Slovene Standard language, have certain teaching competencies and qualifications, and pass a final professional exam. Potential candidates who acquired their teaching education competencies in their country of origin may initiate the procedure of recognition of their professional qualifications. This service falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. The conditions of employment in the field of education are the same for all teachers except that international teachers need a residence and work permit.

According to Slovenian legislation (Rules on the professional examination of professionals in the field of education, 2006), education staff need to pass a final professional exam, which alongside content and teaching methods, also evaluates the candidate's knowledge of Slovene. Teachers cannot be regularly employed in a Slovenian educational institution if they do not speak Slovene fluently. The assessment of Standard Slovene in the oral section of the final professional examination is based on the standards set out in the *Catalogue of Knowledge of the Slovene Language for the Professional Examination* (Križaj-Ortar et al., 2004). It is stated there that "the basis for determining the candidate's knowledge of Slovene, acquired during the candidate's internship or training at school, is mainly the mentor's and school principal's assessment of the candidate's oral and written assignments or activities" (ibid, p. 3). Currently, there is no legal document which determines the level of language proficiency of Slovene (e.g. B2 or C1), according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020), needed to teach in schools. The only document the principals need to follow is the above-mentioned catalogue of knowledge.

Other studies (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Lefebvre et al., 2002; Myles et al., 2006; Niyubahwe et al., 2013) also indicate that not mastering the language and not understanding the culture of the country very well could hamper access to employment. For example, Lefebvre et al. (2002) reported that the French language test could be an obstacle for gaining access to employment for many immigrant teachers in Canada. The participants from Australia in a study led by Cruickshank (2004), involving immigrant teachers, said that they lost confidence in themselves because of their lack of mastery of English, the language of instruction.

There is another issue that might influence the employment of international teachers in Slovenia. According to the European Commission's report (2019, p. 6) on Education and Training in Slovenia, there are currently enough new entrant teachers, though large numbers are approaching retirement, and shortages already exist in certain categories (particularly in rural areas).

In the Slovenian context, only one paper deals with the professional re-integration of international teachers into the school system. Vižintin (2009) described a project which, besides teaching Slovene as a second/foreign language, introduced the teaching of the language of origin (Macedonian and Albanian) and the cultures of immigrant children in Slovenia. The teaching experiences were presented from the perspective of three international teachers who immigrated to Slovenia, two from Albania and

one from Macedonia, and their integration in the specific school setting. In the paper, Vižintin (ibid.) first described some reasons for the migration of the students from Kosovo, Albania or Macedonia to Slovenia: mostly because their fathers had worked in Slovenia for many years, one father even for twenty years. After many years of living apart, experiencing unstable conditions in their country of origin, having the desire for a better quality of life and/or for a higher standard of living (these reasons were given during the conversations to the author), the families decided to reunite in Slovenia. According to Slovenian school legislation, in the third cycle of the primary school, students (12 to 15 years of age) can attend an elective subject in foreign language learning (German, Spanish, French, English, Croatian, Macedonian, Russian, Serbian). The author (ibid.) mentioned that Croatian and Serbian in this form also address the issue of preserving the first language of the second and third generation of migrant children, whose parents came to Slovenia from the 1960s onwards from other former republics of Yugoslavia. However, such a form of teaching the former Yugoslav languages in schools was not often implemented, due to a lack of professional staff, a lack of interested students, fear of stigmatization and intolerance of the majority population (ibid, p. 199). Vižintin (2009) also highlighted the finances: the teaching of the Macedonian language and culture in Slovenia was financed by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia. The teaching of the Albanian language was financed by the host country Slovenia. Both sponsors require five students as the minimum number of young learners taking the language course. Finally, Vižintin (ibid.) introduced the perspective of three interviewed teachers who participated in bilingual classes (Slovene-Macedonian, Slovene-Albanian), took part in multilingual and cultural events at Slovenian schools, and helped in translating some official school documents for parents. They also offered help in teaching Slovene as the language of instruction if Slovenian teachers needed support in some explanations of specific vocabulary, because migrant children did not speak additional languages (e.g. English or German), which can sometimes be used as an extra support in teaching adults (ibid.). The teacher from Macedonia finished his formal study as a teacher of the Macedonian language at his home university and taught at Macedonian schools for many years. He applied to the tender of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia to be a teacher of the Macedonian language to Macedonian migrants in Slovenia and was accepted. He moved to Slovenia with his family. He does not have Slovenian citizenship because he is still very attached to Macedonia but has a permanent residence permit in Slovenia. He intends one day to return to Macedonia. He has lived in Slovenia for more than fifteen years and has been teaching the Macedonian language, culture, and history. He cooperates with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia, the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, the Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia, and Macedonian cultural societies. In his opinion, Macedonian migrant students face the following issues: they speak only Macedonian, read and write poorly in Latin script (Macedonian is written using the Cyrillic alphabet), have to adapt to the host country's school system, traditions and culture (ibid., pp. 201–203). One of the teachers of Albanian came from Kosovo and

studied music (MA) in Slovenia. After her studies she taught music and Albanian at Slovenian schools, and at one asylum centre, to migrant children from Kosovo who had moved to Slovenia for political reasons (Serbian violence against the people of Kosovo). The second teacher was a university professor of the Albanian language and literature who finished her studies in Tirana, Albania. She worked for a few months at the national RTV-centre. She moved to Slovenia because her husband lived in Slovenia and worked in Italy. She has been teaching Albanian to migrant children from Kosovo and Albania at Slovenian schools. She has also been working as a translator, proof-reader, and court interpreter of the Albanian language. She suggested that Slovenian universities should offer a study programme in the Albanian language, like, for example, in Zagreb or Belgrade, which would facilitate the official teacher training of teachers at different school levels. All three teachers also pointed out that they face a lack of teaching materials, which they mostly create by themselves (Vižintin, 2009).

6. A situation analysis of international teachers at Slovenian schools and their perceptions

In order to learn more about the recent situation of immigrant teachers at Slovenian schools, a quantitative-qualitative study was conducted focusing on the forms of inclusion, experiences and self-perceptions of international teachers as part of the new community. With our situation analysis, we would like to offer the teachers, as stated by Jhagroo (2016, p. 56),

> "a platform for their stories to be heard, [so that] their feeling of value may be rekindled. In addition, engaging in reflective narrative through recollections of one's past experiences within a present context may be professionally beneficial in giving teachers an opportunity to reflect on how their own background and experiences may influence their practice."

6.1 The purpose and objectives of the research

The purpose of the quantitative-qualitative study was to analyse the situation, scope and forms of inclusion of international teachers in the regular school system in Slovenia. The study also examined the perceptions and experiences of these international teachers as well as the difficulties and obstacles encountered in their integration into the Slovenian educational environment.

Using the results obtained, the purpose of the study was to consider the possibilities for the integration and continuing professional development of these teachers in the Slovenian school environment. Our research was based on the following research questions:

RQ1: What have been the forms of participation and cooperation, the types of employment and the qualifications of international teachers (with a migration background) over the last five years in Slovenian schools?

RQ2: What experiences do international teachers have in everyday Slovenian school life and what additional support do they receive?

RQ3: How are international teachers professionally integrated and involved in school activities?

RQ4: What difficulties/obstacles do international teachers face in their integration into the Slovenian educational environment?

6.2 Research methods and data processing

The first part of the quantitative study was based upon a descriptive and causal-non-experimental method of empirical pedagogical research, involving an online questionnaire for school principals.

The second part relied on a qualitative methodological approach, utilizing a semi-structured interview. With the help of this interview, we offered the interviewees, international teachers, the opportunity to describe, in their own words and feelings, their own perceptions and experiences in their field of work (Vogrinc, 2008). Their comments provided a multitude of perspectives and experiences of integration and teaching in the Slovenian classroom, while at the same time offering more in-depth insights into international teachers' authentic classroom situations.

Respondents' answers were analysed at the descriptive level and with the help of inferential statistics. The semi-structured interviews were analysed using ranking categories.

In agreement with the Ministry of Education, data were collected using an online questionnaire for (pre-)primary and secondary school principals in Slovenia. The study was conducted between February and April 2021.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed in September 2021. Ranking categories were used to analyse the semi-structured interviews.

205 principals of Slovenian (pre-)primary and secondary schools responded to the questionnaire. Only fully completed answers were included in the statistical analysis; the final research sample was 78 (n = 78).

The aim of the semi-structured interview was to record the experiences and perceptions of professional integration and involvement in Slovenian schools of international teachers from different (marginal) geographical areas, especially from non-European countries (e.g. Syria, Afghanistan). From the Slovenian principals, we received (only) two e-mail contacts of international teachers employed in their schools: one from Slovakia and the other from Croatia. We wanted to interview them in person but they did not respond to our e-mails, despite several e-mails being sent to them.

Due to the fact that we did not collect further e-mail contacts of international teachers from the Slovenian school principals, we then contacted the Slovenian Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants. We received five e-contacts for international teachers with a migration background: three from Türkiye, one from Iran and one from Syria, and subsequently invited them to participate in the semi-structured interview. Only two of them reacted to our e-mail and were willing to take part in the interview, one from Türkiye (under 30 years of age, living in Slovenia for 4 years) and one from Iran (40–49 years of age, living in Slovenia for 2 years). They are both teachers of English as a foreign language. The interviewee from Iran commented: "I was an official English teacher in my country. I asked the employment office in Ljubljana to help me find a job as an English teacher, but they couldn't. I'll be happy if you help me with that." From their answers in the interview, we may conclude that they have had no experience of teaching in Slovenian schools, none of them is employed, and were therefore unable to describe their everyday school-life experience. As stated by the interviewees, the Slovene proficiency certificate was an obstacle for them being employed in schools.

6.3 Methodological approach and challenges

With the purpose of recording the process schools need to undertake in order to employ international teachers and to collect the personal (e)-contacts of those teachers who would be able to complete the final version of the questionnaire, we contacted pre-primary, primary and secondary school principals. With the help of an official intervention by the Ministry of Education, a short questionnaire was sent to the official e-mails of ALL Slovenian public schools (around 100 pre-schools, 400 primary schools and around 100 secondary schools). However, only 78 school principals completed it.

