



From Paris to abroad

- Regards croisés sur la Diversité – Diversity & Public policies



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*« These strangers in a foreign World
Protection asked of me-
Befriend them, lest yourself in Heaven
Be found a refugee »*

*« Ces Etrangères, en Monde inconnu
Asile m'ont demandé
Accueille-les, car Toi- même au Ciel
Pourrait être une Réfugiée »*

Emily Dickinson (Quatrains II-2, 1864-65, Amherst, Massachusetts, Etats-Unis)
traduction en français de Claire Malroux (NRF, Poésie/Gallimard, Paris, 2000)

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From Paris to Rotterdam

The Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (Iriv) has published since September 2016 a newsletter dedicated to migration- Regards Croisés sur la Migration. Its main aim is to tackle the issue of diversity – which gave a motto to the European Union since 2004 with the entrance of ten new EU country members (from 15 to 25).

The first 4 issues of our newsletter (September 2016 to March 2018) were dedicated to a comparison between Paris and Berlin on the basis of the testimonies of migrants found in our French and German capitals. Each time men and women with a foreign background explained how they have succeeded to live, work and build a future in France and Germany taking into account the many barriers they had to overcome.

From November 2018, the newsletter opens to other European Cities in that may be considered as examples to enhance and manage the diversity of their population in public space, public services and public policies. The first “new” issue opens with Rotterdam (Netherlands) whose inhabitants coming from abroad represent more than 70 % of the total population. This is both a challenge and an opportunity to experience new approaches.

In Rotterdam this rich diversity of the population is quite obvious in its architecture, the building of the public spaces combining modernity – with numerous skyscrapers and traditional buildings – symbolised by the statue of Erasmus, one of the most famous European humanist who gave his name to the most popular European programme- 3 million students could travel and have a first European experience between 1987 and 2017. Since 2014 all learners of all ages (from 7 to 77 years old) are concerned by the Erasmus + programme.

In Paris the population is composed of people coming from other cities or regions (internal migration) or from foreign countries (external migration). In early and last settlements, French people usually gathered according to the neighbourhood of their train station arrival (Britons at the Gare Montparnasse for instance) or according to their ethnic communities – many Chinese people live in the XIIIth district of Paris or Indian people around the Gare du Nord.

Each time the newsletter is co-written between a representative of Iriv (Paris, France) and a European colleague from another European City suggesting an innovative approach to enhance diversity in the city, whatever the audience addressed, with a reference to a project they are involved in.

This new issue first tackles the issue of diversity in Rotterdam with the kind collaboration of our Dutch colleague from the Willem De Kooning Academie with whom the iriv is partner in the GRIT project- Growing in uRban education and diversity –an Erasmus + project, led by the Karel de Grote University, Antwerp, in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal (2018-2020).

Bénédicte Halba, president of iriv, co-founder of the club of iriv

Paul Pos, architect, teacher at the Willem De Kooning Academie



Rotterdam city of minorities, Educating towards opportunities for all by mirror pedagogy

As many urban environments the city of Rotterdam is characterized by its diverse population. Statistics show that there is no majority of a specific group of citizens anymore, the Rotterdam inhabitants all belong to an immigrated minority. And taking in account the questionable definitions of how diversity is used in these statistics (nationality, & ethnic background, student or expat) the real social, cultural, economic, gender, religious, age or ability diversity is even greater. Rotterdam is a patchwork of thousands of ‘congregations’ where every group lives in his own ‘parish’ to meet in public space, squares, festivals, marketplaces, sport canteens, playgrounds, malls and schools. Congregation as the group who share the same beliefs and values and the parish as the place where you meet.

Most of the time the members of a congregation will meet voluntarily but not in classroom. There they will meet each other under the guidance of (un)experienced teachers who hardly represent the urban context. They are homogeneous and stem from the parish of suburbs and the congregation of Christian or humanistic middle class, white, Dutch backgrounds and are pre-dominantly female. As teachers are having a crucial role in study success and study choices as role models and coaches, and are unaware of the importance of their own identity and background in this process, a vicious circle of recruiting the same ‘kind’ of students for teaching careers is constructed. Teachers become gatekeepers to their congregation. They actually invite identical members to join their ‘congregation of education in the parish called school’.

The department for teacher training in the Arts at the Willem de Kooning Academy/ University of Applied Sciences Rotterdam, is addressing the teacher competencies needed to avoid the selective gatekeeper role in (Urban) secondary education. Based on the Levinas philosophy of the Other and a critical inclusive pedagogy, future teachers are trained to rather act in a ‘brokerage’ then ‘gatekeeping role’.

Brokerage meaning to connect and create new opportunities rather than to select and to preserve. By connecting with inner city schools and ‘parishes’ with internships and recruiting actively new talented students in the Rotterdam Urban environment the department is breaking the vicious circle of selecting and training the ‘usual suspects and the congregation of female white middle class teachers’. Training of this new generation of teachers is done by creating awareness about prejudice, bias, power relations, cultural and social codes and the importance of having high expectations and high demands based upon the Others potential rather than its background. Inspired by the artwork of Yayoi Kusama; ‘Infinity Mirror Room - Phalli’s Field’ Mirroring the Other’s thoughts, ideas, actions is crucial.

