



TALKING ABOUT LANGUAGE AND EMOTIONS AT HOME

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We will develop a tool, a very accessible app, that professionals can use in their support and learning processes with multilingual families.

Intro

This is the first newsletter of the Tales@Home project. In this first newsletter we've interviewed the project coordinator, Hilde De Smedt. She helped us understand quite briefly what this two-year project is about, what the project partners will develop and what the rationale behind this project was. No small feat if you ask us!

Further on in this newsletter, you'll find :

- a brief description of all the project partners,
- an interview with a professional working with multilingual families in Bolzano,
- an interview with Kristina Cunningham, from DG Education and Culture at the European Commission. She reflects on the project, on what it means at EU level, and on what the EU can mean for this project.

Enjoy the read!

Interview with Project Coordinator

Hello Hilde, you're the project coordinator of Tales@Home. Please, tell us a little bit about yourself.

I'm Hilde De Smedt. I'm a speech therapist and I've been working in Foyer for about 32 years specializing in the field of multilingual education. I give training sessions for professionals and for parents and I've coordinated several projects in the field of multilingualism and education. I've developed didactic tools, interactive exhibitions and manuals and published several articles all in the field of multilingual assessment and education. So you could say that we're in the core of my expertise with this project.

Can you tell us in a few words what this project is about?

The language diversity in society and even within families is widely spread. This influences the process of language learning. This project addresses non-formal language learning in multilingual households: we focus on multilingual families and some participating cities have a specific focus on immigrant families speaking a minority language at home. Such families are often confronted with cultural and social obstacles. We aim to empower parents and by extension the whole family to manage language use at home and to create a positive and stimulating environment. In this context we are concentrating on motivations and beliefs in the family about language use and learning.

Parents should create an open atmosphere in which decisions on maintaining or shifting language-use at home are considered and are debatable.



Hilde De Smedt has been working in Foyer for 32 years specializing in multilingualism.

Aren't there many programs and projects like this already?

A lot of multilingual programs focus on parents and the way they should manage the use of different languages. Programs and websites provide information, advice and practical suggestions. Besides tips and tricks for parents we find language activities for children. But first of all, we lack practices that stimulate families to take into account the way family members feel about the choices made and different learning perspectives. And second, most practices which we know of focus on middle-class families. Whereas we need tools to reach families which specifically face social and cultural obstacles.

The innovating character of the project lays in the content because until now the findings of research are barely translated in a way to reach the multilingual people themselves. Also the method is innovative. We choose the methodology of user centered design from the start to the finish of the project. We observe and learn from our users so we can capture their needs. This should result in a tool that is easy accessible to users with diverse lingual and social background.

So you want to develop tools to support these families?

Exactly! We will develop a tool, a very accessible app, that professionals can use in their support and learning processes with multilingual families. And we will also develop a training for professionals who are working with such multilingual families so they can use the app. Both the app and the training will be developed and extensively tested during this two year project.

And what is it you want to achieve exactly with this app?

We believe that all multilingual families should be supported to create an optimal environment for language learning and well-being. They should create an open atmosphere in which decisions on maintaining or shifting language-use at home are considered and are debatable. They should reinforce the mutual understanding between different generations and develop a positive approach to language learning. This means that they have to become aware of language attitudes and emotions from the different family members. They should be able to handle negative attitudes and reinforce the positive ones.

That's quite ambitious. How did the idea for this project grow?

The number of multilingual families in Europe is increasing and language situations have become more complex. Often more than two languages are involved, differences in language use between generations increase and integration demands higher language skills.

On the other hand we see that professionals, such as educators, social or medical workers, teachers and so on, who are working with such multilingual families are facing big hurdles. They're confronted with family members who sometimes struggle with this multilingual context. Or they see family members who express negative connotations towards the home language and/or the majority language. Those professionals often lack tools to help their clients

express these attitudes and bend them in a more positive direction.

All of this increases the need to translate research into practice and make it accessible to a wide range of multilingual families. But that wasn't happening and it's what we want to achieve through this project.

But why are you doing this as an international project? Doesn't that make it a lot harder to realize your goals?

Developing these practices transnationally, with different partners from across Europe, helps us to take into account different language contexts and policies. This means different minority groups, different majority languages and different situations (one or two official languages, less or more support of home languages). What we have in common is that we are confronted with policies and educators (schools, etc.) which pay little attention to valuing home languages. By working together in an international setting, our tools will be better and applicable across Europe. Moreover, working together can create a stronger sensitization and more possibilities for an extensive dissemination.