Furthermore, more than 10 different non-governmental cultural organisations from former Yugoslavia, based in Slovenia, were contacted. These cultural and arts organisations create conditions for the long-term sustainability of various cultural, educational, and artistic practices of people coming, for example, from the Republic of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, or Albania (not a part of ex-Yugoslavia). We also addressed several individuals (e.g. colleagues at the Ministry of Education and other educational institutions, individual teachers) who could help us find international teachers in Slovenia. However, we received no answers from these cultural organisations, while the individuals we contacted were unable to provide us with the contact details (e-mail, addresses) of international teachers in Slovenia. These individuals reported that they know people who moved to Slovenia when they were young and who completed their education in Slovenia and now work as teachers, or they recommended that we contact international teachers who have come to Slovenia from western EU countries or the USA. Since it has been difficult to collect the-mail contacts of migrant educators from other countries our further step in future research

will be to obtain experiences and self-perceptions of international teachers coming from western EU countries or the USA.

We then turned to other non-governmental organisations who offer support to immigrants (e.g. from Afghanistan, Pakistan). Their contacts reported that they do not possess information on the professions of immigrants staying in Slovenia and do not know if any of them worked as teachers in their host country. They also pointed out that most immigrants coming to Slovenia are just passing through with the goal of settling and finding employment in one of the western countries (e.g. Germany, France, Great Britain). Only one international teacher, from Madagascar, was willing to take part in the semi-structured interview. This teacher works at a secondary school and teaches the son of one of the authors of this paper. The answers are summarised below.

6.4 Results

The results are presented in two parts. First, the quantitative analysis of the answers to the online questionnaire is given. Then, the results of the semi-structured interview with the international teacher are presented.

Analysis of the online questionnaire

First, we were interested in school principals' experience with international teachers in their schools and how many of them have experienced the Slovenian school environment. Our questions addressed the last five school years.

Among the 78 schools that participated in the study there were ten that employed international teachers between 2016 and 2021. One international teacher was employed in the school years 2016/17 and 2018/19, two in 2019/20. There were six more international teachers employed in the 2020/21 school year. The results over the last five years demonstrate that only some Slovenian schools employed international teachers.

We were also interested in the number of international teachers participating in schools (less or more than three teachers per school year). All school principals involved in the study answered that fewer than three teachers have participated in schools in the last five years. In most cases, one international teacher per school was involved. Furthermore, we asked school principals what forms of cooperation with international teachers they had implemented in their schools. The respondents mentioned that in the last five years, the form of cooperation of international teachers in schools has largely taken the form of teaching (all) students or offering language support in communication with others (e.g. peers, teachers, parents).

The most common type of employment in schools was regular employment (43%). One international teacher worked as a part-time teacher, one received a fee, and one was active in the school as a volunteer. However, 36% of respondents chose the option "other" to this question. Their open-ended answers revealed that they had been employed as international teachers in Western European countries, such as Great Britain,

France, Germany, Italy or Spain, teaching these languages to students. Some principals also responded that although immigrant students attend their schools, there are no immigrant teachers working there.

We also wanted to know which qualifications international teachers needed in order to participate and teach in schools, or how the conditions for the cooperation with these teachers were set up. Some authors (Myles et al., 2006; Schmidt, 2010; Schmidt et al., 2010) report that international teachers' existing competencies were not taken into consideration in the hiring procedures in the new country, although they had university diplomas or extensive teaching experience acquired in their country of origin. Niyubahwe et al. (2013) remarked that international teachers who were competent in the required subject were not hired for a permanent position. The school principals mentioned that five (33%) of the international teachers acquired the necessary educational qualifications in their country of origin to work in a Slovenian school. Two (13%) of them needed additional teacher training in Slovenia in order to teach. Five (33%) and three (20%) principals chose the answers "none of the above mentioned" or "other". In the open-ended option, two principals wrote:

> "The teacher has learned Slovenian and passed a professional exam. The international teacher had obtained a relevant qualification in her country of origin, but it was not fully recognized. She then studied at the Faculty of Education, University of Primorska (Slovenia), and received a relevant qualification that led to her employment as a pre-school teacher."

Next, we wanted to know which language was most frequently used for communication with international teachers in (pre-)primary and secondary schools. The results indicate that Slovene (75%) was the language most frequently used. However, three principals chose the answer "other" and mentioned that another language, such as Serbo-Croatian, was also used.

At the end of the questionnaire, we offered the respondents the opportunity to write a comment or simply add their own views on the topic. We would like to highlight the comment of one of the head teachers, who wrote: "I support employing international teachers with the immigrant experience because we desperately need them, both the students and the teaching staff. It would be much easier for all of us."

The comment indicates that school principals welcome and support the integration of international teachers in the Slovenian school system due to the linguistic and cultural diversity of students at schools.

Analysis of the semi-structured interview

The second part of the study includes a semi-structured interview with one international teacher. The interviewee provided us with her personal experiences and involvement with everyday school-life in a Slovenian educational environment. The answers are summarized below.

The interviewee comes from Madagascar. She is a teacher of French at three public secondary schools and works as a part-time teacher (50% and more). She has been working at her current schools for more than five years, renewing her contract every new school year. She is employed currently as an independent teacher with an appropriate knowledge of the content, didactics, and teaching methods in her subject. The interviewee enriches the content of French lessons, introducing cultures, customs, traditions, and language and complements the work of a Slovenian foreign language teacher. She has commented:

> "My work as a language teacher is perhaps different from that of my teacher colleagues because teaching a language really requires a contact with a native speaker who adds value to the learning, which a Slovenian teacher cannot do. I am not disqualifying the work of my Slovenian colleagues at all. On the contrary, our work, our methods, our approaches are complementary."

The interviewee teaches the subject independently, sometimes accompanied by an experienced teacher and, if required, receives help with teaching. She interacts with other teachers and also parents. She uses Slovene when talking with parents and is regularly involved in school life. She attends staff meetings, school trips, and reflects and promotes the diversity of the students in the classroom. Her professional duties and activities are similar to those of local teachers in her country of residence.

The interviewee feels accepted and comfortable among the staff, can always ask a colleague for advice, and can contribute her own ideas to the teaching personnel. She is asked by colleagues for her opinion and feedback on the school's work, and feels valued by the principal, staff and students. Her international background is appreciated and valued. She is proud that her students have achieved excellent results in various examinations and language competitions.

She receives support in team teaching, materials and in-service training. However, she would appreciate more support in learning Slovene. The interviewee would need support in her everyday schoolwork, especially in preparation of and reflection on teaching lessons, classroom management, extra-curricular tasks, and orientation at school. She also pointed out that the formal requirements/acceptance of degrees is a barrier for her to work as a teacher in Slovenia. She says:

> "I do not receive the real 'price', value, salary for the work I do. It is my colleagues who get the points for the projects I propose, organize, and carry out. They get career advancement and not me. I would not like to take the place of the Slovenian teacher, but would like to work with him/her to support the students, to bring the added value to the classroom."

As an international teacher, the experience and competencies she brings to her professional life differ from those of her Slovenian colleagues. She noted that Slovenian classes are more homogenous than in her country of origin and, in her opinion, the question of identity is also different in both countries. She commented:

> "My vision of life in Slovenia is different from that of my Slovenian colleagues because I chose to live here and I 'have' to make an effort to adapt myself to the habits that are not mine. For them, every situation is 'normal' and 'logical'. But what is normal and logical is not for everyone. For me, the classes are rather homogeneous in contrast to those in my country. As a result, Slovenian students and teachers all think more or less the same and do not see other cultures. For example, if we had students of different origins, different religions in the same class (at least half of them), we would treat the question of identity differently (a theme for the language class to deal with)."

7. Discussion and conclusions

The results obtained through our quantitative-qualitative research indicated that few international teachers are integrated and employed in Slovenian schools. Despite of all our efforts, contacting different institutions, ministries, non-governmental organisations, individuals, and school principals, we could not collect the (e-mail) contacts of different migrant teachers in Slovenia who would share their experiences about everyday Slovenian school life with us, and only one international teacher was willing to participate in the semi-structured interview. Moreover, our findings reveal that if international teachers are employed at Slovenian schools, they come from Western European countries as foreign language teachers or from the countries of former Yugoslavia. Medarić et al. (2021, p. 759) claim in their paper on the integration of migrant children in Slovenian schools that Slovenia remains largely a transit country. According to their research data, Slovenia is not a desirable and/or final destination for migrants from a global migration perspective, as it is geographically small, politically less recognized and not economically attractive enough (ibid.).

More precisely, the school principals' answers in our study show that only ten Slovenian schools have employed international teachers over the last five years – the numbers demonstrate that fewer than three teachers, but usually only one, have been employed during one school per school year. Other studies from Canada and the USA (Deters, 2006; Niyubahwe et al., 2013) also reported that international teachers found it very difficult to find a school that would give them the opportunity to prove themselves. Schmidt et al. (2010) noted that systematic discriminatory hiring practices are some of the main obstacles faced by immigrant teachers in Canada who want to resume their teaching career. Furthermore, according to school principals, regular employment was the most frequent form of service found among migrant teachers in Slovenia. Almost half of them were regularly employed at schools. Besides, the study also revealed that international teaching qualifications are often not fully recognized in the Slovenian education system, so in addition to passing a Slovenian language exam, international teachers also need to complete additional teacher training courses in order to receive a relevant qualification. We see a problem in this, as there is only a small number of international teachers who work in our schools and could offer support to immigrant students; we, therefore, recommend moderating our (language proficiency) legislation in order to ease their path to employment.

From the responses to the open-ended questions, we may conclude that Slovenian school principals welcome and support the integration of international teachers into the Slovenian educational system. They are aware of the fact that these teachers act as role models, help immigrant students to integrate into the school system and contribute to multilingual and multicultural education (Niyubahwe et al., 2013). The answers of one international teacher reveal that she mostly teaches content or offers language support in communication with parents, other teachers, or students. She reported no differences in teaching approaches or classroom management and enjoyed positive relations and collaboration with her colleagues as well with the school administration. She did not feel socially isolated at school. Some studies in Israel (Remennick, 2002) or in Australia (Peeler & Jane, 2005), however, have highlighted a lack of cooperation and support on the part of school counsellors, colleagues, and parents.