In a wide range of study activities including, inner city internships, teaching non-western art and cultural history, experimental classroom settings and intercultural communication training the department is now researching the concept of Growth Mindset as developed by Carol Dweck. Combining the concept of a growth mindset with the mirroring pedagogy a powerful attitude for teachers and students to achieve higher ambitions and success could be created. Hence bridging the gaps between the parishes and congregations.

In close collaboration with educational partners from other major cities in Europe: Anvers, Lisbon, Warsaw and Paris, an Erasmus+ project (2018-2020) offers the opportunity to explore, experiment, evaluate and compare a wide range of practical ‘tools’ to use in classroom settings. This GRIT-project shall contribute to our knowledge and understanding of teacher and student behaviour and study success as well as creating new knowledge on the influence of developing a Growth Mindset in a hyper diverse social and cultural context.

© Paul Pos, Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam, 11/2018



the Diversity approach in Education

Education is a key issue for parents especially with a migrant background as this is the main way for their children to build their personal and professional future. Education integrates two main issues: valuing experience and improving competences to be fully integrated in the host society. The European Reference Framework (European Commission, Brussels, 2006) sets out eight key competences: Communication in the mother tongue (KC1); Communication in foreign languages (KC2); Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology (KC3) ; Digital competence (KC4); Learning to learn (KC5); Social and civic competences (KC6); Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (KC7); and Cultural awareness and expression (KC8). The key competences are all considered equally important, because each of them can contribute to a successful life in a knowledge society.

They have been updated this year as “people need the right set of skills and competences to sustain current standards of living, support high rates of employment and foster social cohesion in the light of tomorrow’s society and world of work. Supporting people across Europe in gaining the skills and competences needed for personal fulfilment, health, employability and social inclusion helps to strengthen Europe’s resilience in a time of rapid and profound change” (European Commission, 2018) .

Many of the competences overlap and interlock: aspects essential to one domain support competence in another. Competence in the fundamental basic skills of language, literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technologies (ICT) is an essential foundation for learning, and learning to learn supports all learning activities. There are a number of themes that are applied throughout the Reference Framework: critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking, and constructive management of feelings play a role in all eight key competences (EC, 2006). A main competence is to be taken into consideration in the relations between professionals and families: intercultural competence. This is the ability to understand one another across and beyond all types of cultural barriers is a fundamental prerequisite for making our diverse democratic societies work.

There is an urgent need for a concerted effort to develop the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge that contribute to intercultural competence in the everyday practice of teaching and learning. It addresses the root of a range of issues our societies face: stereotyping, discrimination, all forms of racism, which are exacerbated in times of economic difficulty. Therefore intercultural education aims to develop and enhance the ability to understand and communicate with each other across all kinds of cultural divisions.

The concept of intercultural competence is related to the concepts of identity, culture, intercultural encounter and competence. Intercultural competence is a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action which enables one, either singly or together with others to: understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself ; respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people ; establish positive and constructive relationships with such people ; understand oneself and one’s own multiple affiliations through encounters with cultural “differences” (Huber & Reynolds, 2014).

In Paris (mainly in districts with a high proportion of students with a migrant background) and in the cities around Paris (in the so-called Urban Sensitive Areas, the administrative territory benefiting by a main financial support from public funding), the diversity approach is a reality on a daily basis both in the class rooms (at school) and outside schools (during the extra-curricular activities). It requires from the educators a main creativity and constant critical thinking in order to be understood by their students in the most relevant way.

Diversity is a two way process- educators learn from their students and vice versa.

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Club de l'iriv at the Cité des Métiers

The iriv offers a monthly club at the Cité des Métiers in Paris as an illustration of a pedagogical approach to enhance diversity on the ground

“Valuing a migratory path – from experience to competence”

In a first step, participants are asked to introduce themselves (short biography) during a roundtable.

In a second step, diverse tools & pedagogical strategies are explained. On the basis of the Migrapass portfolio (circular approach from experience to competence), other strategies are suggested and discussed.

In a third step, the pedagogical supports are sent to each participant afterwards. The participation at 3 clubs together with the sending of one's resume open the way to an official attendance certificate provided by the iriv - it may also enrich the resume (as a training path)

Several European projects in the migration field have been tested at the Cité des Métiers since 2012- the Migrapass (2012), the Valbuk (2013), the ALLinHE (2013-2014), the Vintage (2015-2016), the Key Tutors (2015-2017) combining both a multi-targeted model providing diagnostic or personalized, formative and summative approaches for two groups of people: migrants and professionals

working with them



Further information : www.club-iriv.net

The “open door” strategy is to be understood in many ways. Combining the top-down approach - EU and States providing legislation and financial support for diversity strategies and the bottom-up approach - individuals and organisations willing to be better supported for the access to Education, Training or Employment with regards to their “diverse” profiles.

The various national legislations in Diversity together with the diverse profiles of professionals involved in implementing it on the ground are main issues to be taken into consideration if we really want to promote an “open door” approach. At any level many obstacles may be raised.

- On a macro-level, the main basis for Diversity is based on two European directives adopted in 2000 to tackle the issue of discrimination and promote the European values of human rights ; they have been transposed into the national legislations since then ;
- On a meso-level, professionals working with people with diverse profiles (gender, ethnic origins, religious or political beliefs...) have also very various professional backgrounds- teachers at school, social workers in associations or local authorities, trainers in firms or training bodies
- On a micro-level, people with “diverse” profiles are not properly informed according to their testimonies: mainly because they think the diversity approach is only a communication strategy (among institution and firms) and not a concrete reality.

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