Thank you very much for the interview Hilde, and good luck with the project!

Who are the partners?

Foyer, Brussels (Belgium)



Foyer is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1969 as a youth centre in Brussels. Foyer wants to contribute to an inclusive society, in which all people, regardless of their personal background, can participate. Foyer is a pluralistic organization with respect for diversity at all levels. Foyer considers staff and volunteers' commitment to the Foyer mission, as well as a professional approach, to be crucially important. Foyer's most important activities are:

Children's and youth activities that build skills and self-confidence (e.g. music, theatre and sports);

Activities for women of all backgrounds and ages and for men and fathers in the neighbourhood;

Activities related to intercultural mediation and prevention in health care;

Contributing to the protection of the rights of individuals, refugees, undocumented persons, Roma and Travellers;

Developing training sessions, tools and methods to spread information and raise awareness about diversity in society. Language diversity is one of the crucial topics.



Soros International House, Vilnius (Lithuania)

Soros International House (SIH) started in 1993 as an English language teaching centre and soon became one of the largest and most highly rated language schools in Vilnius. Since 2000 SIH has been actively involved in a number of international projects on language teaching, development of teaching methodology and tools, adult education and vocational training, intercultural learning, active citizenship, training senior learners and migrant integration. These projects typically focus on teaching to different target groups (young learners, adults, older persons and migrants with a low level of language skills, as well as professionals from different fields). And many projects involve modern ICT in the language teaching and learning process.

While teaching languages to children, SIH maintains a close relationship with their parents and families in order to maintain motivation. As diversity increases among child learners as well, SIH teachers and the administrative staff are facing new challenges, which definitely require new skills and competences that this project could help them to acquire.

UNIPA: Università degli studi di Palermo, Palermo (Italy)

The University of Palermo is one of the oldest and biggest universities in Italy. It is engaged in research and training in the most important areas of scientific and technological knowledge. The Department of Psychological and Educational Sciences of the University of Palermo has been active since 1987. Within the Department lecturers and researchers operate in different fields and disciplines: clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, social psychology, sociology and pedagogy. The Department is structured on two main axes:

- Applying the psychological and behavioural sciences for promoting well-being and preventing mental diseases and psychopathological behaviours.
- Studying social behaviours and human relations through an interdisciplinary perspective focusing on the integration between psychological, social and cultural factors to provide support, interventions and educational policies for public administrations, enterprises and educational and political organizations.

In general, our organization has an interest dictated by the geopolitical configuration in which Italy, and especially Sicily have been directly affected by the recent migration process





EURAC: Accademia Europea Bolzano (Italy)

EURAC is an advanced private non-profit research and training centre established in 1992 with headquarters in Bolzano. EURAC activities include national and international research and training projects as well as direct cooperation with public and private clients. EURAC is performing research activities in different fields from issues related to minority rights protection, federal, regional and local governmental trends and the efficient management of public administrations to studies on renewable energies, promotion of sustainable development and the protection of natural resources.

EURAC's Institute for Specialised Communication and Multilingualism, involved in the present project, was founded in 1993. It originally focused on research into "Language and Law", but over the years, it has steadily expanded its remit to take in the areas of multilingualism and specialised communication. The Institute's research in the field of multilingualism is involved with different aspects of language learning and teaching in the context of a multilingual and multicultural society, the evaluation of language proficiency, and the making use of new media and electronic resources to support language users.



HOGESCHOOL WEST-VLAANDEREN HOWEST, Kortrijk (Belgium)

Established in 1849, with a rich history linked to local industry and social profit organisations, the HOWEST University of Applied Sciences as we know it today, is a result of the latest merger in 1995. In 1995 HOWEST became a single autonomous Higher Education Institution because of a merger of six prominent institutions of higher education in Flanders. Since then the development within HOWEST has taken on a fresh impetus and we are now one of the leading innovative providers of higher education and research in the country.

The research groups have a clear focus on Applied Research. They are leading professional researchers, in the following 5 pillars:

- Business IT & Management
- Innoteach (innovation in intentional learning)
- Preventive Healthcare (Technologies) & Wellbeing
- Design, Media & Communication
- Sustainable Architecture & Energy management.

HOWEST's Devine research group focusses on the interaction between man and device. We explore new possibilities for digital interfaces and new interaction models. We want to implement our digital knowledge and skills in a broader social context.



Double Helix Resources, London (United Kingdom)

Double Helix Resources (DHR) is a private company, set up in September 2015 by Brian De Lord. It's intention is to provide educational and therapeutic consultancy, accredited training and related resources for those working with troubled and vulnerable children and their families. The company is supported by a network of specialist practitioners and researchers.