Our findings also indicate that it is difficult to find a job in Slovenian schools as an international teacher. The respondents from Iran and Türkiye answered that none of them has been employed in a school and were therefore unable to describe their everyday school-life experience. As mentioned, to get a job at Slovenian schools, all teachers must master the Slovene standard language, have certain teaching competencies and qualifications, and pass a final professional exam. Both interviewees fulfil the requirement of having teaching competencies in their home country. However, the Slovene Proficiency Certificate is often an obstacle to international teachers being employed at schools, as stated by the interviewees. In addition, according to the European Commission report (2019, p. 6) on Education and Training in Slovenia, the demands placed on school teachers have been increasing over the last 5 years; however, currently there are enough new entrant teachers on the labor market, which restricts opportunities for international teachers to be employed in Slovenian schools. However, the teaching workforce is ageing, and shortages exist in certain categories. More than 50% of tertiary education teachers are over 50 years old. The proportion of teachers over 50 is lower for secondary and primary school: 38% and 34% respectively (European Commission, 2019, p. 6). There are shortages, particularly in rural areas, of special education experts, support teachers, art teachers, primary class teachers and teachers of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). In the long run, there is going to be a shortage of teachers in Slovenia and here we see the opportunity for international teachers to make up this deficit. Furthermore, in order to represent 8% of people with a migrant background vis-à-vis the majority population in Slovenia and because migrant children residing in Slovenia have the right to attend a primary school, the support of international teachers in Slovenian schools is necessary.

As a result, we therefore recommend the development of guidelines or recommendations for principals, teaching staff, and international teachers themselves with regard to professional transition in Slovenia and elsewhere, especially in terms of employment legislation, overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers, offering supplementary funding for continuing teacher training programmes, workshops and re-certification, developing (bilingual) websites for teaching and social resources, supporting

teacher practices, mentorship experiences and networking. Niyubahwe et al. (2013) commented that for the successful re-integration of immigrant teachers, additional community support to help them adapt to the new cultural and linguistic environment is needed. We believe that suitable school legislation, which would allow some adaptations to current regulations in the following areas: correctness and fluency in the language of instruction, classroom management, cooperation with teaching staff, monitoring and on-going (self-)reflection of their work in schools might help to overcome these issues.

There are various key factors supporting the social and professional re-integration of international teachers into a new school: recognition of their professional competencies and qualifications leading to a teaching permit and long-term employment, the quality of collaboration and cooperation among teaching colleagues and with the school administration, and acceptance by the general and school community and the students' parents (Niyubahwe et al., 2013; Schmidt et al., 2010). Multilingual and multicultural diversity, multidimensionality in the classroom, contacts, communication, and the support of migrant teachers, in our view, can foster values of tolerance, respect and solidarity, and can reduce prejudices in our schools. Especially since Slovenian students and teachers do not have many contacts to migrant teachers, their inclusion in our schools is even more important.

In conclusion, our quantitative-qualitative research (due to a small number of school principals' responses, presents only impressions and does not allow generalizations) has brought to light some practices and obstacles regarding the social and professional re-integration or transition of international teachers into school practice in Slovenia. It has highlighted the small number of international teachers and studies in Slovenia, and globally, regarding this issue. However, the diverse teaching tasks and practices international teachers are engaged in and their cooperation with other teaching staff enhance the quality of education and working conditions in schools.

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Syrian teachers, migration and educational consequences in the Turkish context

Nesrin Oruç Ertürk

Abstract: Providing educational services for Syrian refugee children is a new fact of life in Türkiye, and the teachers who work in public schools and temporary education centers encounter some difficulties. However, when it comes to the Syrian teachers working in the Turkish educational system, the problem gets even worse. The main purpose of this paper is to describe the present situation of the training needs of Syrian refugees and to provide some data on the existing situation of teachers with a refugee background. It is very obvious that just like immigrant Syrian students, these teachers also face significant challenges in their integration into the Turkish education system.

Keywords: migration, international teachers, non-native teachers

1. Introduction

Migration, a phenomenon as old as the history of humanity, appears to be one of the major issues that has recently been the focus of worldwide discussion, particularly with the increases in global population movements. While some people migrate to other countries more or less voluntarily in search of a better life, others are forced to migrate to other countries for extraordinary reasons such as war (Taskın & Erdemli, 2018).

Over the past few decades, it is not only the Turkish context, but all around the world, where teacher mobility and migration has become an issue for governments. Before continuing, we first need to define the term "immigrant teachers". Datta-Roy and Lavery (2017) define this term as those who have already received their teacher training education in their homeland and are trying to be accepted and to continue to teach in a new country of residence. The term "non-native teacher" is derived from the profession of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), when, in the second half of the 20th century, many native speakers of English moved from their own countries and started to work as English language teachers in countries where students were non-native speakers of English. Later, the term began to be widely used to describe foreign-born professionals who differ from their counterpart native-speakers in terms of linguistic, ideological or pragmatic aspects, as a result of

which they display different teaching behaviours in the classroom (Árva & Medgyes, 2000).

Not only specifically teachers, all immigrants have to leave their home countries for some reasons. Literature (Rahman, 2007; Zachariah et al., 2001) suggests that migration can be a result of looking for better opportunities to improve one's quality of life, to have a better position in society, for improved gender or intergenerational relations, or for reasons of female empowerment, among many others. However, no matter what the reason is, non-native immigrant teachers from different educational systems are required to merge into the new system they will be a part of and, in addition, they are also expected to function effectively in the host country both professionally and socially (Peeler & Jane, 2005).

Studies (e.g. Datta-Roy & Lavery, 2017; Miller, 2018) have reported some unique challenges experienced by this group of immigrant teachers, including a lack of culturally specific educational knowledge (Peeler & Jane, 2005), along with metacognitive competence in the host country (Yan, 2020). However, the biggest challenge of all is how to make a smooth transition to new sociocultural environments (Benson, 2019; Collins, 2012; Xue & Yan, 2015).

According to a European Commission report, teachers represent one of the "most mobile professions" and play an important part in the global employment market these days (Reid & Collins, 2013). However, despite a heightened research interest in issues related to international teacher mobility and migration, reviews of the existing literature are scarce. Yet reliable information is essential in order to develop evidence-based policies and practices for the management of teacher recruitment, mobility, and migration.

This paper reviews the Turkish literature and cross-disciplinary empirical work on the issue of internationally mobile teachers. The objective is to provide researchers and policymakers with a reliable and current assessment of what is known and not known about the issue of international teacher mobility and migration. It has to be stated here that, especially in the Turkish context, it was difficult to find studies on how international teachers enroll into the Turkish education system. Besides this, the main challenges for migrant teachers during their professional transition, and the personal and professional benefits of international migration for teachers have not been covered in the literature. However, in the light of the existing literature, the author expects to identify gaps and questions in the research base that have not been addressed so far in the Turkish educational context in terms of international teachers.

2. Immigration and the Turkish educational system

Before understanding the concept of international teachers and integrating them in the Turkish education system, the government and the Ministry of National Education were faced originally with the challenge of integrating immigrant students into the Turkish education system, which has never been the case for Turkish educational contexts. The mass migration of Syrian refugees with a high rate of school-age chil-

dren to Türkiye as a result of the Syrian civil war since 2011 has created the need for teaching these students Turkish in order to integrate them into Turkish society and the education system (Arslangilay, 2018). In addition, at that stage there were two issues to be solved. The government first of all had to find ways to equip the Turkish teachers who would be teaching newly migrated students with skills and abilities to enable them to teach in these diverse classrooms. It was obvious that Turkish teachers now had to have some intercultural sensitivity and cultural knowledge about Syrian students. And secondly, the government needed to find some pedagogical ways to teach the Syrian students, for most of whom the Turkish language was a barrier. In the following, we will first analyse the current situation of Syrian students and their education and then focus on Syrian teachers in the Turkish context.

2.1 Syrian refugee students in Türkiye

According to a UNHCR (2018) report there are 5,645,914 registered Syrian refugees worldwide as of 2018, 3,586,679 of whom are in Türkiye, which means more than half of the registered refugees are living in Türkiye. Since providing refugees educational support was one of the most important arrangements to be made by the government apart from other necessities such as shelter and food, some significant steps have been taken. In order to offer children compulsory education in public schools first Temporary Training Centers (TTC) were created from 2013 on. In these centers the children are taught in Arabic in accordance with the Syrian curriculum. The following options are available in Türkiye for the education of the Syrian children under temporary protection:

Camp Education Centers. In Türkiye, 26 camps/temporary accommodation centers in 10 provinces have been established. All of the camps have education centers offering education from primary school through high school. In 2014, more than 90% of the Syrian children living in the camps received an education (UNICEF, 2014).

Public schools. In order to fulfill its international obligations and provide the Syrian children living outside the camps with access to education, the MoNE (Ministry of National Education) published the Circular on "Educational and Learning Services for Foreigners" in September 2014. With this Circular, the Syrian children have had the opportunity to receive a Turkish education in public schools, under MoNE, needing a "foreigner identification document" and without the requirement of having a "residence permit".

According to the regulation, the Syrian students have the right to receive education in the same class together with Turkish students. In these schools, the Turkish education curriculum is implemented for the Syrian students in the same way as for all students. The Syrian children do not go through a preparatory stage and are admitted to formal classes taught in Turkish as soon as they enroll. In contrast to this, in November 2016, the MoNE created the project "Integration of Syrian Students into the Turkish Education System" together with the European Union in order for Syrian students in Türkiye to learn Turkish better. Under this project, teachers are be specifi-

cally employed to teach the Turkish language to Syrian students (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2016). A total of 36,655 Syrian students enrolled in the primary, middle and high schools in the public education system in Türkiye in the 2014–2015 academic year (Human Rights Watch Report, 2015, p. 12).

More than 490,000 Syrian refugee children have been enrolled in public schools in Türkiye since the beginning of the civil war, which means a 50% increase from the end of 2015 to 2016. However, an estimated 370,000 Syrian children remain outside the public school system. Many children attend UNICEF-supported Temporary Education Centers (TECs) where classes are held in Arabic and follow a Syrian adjusted curriculum taught by Syrian voluntary teachers. There are more than 430 TECs in Türkiye (as of February 2017) and many Turkish schools are now double shifting to accommodate Syrian students. In Ankara, more than 2,400 Syrian children attend 5 TECs (Lorch, 2017).

Temporary Education Centers (TECs). These centers have been established inside and outside the camps and are the only educational centers to offer primary and secondary education in Arabic by adhering to the Syrian curriculum for school aged Syrian children and youth. In TECs, non-formal educational courses in demand can also be opened by non-formal educational institutions.

Private Initiatives. Another alternative for the education of Syrian children is private schools established with the help of philanthropists or non-governmental organisations. Educational materials and school supplies are donated. In these private schools, a revised version of the Syrian curriculum is implemented and the subjects science, social sciences, mathematics and Turkish are taught (Evin, 2014).

