

## Participant's report to the National Nominating Authority and the National Contact Point

### Meeting report

In the three weeks after the event, please complete this report. It contains two sections:

1. **Reporting:** this is intended as a feedback on the event, on what was learnt, on how the event will affect your work and on how it will be disseminated. In addition to the ECML National Nominating Authority and the National Contact Point in your country the ECML will use the report<sup>1</sup> in the "Experts involved in ECML activities" section of each ECML member state website (please see <http://contactpoints.ecml.at>).

This section should be written in one of the project's working languages.

2. **Public information:** this is intended as an information on the ECML project and its expected value for your country. The content should be of interest for a larger audience. Thus it should link up to interesting publications, websites, events etc. which were discussed on the occasion of the workshop or which are relevant in your country. The public information should be a short, promotional text of about 200 words.

This section should be written in (one of) your national language(s).

### The completed file should be sent to

- the ECML National Nominating Authority and the National Contact Point in your country (contact details can be found at <http://www.ecml.at/aboutus/members.asp>)
- and in copy to ECML Secretariat ([Erika.komon@ecml.at](mailto:Erika.komon@ecml.at))

within the given deadline.

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Only if you authorised the ECML to publish your contact details.

## 1. Reporting

The seminar was entitled a 'collaborative community approach to migrant education' and was aimed at encouraging the participants to reflect on how different stakeholders (including pupils) could be brought together so as to contribute in a meaningful way to a child's education. The seminar adopted an experiential approach which was inherently inter-cultural as it brought together experts from different parts of Europe, each of whom contributed their different perspectives so as to make this workshop the richly diversified and highly enriching experience that they succeeded in doing. I would say that the most central lessons that were acquired from this workshop were those of appreciating the complexity of the multi-cultural process, seeing how there are different types of multi-cultural contexts, and being conscious that they are always evolving. Teachers/educators, parents, pupils and the schools themselves also face a number of complex challenges that although sometimes conceptually separable on paper are intertwined in everyday classroom practice. For instance, speaking in a classroom where the students come from different cultural backgrounds might imply that they find it difficult to relate to one another and this can give rise to situations of bullying or where students find themselves disaffected at school since they are unable to relate to what they are being taught. The teacher, however, might also be in a situation where she feels restricted by the curriculum and is unsure how far she can adapt the syllabus so as to effectively manage the class in an optimal fashion. The school administration may be inundated by complaints by certain parents that the syllabus is not being covered as quickly as it should - as the teacher may have to work at a slower pace granted that the students are unable to keep up with a 'foreign' curriculum. The seminar introduced the notion of a holistic approach to teaching where parents were invited to play an active part in the classroom's activities and where the curriculum, during certain lessons, could be adapted so as to build on the cultural strengths and knowledge of the parents. Therefore, for instance, a Chinese parent could be invited into the class, so as to teach the children how to write their names in Chinese, and to cover certain aspects of Chinese culture with them. Likewise an Arabic teacher can show children how to write down basic things in Arabic, and to get the children to enjoy the sensation of drawing letters by writing from right to left instead of vice-versa as in the Romance script.

I believe that the seminar has served to give me wider exposure to an appreciation of the difficulties that migrants face when entering a culture which is different from that they are accustomed to. In this respect, I believe that it has influenced me as a lecturer in a further education setting by allowing me to understand how curricula can be developed in ways that are more sensitive to the needs of migrant populations, by noting how people are influenced by the context that surrounds them, and by taking this into account in the way curricula are developed. Also, the reality that if people move around within the same country (eg. Canada) or different parts of Europe implies that migrants have to adapt to curriculum changes, culture changes, and even changes in one's peers and lecturers. This seminar has brought home this fact by bringing to the participants' attention how sometimes adapting can be a very energy-consuming and sometimes confusing exercise and will thereby increase my sensitivity to the plights of any migrants in my classes.

I intend using and adapting the material from the workshops by offering a training course to teachers as part of their continuous professional development training in the coming academic/scholastic year.

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Title of ECML project	Collaborative Community Approach to Migrant Education.
ECML project website	www.ecml.at
Date of the event	25-27 June 2014
Brief summary of the content of the workshop	Different methodologies so as to ensure that migrant children receive an optimum education whereby teachers are sensitized to their needs.
What did you find particularly useful?	I found the experiential approach adopted particularly interesting as well as the inter-cultural aspect of evolving ideas with people from all over Europe.
How will you use what you learnt/ developed in the event in your professional context?	What I have acquired from this workshop is a greater appreciation of the challenges that educators face in relating to children/young people and parents.
How will you further contribute to the project?	I would like to develop a project of my own based on what I have acquired from this conference.
How do you plan to disseminate the project? - to colleagues - to a professional association - in a professional journal/website - in a newspaper - other	I will be offering staff-training to colleagues based on what I have learnt at the conference.



### Public information

Short text (about 200 words) for the promotion of the ECML event, the project and the envisaged publication with a focus on the benefits for target groups. This text should be provided in your national language(s) to be used for dissemination (on websites, for journals etc.).

The Collaborative Community Approach to Migrant Education is based primarily on bringing together all stakeholders in understanding the importance of enabling children and young people to acquire a meaningful education. These include parents, teachers, school administrators, and, also, the students themselves. This coming together does not only base itself on allowing students physical access to schools and other places of learning but also the possibility of participating meaningfully in what they are taught, by having it presented to them in a language that they can follow and understand. The language includes both the spoken word and the wider taken-for-granted cultural understandings that migrants may find difficult to discern, comprehend, and relate to. Ideally, children from bi-lingual and poly-lingual families should be encouraged to speak both the language(s) spoken in their host country and their native language(s) as this is likely to give them a greater sense of continuity and psychological stability, particularly if they have left their home-land as refugees/asylum-seekers. Within the Maltese context, although research is being undertaken, particularly relating to asylum-seeking and refugee children, further work needs to be developed on how to optimize the educational opportunity of young people from other parts of Europe who benefit from the freedom of movement associated with coming from an EU country.