The individuals that make up the network which DHR is able to draw on, have all worked as high level practitioners, researchers and policy makers and represent a diverse range of specialisms. These include the education and therapeutic support of vulnerable and families, juvenile offending, youth violence, gangs, migrants and refugee communities, fostering and adoption, community arts, social capital, identity, curriculum development and service delivery. DHR has a wealth of experience in the provision of effective and transformational educational and therapeutic services for vulnerable target groups including refugee and migrant communities.



ENSA : European Network of Social Authorities

ENSA is a network of cities and European Regions coming from 13 member countries. It's goal is to promote international cooperation in the social field. ENSA was established by the Veneto Region in 1999. Since then the network has developed and supported solid partnerships between a wide range of European Regions and has carried out seminars, conferences, study visit programs and exchanges of operators.

Collaborating with ENSA is a way to increase the dialogue with the European institutions and to become part of an international platform to implement shared projects. Its scope of work is to encourage international co-operation, mutual learning, exchange of know-how, of cultural models and of experience in the social sector, to deepen the dialogue concerning social policies with the European Institutions, to favour innovative European answers to social needs. The network organizes its work in five subject areas of intervention. Each has its own "thematic network": elderly, youth and family, child issues, disability and social inclusion.

First Meeting round-up

Multilingualism is a matter of fact in our moving society but no better place could have been chosen for the first meeting of this project: Bolzano. Bolzano is a rather unknown little Italian town, where a lot of new languages are constantly introduced by the arrival of migrants and refugees. Three official languages are spoken: Italian, German and Ladin. The rich history of the region as well as its beautiful geography are responsible for this. Bolzano and the rest of South Tyrol were annexed to Italy only in 1918 and that is why the majority of the population of South Tyrol is German speaking. This multilingualism and this mix of cultures is specifically visible on the menu of the many restaurants in Bolzano and the rest of south Tyrolian: order an insalata caprese as a starter, a first plate of Knödel to continue, a second plate of saltimbocca alla romana and feast on an Apfelstrudel for dessert!

These professionals discussed all possible methodologies to create the digital application.

Pull together a group of 8 passionate professionals of multilingualism in this magnificent setting and let them discuss the development of a new digital application for multilingual families... You'll see there's no shortage of topics for discussion ! These professionals discussed all possible methodologies to create the digital application. The first method is a series of interviews with multilingual families in order to help them reflect on their use of languages at home and on the emotions connected to this use. The interviewees of the families will be a child aged 6 to 14 and one of his parents. The professionals will use a visual and accessible questionnaire during the interview. The interviewee will fill in timelines and colour silhouettes in order to reflect on their language use and development in a domestic context.

The project partners are determined to work on the development of the digital application till May 2018, when the application will be presented to the world. The second meeting of the professionals will take place in January 2017 in London. It will, without a doubt, be a successful meeting, even without the gorgeous setting of Bolzano's mountains.



Interview with Ljubica Subotić Rapo

(Interkulturelle Mediatorin, Referat Migration – Kompetenzzentrum)

Dear Mrs. Rapo, could you tell us a little bit about yourself: how did you get to working with multilingual families? And what do you do with the families you work with?

Originally, I come from Croatia, where I worked as an educator in a school district. Because of the war, I migrated with my family in 1992 first to Austria. So, as a mother of two children, I've lived the experience and know what it means to lack a social network for child care and, also, what it means if you cannot understand the language of schooling of your children. My husband was able to attend a German course at the University of Innsbruck during his lunch break, and whenever he was doing his homework, he explained to me his German lesson. I wanted to get a job that was at least similar to the work I had done in my country of origin, so I started to learn German, first on my own and later in evening courses.

Sometimes, there are tears, a feeling of powerlessness: "How can we live up to the expectations of schools here? My first language is so much easier."

Looking for job opportunities, my family came to Bolzano in 1998. The children were enrolled into a German school and we all started to learn Italian. Because my children had attended lessons in their mother tongue Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian in Austria in the afternoon, and as I had noticed the advantages this had for them learning German, I immediately asked the German School Board in Bolzano whether there was a similar educational program on offer. That's when I was informed that in Italy the law provides the function of "mediatore linguistico culturale" (intercultural mediator) in order to facilitate the integration of migrants. After a few months, the School Board contacted me, because two children from my language area had recently arrived at school and I was able to accompany and help them, their parents and their teachers for a few hours per week to give them a good start. Soon after, I underwent a training for intercultural mediators. During these last 18 years, I've worked for more than 50 educational institutes in all three official languages all over South Tyrol.