2.2 Syrian teachers in Türkiye

Among all the opportunities provided to the Syrian students in Türkiye, Syrian teachers work above all in Temporary Education Centers (TECs). Syrian teachers work in these schools, and only the Turkish language classes are taught by Turkish teachers. While the Turkish teachers are employed on a contractual basis by the MoNE, the Syrian teachers are funded by the Turkish Religious Foundation, and the funding is provided by UNICEF. However, not all of the Syrian teachers working in these schools have a teaching degree. Syrian nationals who practiced a profession before the war in Syria such as in medicine, engineering and law also teach in these schools. While co-education is implemented in the first four years in these schools, male and female students receive education separately in the subsequent years. Nonetheless, for a study conducted in Istanbul, researchers visited several schools where all current Syrian teachers were university graduates and an overwhelming majority of them (97.9%) were accredited teachers in Syria, with only a small group of individuals from other backgrounds, such as law (Aras & Yasun, 2016), which points to the fact that there is a lack of consistency in the education of the Syrian refugees in Türkiye (Taskın & Erdemli, 2018).

However, the professional development of Syrian teachers teaching in Türkiye, with the financial support received from UNICEF, continues. In order to help these teachers to integrate into the Turkish education system some teacher development activities have been conducted. In his report, Lorch (2017) states that about 250 Syrian refugees have attended a 10-day course in Ankara, Türkiye's capital. Training courses took place simultaneously in 21 provinces targeting an estimated 20,500 volunteer teachers. This is the second phase of a programme led by Türkiye's Ministry of National Education (MoNE) partnering with UNICEF and aimed at teaching pedagogical skills in line with Turkish teacher training standards. Topics include developmental psychology, professional ethics and counseling. Graduating teachers receive a certificate from MoNE indicating they have the required skills to provide quality education for Syrian children in Türkiye.

In the same paper, a Syrian teacher named Osama, who fled Northern Aleppo in 2013, works as a supervisor in a TEC with about 1,000 Syrian students and housed in a Turkish elementary school is presented to the readers. His teaching shift is from 1:15 to 5:30 in the afternoon and classrooms with a 25-student capacity must now seat 50. This overcrowding creates tension and makes teaching more difficult. Students find it hard to focus. "It is very difficult for teachers to keep order," he said.

> "Part of a teacher's job is to give attention to students but they are spread too thin. Many students have war-related emotional problems and special needs but everyone is mixed together. There is shoving and punching. I've seen stabbing with a pen."

These needs are one reason why the teacher training focuses on psychosocial support in addition to other relevant topics.

Osama stressed the importance of confidence building. Learning Turkish is a critical asset for Syrian refugees but learning is arduous and access to schools expensive for adults. In the classroom, only 4 out of 30 teachers were proficient in Turkish. Osama used his own experience as a student to empower his students in their teacher training. When Osama described his own poor language skills, the classroom filled with laughter. "My (Turkish) teacher gave me confidence so now I go home and study not one but three hours," he said. "Sometimes with your words, you can empower students so much they feel they can take over the world." (ibid).

The teacher training provided to Syrian teachers presented above was carried out in two phases, the first phase from August to September 2016 and the second phase from January to February 2017. The training was supported by UNICEF through generous funding received from the European Union (EU Trust Fund), Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the U.S. Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM), and other donor contributions through the Thematic Humanitarian Fund.

According to KfW (KfW Development Bank, 2020), Syrian teachers have an important role in supporting the teaching of refugee children in Türkiye. The teachers receive remuneration equivalent to the Turkish minimum wage and further training.

Even though they do not teach, they help Turkish teachers in class, support the integration of Syrian children in Turkish schools and work in advisory centers. In the Corona pandemic they maintain contact between the schools and the refugee families. There are now 12,000 Syrian teachers working in Türkiye, looking after 300,000 Syrian school children.

Since the 2016/2017 school year KfW has already supported the project in four phases, and the contract for the fifth phase was signed at the beginning of October 2021. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) KfW is thus providing a further EUR 50 million for salary payments and further training as well as Corona aid measures in the new school year. The project not only improves the educational opportunities of Syrian children, but also ensures a stable income for the Syrian teachers who have fled to Türkiye. They also belong to the poor sections of the population there and are dependent on a regular income, especially during the pandemic. The project is part of the Middle East employment offensive under the special initiative "Combating the causes of flight, reintegrating refugees". The project is being implemented by UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund.

Despite these good efforts, some undesirable things also happen to the Syrian teachers teaching in Türkiye. According to the North Press Agency (Syria), "Turkish authorities issued a decision providing for the dismissal of 13,000 Syrian teachers, many of whom had served in public schools for years. […] The Turkish Ministry of Education informed the teachers of their dismissal through a group message it sent via WhatsApp, saying that 'the decision was due to the cessation of support by UNICEF'" (Tamo, 2021).

According to previous reports by the North Press Agency (ibid.), Syrian teachers have been in fear since the beginning of 2021, after their files were transferred to the Turkish government by UNICEF, which paid their salaries. At that time, the North Press Agency "documented the appeal of a teacher after the Turkish authorities dismissed every teacher who did not obtain a university degree or the Turkish Language Certificate" (ibid).

3. Conclusion

Providing educational services for Syrian refugee students still is a new fact of life in Türkiye, and therefore the Turkish teachers who work in public schools and temporary education centers with this new population of students encounter some difficulties. Apart from that, this paper has tried to reveal the situation of the Syrian teachers and their working conditions in Türkiye. It is obvious that both Syrian students and teachers experience some challenges in their new learning and teaching environments.

Syrian refugee students, on one hand, experience real barriers such as language problems and bullying to name just two. On the other hand, the Turkish teachers teaching this new group of students also face problems because most of the Turkish teachers do not feel well prepared to support the learning or teaching of these diverse

groups since they lack materials and methods for teaching refugees. They also need more support in teaching in an intercultural and multicultural environment, especially out-of-school support.

Maybe among the ones who suffer the most, we can count the Syrian teachers working in Türkiye. Having language barriers as well, these teachers, in order to continue their life and establish themselves in the career of their choice, are expected to acquire suitable sociocultural knowledge and function effectively as a professional in the host country. As all temporary schools for Syrian students are expected to be closed as a result of the implementation of the gradual integration plan, neither the Turkish government nor UNICEF has announced anything about the fate of Syrian teachers working in these schools. The head of the Syrian Teachers' Union, Hassan Tayfur, said that the Turkish Ministry of Education will not lay off Syrian teachers and will work to gradually incorporate them into the educational system (Al-Jablawi, 2018).

The challenges experienced by this group of immigrant teachers, including a lack of culturally specific educational knowledge, along with their metacognitive competence in the host country seem to be continuing. However, the biggest challenge of all is how to make a smooth transition to new sociocultural environments, which unfortunately is not yet the case in Türkiye.

The Syrian Teachers' Union's figures indicate the presence of about 23,000 Syrian teachers in Türkiye, about half of them are unemployable as teachers and most work in areas outside of their specialties. The current status of Syrian teachers in Türkiye may be no less difficult than other Syrian refugees, but abandoning them and leaving them to an uncertain fate will complicate the situation for thousands of displaced Syrian families in Türkiye. In light of the obstacles and without adequate support from the Turkish government and UNICEF, Syrians will find themselves without legal options to work in the Turkish labor market (ibid.).

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International teachers in Europe

Obstacles to a new professional start in a country comparison – findings and recommendations from the ITTS project

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Abstract: This concluding article takes a comparative look at the country contributions in this volume. First of all, the processes of migration to Europe and more specifically to the countries of the ITTS project partners are described. This is followed by a summary of the fundamental opportunities and challenges of re-entering the profession for international teachers, based on thematic focal points. In a concluding outlook, summary findings are presented and recommendations are derived from the research work in the ITTS project, i. e. from the country contributions and the quantitative survey.

Keywords: teachers with and without a refugee background, professional integration, country research, study results, recommendations

1. Introduction

Re-entering a profession in a new country poses challenges for both immigrant teachers and host societies. It depends on the frameworks of European and national migration policies and is regulated by national and regional integration and education policies. Studies (e.g. Datta-Roy & Lavery, 2017; Miller, 2018) from different countries and regions report specific challenges for immigrant teachers, for example with regard to culture-specific pedagogical knowledge (Peeler & Jane, 2005). The transition to a new socio-cultural environment is a challenging task in addition to the demands made by a change of school system (Benson, 2019; Collins, 2012; Xue & Yan, 2015). While immigrant teachers have to find their way in a society that is partly foreign to them and in a new education system, they are also exposed to high expectations with regard to their professionalism (ibid., Peeler & Jane, 2005). If immigrant teachers succeed in gaining access to schools, they can bring with them great potential for school development and cooperation with students, parents and colleagues (Georgi et al., 2011; Massumi, 2014).

The contributions in this volume describe in detail the opportunities, experiences and also barriers to re-entering the labour market in seven countries: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Poland, Slovenia and Türkiye. A significant increase in the number of students with their own migrant background and, in some cases, with refugee expe-

rience in the countries selected here has been recorded since 2013, but especially between 2014 and 2018 and again since 2021. The country contributions here document the corresponding research situation. However, newly arrived teachers have only gradually been perceived as a specific target group, if at all. In addition to their professionalism, they bring potential as possible persons of identification for pupils and can promote intercultural parental work in culturally and linguistically mediating activities (Massumi, 2014, 88 f.). Further studies suggest that teachers with a migrant background can contribute to the design of inclusive and multilingual reflective educational processes (Georgi et al., 2011). The increasing presence of international teachers could also help to develop a more positive image of minorities and plural ways of life in a migration society and contribute to the intercultural opening of schools.

Different conditions, challenges and opportunities can be identified for immigrant teachers wishing to work in schools in the seven countries presented in this publication. If there is the possibility of re-entering the profession and the school system, this access is usually highly regulated and linked to high demands for the recognition of qualifications and linguistic skills. At the same time, it often seems confusing for those affected to know exactly what the criteria for returning to their profession are.

An insufficient data situation and research gaps in the majority of the countries made the surveys for the country contributions considerably more difficult, which was revealed both in terms of statistical data, studies and specialist literature, but also in the difficulty of identifying and making contact with the target group. This was also evident in the preparations and implementation of the quantitative survey, the results of which are presented in this publication in "*Valued and supported?! Which factors have a positive effect on the professional re-entry of international teachers into school? Results of a cross-national quantitative study*". With a total of 158 participants, the study was nevertheless able to gain helpful insights from the assessments of the participating teachers. Among other things, high satisfaction values of those who have the opportunity to work as teachers in schools became apparent. Three factors are decisive for this: first, the self-efficacy beliefs and the handling of challenges by the teachers themselves; second, being perceived and taken seriously as teachers (and not as support staff); and third, support for their professional re-entry in the new school. These findings once again point to the importance of creating opportunities for international teachers in schools and reducing the challenges of re-entering the profession.

2. Migration to Europe

In 2021, a total of 2,858,922 refugees with a recognised refugee status and 632,315 asylum seekers[1] were living in countries of the European Union (Statista, 2022h). Be-

1 "The term refugee refers to people who have had to leave their country of origin in order to save their lives and who have been recognised and accepted as such in the host country. Asylum seekers are people with an ongoing application for asylum" (Statista Research Department, 2022).

tween 2014 and 2021 alone, 2,083,122 refugees arrived in the EU, according to Statista (ibid.), a large proportion via the sea route and European Mediterranean countries (UNHCR, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d). A maximum of asylum applications was registered in 2015 and 2016; according to the European statistics authority Eurostat, a total of 1.28 million asylum applications (including 1.22 million initial applications) were registered in the 27 EU states (excluding the UK) in 2015, and 1.22 million (including 1.17 million initial applications) in 2016 (Eurostat, 2023a). Since then, the number of applications has fallen significantly, mainly due to the policies adopted by the EU to curb refugee migration, through the increasing militarisation of borders, the tightening asylum legislation and repatriation agreements with countries of origin and third countries, as well as illegal pushbacks (Europäisches Parlament, 2017; Hänsel et al., 2022). In 2017, the EU registered a total of only 677,470 asylum applications (including 620,265 initial applications), almost half as many as in 2015, falling to 625,575 applications in 2018 (including 564,115 initial applications) (Eurostat, 2023a). In 2020, the lowest number of applications since 2014 was recorded in the EU member states, with 472,395 asylum applications (including 417,070 initial applications), before overall numbers rose again in the following years (ibid.). In 2022, asylum application numbers for the period between January and October alone amounted to 767,580 (including 699,785 initial applications) (Eurostat, 2023b). While the monthly number of applications in January 2022 was 59,735 (including 52,885 initial applications), at 105,970 (99,175) almost twice as many asylum applications were made in EU member states in October (ibid.).

The above application figures provide an insightful picture of the migration of asylum seekers to the EU, but do not take into account the number of unregistered asylum seekers and those who are granted immediate protection in the EU even without an asylum procedure. Since the start of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine in February 2022, according to UNHCR (2022b), some 4.8 million people had already fled Ukraine to Europe by the beginning of June 2022. In response to the high immigration figures, the European Parliament activated a directive at the beginning of March 2022, according to which people fleeing Ukraine have since been granted immediate temporary protection in the EU for an initial period of one year (Europäisches Parlament, 2022). This means that refugees from Ukraine do not have to go through a lengthy asylum procedure, but still have the right to apply for asylum. In addition, those seeking protection are guaranteed minimum standards such as access to social assistance and a work permit (ibid.). 3.2 million of the 4.8 million seeking protection have been registered under this temporary protection or similar national protection programmes (UNHCR, 2022b). The 35% increase in asylum applications in the EU between February (54,565 initial applications) and March (73,850 initial applications) is also clearly driven by the number of refugees from Ukraine: the number of asylum applications increased by 443% from 2,370 in February 2022 to 12,875 in March 2022 (Eurostat, 2022). Ukrainian refugees thus formed the largest group of asylum seekers. The highest number of asylum applications within EU member states in March 2022 was reported in Germany, with 14,135 asylum applications (19%) (ibid.). According to

UNHCR (2023a), a total of 8,046,621 refugees from Ukraine had been registered in Europe at the beginning of 2023 (February 6, 2023), 4,823,326 of them with temporary protection or under similar national protection programmes (January 31, 2023). In a comparison of European countries, the largest number of Ukrainian refugees was registered in Poland (1,563,386, February 7, 2023), followed by Germany (1,055,323, January 31, 2023) and the Czech Republic (485,124, 29.01.2023) (ibid.).[2]

The large number of people seeking protection from Ukraine has changed perception of the main regions of origin of refugees in the EU, the most common migration routes, as well as the countries where most people seek protection. Due to the geographical location of the countries, the destination preferences of those seeking protection and the political situation, the impact of refugee migration on the individual EU Member States has been and continues to be very varied. Accordingly, the migration conditions and experiences of the countries that are the focus of this publication are also influenced by different factors and vary greatly.

3. Migration to the ITTS project countries

In the past decade, Greece has become one of the main countries of entry into the European Union. Due to its geographical location on the EU's external border, there is a high level of immigration from Türkiye, especially via the Mediterranean. In 2015 alone, 856,723 refugees arrived in Greece via the Mediterranean and 4,907 people crossed the national border (UNHCR, 2023b). In 2016, the total number of arrivals was 177,234 according to UNHCR (ibid.). Since 2016, Greece's immigration policy has been constantly changing accordingly and overall tightened, actively supported by increased control mechanisms and measures by the EU, including through the border management agency Frontex and the EU-Türkiye agreement (Europäisches Parlament, 2022; Noraie-Kia, 2022). Since then, annual arrival numbers in Greece have varied significantly from 9,157 (2021) to 74,616 (2019), but have been significantly lower than in 2015 and 2016, with a total of 147,420 refugees registered by UNHCR in 2022 (UNHCR, 2023b). Greece is thus a country with a particularly high number of migrants from non-EU countries, but for many of them it is only a temporary stopover on their way to mainly Northern and Central European countries (Kühnlein & Hachmeister, 2022).

Measured by the absolute numbers of asylum applications in the EU member states, Germany has been one of the preferred destination countries for refugees within the EU since 2015 at the latest. Due to the suspension of the Dublin Regulation in 2015, many migrants were not directly registered in the countries of their first entry into the EU, and accordingly asylum applications were filed in other EU states (European Parliament, 2020). At that time, the main destinations for those seeking protection were Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden (Brücker et al., 2016). Of approximately 1.3 million asylum applications in 2016, 745,160 applications were made

2 Türkiye: 95,874, Belgium: 66,406, Greece: 20,955, Slovenia: 8,659, Iceland: 2,239.

in Germany. Most refugees came to Germany in 2015 and 2016 from Syria (661,500), the Western Balkans (404,800), Afghanistan (268,200) and Iraq (235,900) (Destatis, 2023b). Since February 2022, over 1 million refugees from Ukraine have sought refuge in Germany (UNHCR, 2023a). The share of the foreign population in Germany was around 15.88 million in December 2022, most of them from non-EU countries (8,319,395), a smaller share are internal EU migrants (5,064,515). The most common nationalities are Türkiye (1.49 million), Ukraine (1.16 million) and Syria (923,805) (Destatis, 2023a).

In an EU comparison, the proportion of the foreign population in Belgium was also in the upper range, at around 12.66% of the population in 2021, and is thus comparable to Germany. However, a large part of this is accounted for by internal EU migration: around 8.16% came from EU states, mainly from France. Only 4.49%, about a third, were accounted for by people without an EU nationality (Statista, 2022a). Most non-European immigrants in 2021 came from former labour agreement countries such as Morocco (14%) and Türkiye (7%), as well as the former colony of the Democratic Republic of Congo (3%) (European Commission, 2023a). Due to the immigration of approximately 67,511 Ukrainian refugees in 2022 (UNHCR, 2023a), Belgium has also seen an increase in immigrant numbers of people without EU nationality.

Already since 2014 and 2015, migration from Ukraine to Poland due to short-term employment had increased compared to previous years. By accepting Ukrainian migrants since 2014, the Polish ruling party (PiS) justified its decision not to accept asylum seekers from other EU countries in Poland at the end of 2015. In doing so, it opposed an EU decision to redistribute refugees within EU member states in order to relieve the crisis situations in Greece and Italy. The Polish government's withdrawal from the redistribution mechanism for refugees is not the only measure the ruling PiS party has taken against the protection of refugees. Human rights organisations report rejections of asylum applications at the Polish border. Despite measures by the European Court of Human Rights prohibiting the refusal to accept asylum applications at the border, this pushback practice still continues (Lukasiewicz, 2019).

Looking at the total share of the foreign population in Poland, at only 1.21% (2021) it is far below the average of 8.35% of the EU member states. At 0.99%, the share of non-EU nationals outweighed that of internal EU migrants (Statista, 2022b). The massive increase in mobility in Poland since 2022 is largely due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and is favoured by spatial and cultural proximity, established migration networks and a similar language (Arak, 2020). Thus, in 2022, the largest number of Ukrainian refugees, 1,563,386 (February 7, 2023), took refuge in neighbouring Poland (UNHCR, 2023a). In March 2022 alone, Poland granted temporary protection status to 675,085 Ukrainians (Eurostat, 2023c).

In contrast, Iceland has the largest share of foreign nationals in the total population of the countries selected for this volume, with a share of 13.9%. If Iceland is included in the list of EU countries, it ranks sixth. At 11.15%, the proportion of migrants from EU countries clearly predominates, while only 2.75% are non-EU nationals. The EU average is around 5.3% (ibid.). The number of migrants in Iceland increased especially

with Iceland's accession to the European Economic Area in 1994. Since 2000, the proportion of foreigners living in Iceland has increased fivefold in about 20 years (Statista Research Department, 2023b). Most immigrants in Iceland are labour migrants from Poland, Northern European countries, Romania and the USA. In 2021, 1,933 people in Iceland were of Polish nationality, 887 were Danish, 614 were Romanian and 590 had Swedish citizienship (Statista, 2022e). There has been a steady and very large increase in the number of refugees in Iceland since 2014 (93) (Statista, 2022g). According to UNHCR data, there were 549 registered refugees in Iceland in 2018, rising to 1,830 in 2021 (ibid.). People from Iraq accounted for most of the refugees in Iceland in 2021 (Statista Research Department, 2023a). In 2022, the highest number of asylum applications in Iceland was made by Ukrainian refugees (2,345), followed by Venezuelans (1,199) and Palestinians (232) (Directorate of Immigration, 2023).

Slovenia lies on the edge of one of the most important migration routes between the Middle East and the EU. After an average of one thousand migrants began entering the EU every day since summer 2015, Slovenia was the first country to close its borders in March 2016, followed by Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia (Peerenboom, 2016). The closure of the Balkan route left many migrants stranded in countries that were not their preferred destination (Tošić, 2018). In Slovenia, the number of asylum applications also increased by approximately 476%, with 1,310 applications in 2016 compared to only 275 applications in the previous year. As recently as 2014, more asylum applications were filed in Slovenia than in 2015, when Slovenia was presumably predominantly a transit country for migrants heading to Northern or Central Europe. Since then, the number of asylum applications in Slovenia has been grown significantly, reaching 5,300 in 2021. While Slovenia was ranked 24th in terms of the number of asylum applications filed in EU member states in 2014, it is ranked 14th in 2021 (Eurostat, 2023a). As one of the Balkan route states, immigration to Slovenia has been consistently influenced by changing and increasingly restrictive border, migration and asylum regulations (Tošić, 2018).

Looking at the number of total non-EU foreign population between 2014 and 2021, Slovenia shows an increase from 80,290 persons in 2014 to 147,531 persons in 2021 (Statista, 2022c). They thus account for approximately 87% of the total foreign population in Slovenia, while only 21,120 persons are internal EU migrants. The five largest foreign populations in Slovenia in 2021 were from the former Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina (79,616), Kosovo (22,386), Serbia (17,257), Northern Macedonia (14,048) and Croatia (10,234). The large share is due not least to internal migration caused by the wars in the former Yugoslavia. In addition, the largest share of the foreign population in Slovenia comes from EU accession candidate countries (Statista, 2022f). In a comparison of EU member states in terms of the share of foreign population, Slovenia was slightly below the EU average at 8% in 2021 (Statista, 2022b). According to UNHCR (2023e), 9,081 Ukrainian refugees had also been registered in Slovenia by January 2023.

Türkiye has the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers in the world, with over 4 million people (UNHCR, 2022a). According to UNHCR (ibid.), Syrian ref-

ugees with temporary protection status accounted for the largest share of refugees in 2021 with approximately 3.7 million, followed by 153,634 refugees from Iraq and 140,709 from Afghanistan. In September 2022, 145,000 Ukrainian refugees had also been registered in Türkiye (ibid.). In comparison, the number of people with EU citizienship living in Türkiye increased only slightly between 2014 (133,825) and 2020 (159,039) (Statista, 2022d).

Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Türkiye has been one of the main countries of refuge for Syrian refugees. Especially in the first years of the war, most refugees sought protection in the neighbouring countries of Türkiye: Lebanon and Jordan – many with the idea of returning to Syria in the near future. Later, these states also became transit countries when many Syrian refugees decided to seek refuge in the EU or to return to Syria (Kühnlein & Hachmeister, 2022). Many refugees from the Middle East seek protection in Türkiye or cross the country with the aim of entering the EU via the border to Greece. The eastern Mediterranean route, i. e. the sea route between Türkiye and Greece, has been used by the majority of migrants to reach the EU since 2007. Between 2014 and 2016, this proportion was particularly high: in 2015 alone, 856,723 refugees arrived via the Mediterranean and 4,907 people crossed the land border from Türkiye to Greece (UNHCR, 2023b). Due to the de facto closure of the Western Balkans route and the return and border security agreement between the EU and Türkiye ("EU-Türkiye Deal"), a significant overall decline in arrivals via the sea route has been evident since 2017 (ibid., Etzold, 2017). The agreement in March 2016 was accompanied by a considerable militarisation of European border protection (Hess, 2022), while violence and human rights violations through pushbacks increased (cf. bordermonitoring.eu; pushbackmap.org).

The descriptions of the immigration processes in the seven project countries make it clear that these vary considerably between the states. However, they also indicate that in all countries there has been a move from non-EU countries and that this involves highly qualified people, including many teachers with university training and in some cases many years of professional experience (e.g. to Germany, cf. Wojciechowicz et al., 2020). In view of global migration processes, teachers have become an important section of the migration of professionals. Looking at mobility within the EU and the European Economic Area, secondary school teachers are among the most mobile professions after nurses and doctors. Primary school teachers rank eighth. These statistics are underlined by the "number of decisions on professionals who have acquired a qualification in a Member State and who have applied for recognition with a view to permanent residence in the EU, the EEA States and Switzerland" (European Commission, 2023b).

In contrast to the mobility of teachers within the EU, this volume is dedicated to teachers who have migrated from outside the EU to European countries. The focus is on teachers who have obtained their professional qualification in a non-European country and who want to start a professional life as a teacher in their new country of residence. As can already be seen from the various country contributions, there are hardly any statistics and research on this topic. In view of the large arrival of non-Eu-

ropean migrants with a long-term perspective to stay, this publication deals with the question of the opportunities and challenges facing the professional re-entry of these teachers.

4. A cross-national view of the professional re-entry of international teachers – systematisation of findings from the country contributions

As most of the contributions in this publication make clear, the data and information situation on international teachers are very precarious. Only a few research papers deal with the professional integration of international teachers in their new education systems. There is also little data on this particular professional group, making it difficult for researchers to identify international teachers among other professionals in European education systems. Against the backdrop of a large number of refugees and new immigrants for other reasons in Türkiye, Greece, Belgium and Germany – and now also in Poland due to the war in Ukraine – this may, on the one hand, be an expression of an overload of the receiving systems. However, the difficult data situation also gives indications of particularly high prerequisites and requirements for teacher employment in the respective countries, due to which only a few international teachers can actually work in schools in their professional field.

Accordingly, the country reports reflect considerable barriers to entry and challenges for the professional re-entry of international teachers. It is neither a matter of course nor the norm to enable immigrant teachers to teach in the education systems in their new countries of residence and in some school systems it seems virtually impossible (cf. the reports on Greece and Iceland in this volume). In the following, some of the main points from the country reports are examined again, before a summary of the central findings and the resulting recommendations are presented.

4.1 High-level linguistic demands

All contributions in this volume point to very high-level language requirements for international teachers wishing to re-enter the profession within the state education systems. Given the linguistic competences that teachers need to fulfil their tasks in schools and classrooms, this is at first sight an understandable obstacle from the point of view of the authorities. What should be questioned is the required level, the possibility of acquiring it and the unequal treatment with respect to native applicants, to name just a few aspects. The majority or official language of the countries is usually also the language of instruction. International teachers with a comparably short migration history and short-term migration decisions have to spend a long time learning the new language. If mastery of this language is a formal qualification for employment in schools, it is obvious that language barriers play an important role in the social participation and professional integration of teachers with a migration background.

In the contributions from Belgium, Germany and Greece listed here, the formal language requirements according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) are between level C1 and C2, depending on the hiring modality. In the Belgian region of Flanders, the requirement of a C1 level certificate in Dutch is supplemented by the requirement of French language skills (B1 to B2, depending on the skill) for employment in the fifth and sixth grade of primary school (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2021). In Slovenia, although no level is defined according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020), according to the training regulations (Rules on the education of teachers and other professional workers in vocational and professional education, 2011), all teachers must be fluent in the standard Slovenian language, which must be proven in a final examination. Teachers who are not fluent in Slovene cannot be regularly employed in a Slovenian educational institution. Accordingly, the persons interviewed in the country report stated that obtaining the Slovenian language certificate is an impediment to hiring international teachers. In the Turkish report, the language level is not specified, only implicitly is it mentioned that Syrian teachers who do not have the Turkish language certificate and work in the temporary educational institutions for Syrian children are threatened with dismissal. The authors of the reports on Iceland and Poland also do not specify a formal language classification for the employment of teachers. However, they point to a particularly high level of language skills required, especially in contrast to the particular obstacles in learning Icelandic or Polish: "The Polish language is not easy to learn and the degree of mastery of the language determines both academic success and economic integration" (Aleksandrovich & Piekarski, 2023).

Linked to the required language skills – whether formally presupposed and socially expected – is the question of opportunities to participate in appropriate language courses. Here, too, there are limitations, as the contributions from Belgium, Germany and Iceland show. Accordingly, the opportunities for language acquisition are very limited and, despite the partial state support for refugees in some areas, are associated with high financial and time expenditure due to the (in)accessibility of the course locations and the intensity of learning. Particularly at the higher levels, language courses are very scarce. Occupation-related language support programmes are generally lacking. There is also hardly any differentiation according to school-related fields of employment, e. g. foreign language teachers or physical education teachers. Similarly, the main languages of origin are rarely if at all recognised as official school subjects.

4.2 Difficulties with the recognition of qualifications

Not all migrants can provide proof of possessing professional certificates and qualifications. Sometimes documents were destroyed in the course of flight or could not be taken with them. Even if the relevant papers are available, their recognition is neither easy nor always transparent for the applicant. Obtaining information on the procedures and criteria for the recognition of qualifications can be a challenge. Initiatives such as an online tool developed in Belgium, the *Coaching Tree* (NARIC *begeleidings-*

boom), aim to facilitate understanding and implementation of the different procedures (Donlevy et al., 2016, p. 14).

The recognition of official documents can also entail lengthy bureaucratic processes and financial expenditures due to the necessary translations and certifications. Due to the different education systems, direct transferability of qualifications is not always possible and instead requires detailed examination of certificates and study content. In the reports on Germany, Slovenia, Greece, Poland and Iceland, particular reference is made to the possible lack of recognition and the difficulty of recognition, also in comparison with the specifics of teacher training in the receiving countries. In the article on the situation of international teachers in Germany, for example, a fundamental difference is discussed between the prerequisite training (two or more subjects, Bachelor's and Master's degree, further second training phase after the university degree) in the German education systems and predominantly single-subject teachers from other education systems. As a result, the degrees held by international teachers with only one subject are not considered to be of equal value. In the hiring practice at schools, this has the consequence that two-subject teachers with full (German) teacher training must be formally preferred to international one-subject teachers. Even supportive school management and school supervisory staff have only very limited room for manoeuvre here. The Polish report by Aleksandrovich & Piekarski points out that the Polish government is trying to simplify and standardise the procedure for the recognition of teacher qualifications and to make the employment requirements for teachers more transparent. At the same time, this article also makes unequal treatment between migrants from different countries of origin very clear.

In the Slovenian and German reports, the recruitment opportunities for international teachers are also compared with the issue of teacher shortage vs. saturation of the teacher labour market. In Slovenia, for example, there are currently enough Slovenian teachers on the labour market, which could make it difficult for immigrant teachers to find a job. In Germany, the shortage of teachers creates windows of opportunity that at least make it possible to facilitate recruitment. It can currently be observed that previously very restrictive regulations and specifications are being loosened discursively and partly as well operationally.

In Slovenia, all teachers, including international teachers, must be proficient in the standard Slovenian language, have certain teaching competences and qualifications and a recognised professional qualification. Potential candidates who have acquired their teaching competences in their country of origin can initiate the procedure for recognition of their professional qualifications at the Ministry of Education. Employment conditions in education are the same for all teachers, except that international teachers also need a residence and work permit. Nevertheless, there are hardly any international teachers in the country, as the intensive research efforts of the Slovenian project team, which contacted all pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in the country, revealed. This may also be related to the fact that Slovenia – as described in the report by Brumen, Herzog, Duh & Zupančič – is largely a transit country.

4.3 Nationality and residence restrictions

Fundamental to the employment of international teachers in schools is a specific, usually long-term residence title, closely linked to a work permit. In Greece, in addition to the recognition of university degrees and proof of Greek language skills at C1 level, citizenship is a particularly high hurdle in the country comparisons, as it is a fundamental condition for the employment of international teachers at Greek state schools. However, obtaining citizenship or naturalisation is a lengthy and costly process and thus a serious impediment to the integration of international teachers in the Greek education system. In Poland, too, teachers in mainstream schools are generally expected to have Polish citizenship. However, the system allows for a variety of exceptions if schools claim the need and other conditions are met, such as the recognition of qualifications and professional experience. However, the article also shows that the procedures for the recognition of teaching qualifications also depend on the country of origin – and have developed a clear dynamic through the admission of Ukrainian refugees.

In the other countries, too, employment opportunities are linked to the teachers being in possession of a residence permit. Citizenship can be a possibility for acquiring a work permit, but fortunately it is not a necessary prerequisite and thus, in the case of a lack of it, not an obstacle to working as a teacher at a state school.

4.4 Programmes for supporting immigrant teachers and students

Some country reports describe programmes and measures for the professional and/or social integration of newly arrived migrants that are designed for all migrants and refugees, regardless of their profession. Examples of this are the Belgian projects *De Baobab*, which focuses on early childhood education, and *MaxiPAC*, which supports the recognition of qualifications, or the *Directorate for Social Integration* and *the Helios project* (Hellenic integration assistance for beneficiaries of international protection) in Greece. Structures and programmes specifically designed for international teachers with or without a refugee background are described in particular in the Turkish and German reports.

In the Turkish report by Oruç Ertürk, the situation of Syrian students and teachers was focused on, as they have migrated there in great numbers, especially as a result of the war in Syria. Due to the so-called EU-Türkiye Deal, they are also remaining in Türkiye to a greater extent than before. With the so-called *Temporary Education Centres* (TEC), which have been established since 2013 with the support of UNICEF, educational institutions for Syrian pupils have been built inside and outside the large refugee camps. In the TECs, which are generally administered separately from the Turkish education system, primary and secondary school lessons are taught in Arabic by Syrian teachers, following the Syrian curriculum. Only Turkish lessons are taught by Turkish teachers. This creates temporary jobs for the Syrian teachers. However, the dependence on UNICEF funding and the redundancies that go hand in hand with

the lack of funding are also mentioned in the country report. In the long term, all provisional schools for Syrian pupils are to be closed to facilitate gradual integration, without the fate of the Syrian teachers working at these schools being clarified, according to the country report.

The overall idea behind the TECs is that the refugees will be able to return to Syria in the medium term – which is hardly foreseeable given the ongoing war and the humanitarian and human rights situation in Syria; not to mention the difficult implications of the devastating earthquake in February 2023 on both sides of the border. With regard to Ukrainian students, who have been receiving education in Poland or Germany since 2022 as a result of the war, the discussion about temporary and parallel versus permanent school programmes integrated into the education system of the receiving countries has gained momentum again.

Specific re-qualification programmes for international teachers, as described in the German report for three federal states, do not exist in any of the other countries participating in ITTS to the knowledge of the authors. The re-qualification programmes described, unlike the temporary educational institutions in Türkiye, for example, aim at the professional integration of immigrant teachers in schools. In addition, the programmes, while aspiring to be holistic, also take into account dimensions of an intercultural opening of schools, also at the personnel level, and intend to stimulate comprehensive school development processes that take into account the special challenges and opportunities of schools in a migration society (cf. Purrmann et al., 2020; Schüssler & Purrmann, 2021). Against the backdrop of an increasingly heterogeneous student body, the aim is to reflect this heterogeneity more clearly in the teaching staff and thus to create role models, especially for newly arrived students (Purrmann et al., 2022). The aim is to create a basis for making it easier to re-enter the profession and, at the same time, to stimulate rethinking in and about schools by reflecting on ideas of normalcy in schools. In an interlocking of university and state re-qualification programmes, the programmes in North Rhine-Westphalia enable participants to make their first professional re-entry. The main challenge is described as gaining access to permanent positions, which have so far been too closely linked to the existing shortage of teachers, as well as the difficulties of recognition due to the very specific German teacher training system, which with its second (in-service training) phase is hardly comparable internationally.

All country reports show that full recognition or regular entry into the teaching profession at school remains the exception. Access to compensatory measures, such as the opening of EU adaptation courses for people from third countries, is also extremely dependent on the fulfilment of pre-conditions and has so far been denied to most international teachers.

4.5 Alternative teaching opportunities

In countries where access to the formal education system is largely closed to teachers from abroad, alternative employment opportunities are of great importance. As an alternative to employment opportunities in state schools, for example, international schools are mentioned in the Greek report by Chiou & Petracou. Of the 30 international schools in Greece, most are from EU countries or the USA, while only three are from other countries (Chiou & Petracou, 2023). These schools are mainly staffed by international teachers who have obtained a work and residence permit for Greece, but are ultimately employed in the education system of their country of origin or the country of the schools. The conditions for employment do not correspond to the Greek state requirements, so that the recognition of foreign university degrees and the certification of Greek language skills can be waived.

Other employment opportunities mentioned in several country contributions, such as Greece and Belgium, include working in foreign language centres (also the case in Poland), in adult education or in educational projects of non-governmental organisations. However, the activities and status often do not correspond to those of a teacher in the formal education system, neither in relation to the country of origin nor to the host country.

4.6 Socio-economic inequalities and discrimination

Closely related to the lack of recognition of teaching qualifications obtained abroad are socio-economic inequalities between international and local teachers.

In the description of the programmes for Syrian teachers in Türkiye, the precarious situation of temporarily employed teachers with comparatively low wages and the risk of short-term closure of schools due to lack of financial resources is particularly evident. After the closure of these institutions, the Turkish government does not foresee any professional perspectives for the Syrian teachers.

The report on the situation in Flanders also stresses that teachers can be discouraged by lower salaries and the lack of social prestige of the profession. Linguistic, religious and cultural differences can foster inequalities and discrimination. The article also shows that schools in Flanders have autonomy in hiring teachers and have the possibility to hire teachers with a migrant background and a foreign degree that have not (yet) been recognised by the authorities. Nevertheless, they usually prefer people without a migration background, including trainee students or trainee teachers (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2019, p. 28).

The Icelandic report emphasises a large discrepancy between native Icelanders and immigrants with regard to a variety of socio-economic indicators. Unemployment, financial insecurity and loneliness are more common among immigrants than natives. These statistics do not refer directly to teachers, but this issue should also be considered in the debate on international teachers.

In Germany, too, the questions of the lack of comparability and difficult recognition of teaching qualifications go hand in hand with the fact that international teachers, who can often only be employed as single-subject (temporary) teachers, are placed significantly lower in terms of pay scale than teachers who have completed teacher training in Germany and who also have the option of obtaining civil servant status (cf. also George, 2021). In addition, with reference to Niesta Kayser (2020), the article addresses the negative consequences of a lack of professional integration and of unemployment in connection with the issue of refugee migration.

For many newly immigrated adults, professional integration is an important prerequisite for settling down in the new country and for their social integration. However, it is not uncommon for this to go hand in hand with employment at a level below the requirements of the previous occupation (Brücker et al., 2020, p. 10). This has many implications for a life of dignity and security, for the socio-economic security of those affected and their families, and ultimately for social participation.

4.7 Representation and cultural diversity as an opportunity

The relevance of heterogeneous teaching staffs reflecting the make-up of the student body is emphasised in several reports in this publication. At the same time, it is noted that the required diversity is not reflected in the reality of teachers' staff rooms. For the region of Flanders, the Belgian report by Goemans, d'Herdt & Holz points to a fundamental under-representation of employees with a migration background in the education system. A recommendation of the Flemish Diversity Commission includes the resolution that the government should monitor and research the diversity of students and teachers (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020, p. 6). So far, however, there are no official figures on the proportion of teachers with an immigrant background (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020; Donlevy et al., 2016, pp. 12–15), but awareness of the importance of diversifying the education system is growing (Moens, 2017).

The number of immigrant students is also increasing in Icelandic schools, while this diversity remains unnoticed in the staffing of teaching positions, apart from additional support functions (Pálsdóttir et al., 2021). However, Hopton & Pétursdóttir, the authors of the Icelandic report, point out that intercultural education and addressing diversity, which is an integral part of the state education and training of Icelandic teachers, could provide a basis for the diversification of teaching staffs. As stated in Pétursdóttir (2013, 2018), interculturality is defined here as a basic principle that should run through the entire institution and determine the relationships between all persons within the institution.

The argumentation in the German report by Schüssler, Hachmeister, Auner, Beaujean & Göke, which also points to an under-representation of teachers with their own and their family's migrant background, also goes in this direction. Schools and the people who work and learn in them can benefit from the exchange and cooperation with immigrant teachers. They bring new perspectives, experiences, linguistic and cultural knowledge. The professional re-entry of international teachers is therefore

closely linked to the promotion of interculturally oriented educational processes and the success of students with a migration background (Massumi, 2014). A society shaped by immigration makes it necessary to rethink schools under conditions of migration-related heterogeneity, so that dealing with ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in schools is seen as a natural part of society. As a counterpart to a migration-related pluralisation of the student body, this diversity should therefore also be strengthened within the teaching profession.

Overall, all reports refer to the fact that difficulties in accessing the profession are accompanied by diverse de-professionalising experiences and rejections. The treatment of migrant teachers, the denial of their professionalism, the impossibility of expressing themselves confidently and interacting in a self-assured manner as they are used to in their country of origin, burdens of forced migration, are accompanied by many depressing and degrading experiences.

The findings of the quantitative survey are an exception here. Although experiences of discrimination and degradation are also evident here in the open answers, the opportunities and potentials are also impressively shown, both in the open answers and in the quantitative findings. In other words, if international teachers have the opportunity to work in their profession as specialist teachers in the host country, they and the schools can have a variety of positive experiences under certain conditions.

5. Conclusion, recommendations, outlook

This publication has set itself the task of outlining the situation of international teachers in the countries of the ITTS project partners. The majority of the country contributions have broken new thematic ground. The country reports on Belgium, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Poland, Slovenia and Türkiye clearly show the existing obstacles, but also the opportunities and scope for the professional re-entry of international teachers. The quantitative comparative study makes it clear that, in addition to all the impediments, the deployment of international teachers in the host countries can be profitable and full of potentials.

From an overview of all these approaches and in comparison with the literature reviewed in this volume, the following summarised observations, tips and recommendations can be derived. As these have to take into account very different starting points across countries, they are inevitably broader and more general than recommendations that can be formulated specifically for a particular country or region.

5.1 Summary of the observations and findings

1. The field of professional integration of international teachers (from third countries, with or without a refugee background) has been little researched so far. Unlike, for example, the origin-related diversity of pupils, the diversification of the teaching staffs has so far also been less in the public and political focus.

2. In the recognition or lack of recognition of degrees, there is a strong orientation towards the context-specific standards of teacher training and thus also towards a prevailing (national or regional) understanding of normalcy. This conception of normalcy in teacher training and a specific view of how teacher training and school should be and which criteria have to be fulfilled, make a new cross-border professional start considerably more difficult. In addition, the regulated character of the profession means that international teachers face high (also bureaucratic) hurdles in the recognition of their qualifications. Although this is understandable in order not to undermine the academic degrees of the host country and not to disadvantage the graduates of the local teacher training, the question must nevertheless be asked as to how appropriate and more flexible solutions can be found for the dynamic challenges of teacher shortage, diversification of classrooms and professional and social integration of newly arrived professionals.
3. Similarly, schools, teacher education and related recognition processes are monocultural, which makes great demands on international teachers. With their diverse linguistic competences, they usually encounter strongly monolingual teaching staffs – regardless of how strongly plurilingiual the respective host society and thus also the student body may be. The cultural background of international teachers is often not perceived as a plus, but rather as "other", which needs to be adapted as noiselessly as possible. With the exception of a few world languages such as English, French or Spanish, there is hardly any recognition of foreign language competences or multilingualism. This is especially true for the languages of the main countries of origin of refugees to Europe.
4. In response to massive refugee movements (especially since 2015 and with renewed intensity with the onset of the war in Ukraine) and the associated need to develop schooling concepts for a large number of newly arrived students in a short time, new considerations and initiatives for the integration of international teachers have also emerged. However, the resulting leeway in recruitment policy is strongly linked to the widespread and increasing shortage of teachers in Europe. Thus, they do not provide transformative and lasting solutions for a strengths-based integration of international teachers that would lead to fundamental structural changes in the recognition and recruitment of international teachers.
5. Re-qualification programmes, as described in the German report for some federal states, are an exception in the comparative country analysis. The authors are only aware of them in Europe in systematic form in Sweden and Austria. In the course of the re-qualification programmes, an accompanied career entry is made possible, at least in part. However, the transition to permanent employment and the recognition of the certificates acquired within the framework of the programmes described remains too contingent and a challenge that is difficult for those involved to comprehend. Thus, the possibility of successfully applying for a permanent position is strongly dependent on the shortage of teachers.
6. It is not surprising that the majority of international teachers from non-EU countries are unable to return to their profession. If they are employed at a school,

- they are often employed in an auxiliary function, in the school integration sector or as assistant teachers,
- many of them have contracts with short fixed terms; unless they are given the option of permanent positions following re-qualification measures and depending on recruitment opportunities in the context of teacher shortages,
- they receive a salary that is usually several pay scales lower than that of native teachers, as often the teaching qualification is not fully recognised and practical professional experience gained in the country of origin is not recognised.

Innovations resulting from the opening of EU adaptation courses to third countries, the lowering of entry requirements to a C1 level and other dynamic developments due to a worsening shortage of teachers and current refugee movements will need to be monitored further.

The difficulty of acquiring participants for the quantitative ITTS survey, which was conducted in seven countries with 158 international teachers, also revealed that the professional integration of international teachers is not yet sufficiently prominent on the political agenda in most of the participating countries. In contrast to a migration-related pluralisation of the student body in most of the European countries selected here, this diversity is usually not reflected in the teaching profession.

The comparative study also shows that international teachers are a very heterogeneous group of people in a profession with a wide variety of professional experiences and competences, challenges and training needs, opportunities and working conditions. As the lowest common denominator, one could postulate that they are first and foremost teachers or subject teachers who can, but do not have to, offer their international background as an asset. If they are given the opportunity to work in a school in the receiving country, high satisfaction values are apparent. Three factors play a particularly important role here:

- the self-efficacy beliefs and the handling of challenges by the teachers themselves
- that they are perceived and taken seriously as teachers (and not as support staff)
- that they receive support in re-entering the profession in the new schools.

With the ITTS comparative study, it was possible to work out not only the attitude of those affected themselves, but also the importance of the way schools deal with international teachers and the support they offer. The need for support is particularly high when they are made unilaterally responsible for migration issues, or when teachers feel over-burdened by conflicts and experience barriers. The quality of the support must also be kept in mind. More important than partially perceived system differences, which can be taken into account by means of communication and reflection, is an open and appreciative approach on the part of schools to their international teachers (Brandhorst et al., 2023).

5.2 Recommendations derived from the ITTS project

Thus, the following recommendations can be summarised from the results of the detailed country observations and the quantitative study:

1. The social integration of immigrants also includes participation in professional life and thus the integration of international teachers into the education system. Instead of precarious employment with low salaries and temporary or fixed-term contracts, the creation of long-term employment opportunities with equal rights for international teachers would be desirable.
2. Overall, a more open consideration of teaching qualifications acquired abroad is necessary – and, in view of the increasing shortage of teachers, also expedient. This applies, for example, to the university degree for teachers from countries of origin where a Master's degree is not required for the teaching profession, or to the employment modalities for teachers qualified for teaching one subject (which is very common internationally) in countries such as Germany, where the regular teacher training system includes at least two school subjects.
3. In the case of applications for recognition, as well as the opening of the EU adaptation course for teachers from third countries, a strength-oriented examination of the applications should take place. Discretionary and decision-making leeway should be made full use of as far as possible in a solution-oriented manner. It would also be helpful to raise the awareness of those responsible for recognition issues, e. g. in the form of in-service trainings.
4. With regard to missing certificates or qualifications, specific further training opportunities for international teachers should be offered and promoted.
5. Language barriers should be interpreted more appropriately in accordance with the subject matter to be taught. It is not expedient to demand linguistic competences at a level for which there is no systematic, occupationally oriented offer of corresponding language courses. Since, as a rule, up until now only language competence at the general level has been required, there is also no guarantee that the professional language requirements for school and teaching can be mastered. Thus, the development of financially accessible, job-related language support measures that prepare and accompany the professional re-entry is both sensible and important.
6. Re-qualification programmes, such as those described in the German report, could also be an incentive for other countries to support and facilitate the difficult entry into the profession in the new country, for which there are a host of pre-conditions that need to be fulfilled. They should be designed in such a way that after successful completion they offer teachers permanent employment opportunities, irrespective of the issue of teacher shortages.
7. To address the issue that international teachers have been a neglected field of interest, unlike the increasing heterogeneity of the student body, it would be helpful if policy makers and school administrators, together with representatives of universities and civil societies, have the courage and foresight to pursue innovative

paths for creating "schools of diversity" in a migration society. This should also be reflected in recruitment and hiring policies as well as in appropriate re-qualification measures.

8. In the future, this could also be reflected in a stronger consideration of languages from the main countries of origin as additional foreign languages in the form of regular school subjects. This would take into account that schools are operating in a migration society and at the same time could generate an additional regular subject for international teachers to teach.
9. In school practice as well as in accompanying academic research, attention should be focused more on the common ground, the subject-teaching activity, understanding of one's role and the professional ethos. Rather than being labelled as migrants, international teachers should first and foremost be perceived as professionally trained and experienced teachers. It should be up to the international teachers themselves – and not to the external decision by the school or the school administration – to decide whether they want to emphasise their competence as subject teachers or also use their biographical background and their multilingual competences as resources.

Schools and the people who work and learn in them can benefit from the exchange and cooperation with immigrant teachers. They bring with them new perspectives and experiences, linguistic knowledge and knowledge of their culture of origin. The professional re-entry of international teachers is therefore closely linked to the promotion of interculturally oriented educational processes and the success of migrant students (Massumi, 2014).

A diverse teaching staff offers a broader range of experiences and backgrounds for the education system. Habits and routine methods can be critically challenged. In this sense, the ITTS project has produced a handout for school stakeholders, school administrators, mentors and teaching staff (Brumen et al., 2023). It is also based on the results of the ITTS research and provides school actors with concrete instruments for understanding, reflection, counselling and information. The handout is intended to promote strength-oriented support for the arrival of new international teachers at school. In addition, it contains suggestions for the promotion of corresponding negotiations and communication within the framework of school development in a migration society.

Teachers with international backgrounds can introduce narratives of lived experiences into the classroom and provide learners with a broader, more global perspective. Goldhaber et al. (2019) provide a selection of evidence on measures that show that all learners benefit from teacher diversity. It is highly likely that those who have managed forced migration and flight have high levels of intercultural skills such as resilience, initiative, flexibility and other related qualities. A society shaped by immigration makes it necessary to rethink schools under the conditions of migration-related heterogeneity, so that a strength-oriented approach to ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in schools is seen as a natural part of society.

The findings published in this volume are characterised by different starting conditions in the cross-national analysis: extremely different levels of immigration, different migration regimes, differences in integration and social policies, differences in teacher training and in the recruitment requirements for teachers, as well as the existence or not of initiatives for the integration of international teachers. As diverse as the starting points and experiences described are, they can be summed up in the title of a study carried out for the German context: with regard to the recruitment of international teachers and the diversification of colleges, there are still too many "wasted opportunities" (George, 2021). Proactively seizing these opportunities should be the order of the day and a sign of a modern, bold and forward-looking immigration and education policy.

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