How does the specific multilingual context of South Tyrol impact on your day-to-day work? I suppose there are positive as well as negative aspects to this?

On the one hand, people from ex-Yugoslavia, where there are 30 different nationalities, have already lived in a similar multilingual context and that helps to explain the situation in South Tyrol. But it certainly is a challenge, if you need to learn three or four new languages at once. People can understand that if they have to perform quickly in a non-native language. For some very talented children and teenagers, plurilingualism is easier. Some, however, need a little bit more time in order for the learner language to become academic language. Many educators and teachers that I meet in kindergarten, school and at teacher trainings on the topic of multilingualism, are conscious of the fact that "feeling included in a class/group" has a positive effect on learning several languages!

Are you confronted with specific emotions or attitudes from children or parents towards their home language or towards other languages they learn?

Yes, at the beginning, there are a lot of new information, notes that need to be signed, all in unknown languages. The families want to do it right, but sometimes, misunderstandings happen, because some rules in the new language, the new cultural and economic situation are not clear. Sometimes, there are tears, a feeling of powerlessness: "How can we live up to the expectations of schools here? My first language is so much easier. There is no "der, die, das, il, lo, gli", one immediately knows which word is feminine and which masculine ... and as to counting, you don't need to pronounce the numbers in an obscure order as is the case with German ..." It's easier for

children and teenagers to talk about these things with someone who has had the same experience. They and their parents often ask how long it took me to learn German and Italian. As an intercultural mediator I encourage them to learn, to write down important words, give examples and offer them some tips on learning and pronunciation (e.g. umlaut in German or “cosa” in Italian)

Do you see an evolution in the way multilingualism is considered by societal actors such as local authorities, schools, family councillors, etc?

In the last 18 years, several institutions (hospitals, work security, registration office, family agencies etc.) have translated their brochures and other information also in some migration languages. In the educational sector, where there are many notes for parents, these were, if possible, also written in the language of the parents and intercultural mediators serve as translators. Here are some multilingual documents compiled by members of the German School board that are available online:



- Schatzkiste der Sprachen
<http://www.bildung.suedtirol.it/kindergarten/didaktische-materialien/schatzkiste-der-sprachen/>
- Berufsorientierung für Jugendliche mit Migrationshintergrund (in 12 Sprachen)
<http://www.provinz.bz.it/bildungsfoerderung/ausbildungs-berufsberatung/1679.asp>
- Informationen für Lehrpersonen
<http://www.provinz.bz.it/bildungsfoerderung/ausbildungs-berufsberatung/1679.asp>
- MSCS – Mehrsprachigkeitscurriculum für Südtirol
<http://www.bildung.suedtirol.it/unterricht/mehrsprachigkeit/materialien-online/>
- ...

Through the Tales At Home project, we're developing an App to assist professionals such as yourself in dealing with multilinguality at home. What is according to you an essential element we mustn't overlook in developing this App?

The topics and the usability of the app should be family friendly and interactive, since for migrants, family is often the only factor of stability, the only safe haven. Language learning activities should be offered at different competence levels and in several languages. The app should also deal with work related topics and exercises, but should keep in mind the socioeconomic background of the people. It would be nice if topics were used that highlight similarities (e.g. family rituals, remedies, water resources ...). That would necessitate a closer cooperation between language experts, ethnologists, intercultural mediators, IT-specialists ...

Thank you very much for this interview!

(You can find this article in German on our website)



Interview with Kristina Cunningham

Kristina has ten years' experience of working with issues linked to multilingualism and language competences at European level.

We met Kristina Cunningham at the conference 'Great start in life' organized by the European Commission in Brussels. (December 2016).

Dear Mrs. Cunningham, you work at the DG Education and Culture for the European Commission. Before we get into the core of this interview, do you have some general reflections on the project Tales@Home?

Congratulations for having been selected for funding with your project Tales@home! Linguistic diversity is one of the over-arching priorities of the Erasmus + program. Your project addresses an aspect which is more important than ever, as increasing numbers of refugees make multilingualism a feature even of regions and cities where previously fewer languages were spoken. Member States are also increasingly aware of the fact that the wellbeing and positive development of children depends on an approach that involves families, health professionals, social workers and communities as well as schools and educators.

How can the EU role in education & training support the challenges addressed by multilingual families?

Apart from funding projects such as yours, the EU has a large array of policy tools at its disposal. Even though education and training is a national competence (which means that the EU has no right to legislate or impose any kind of standards in those fields), we work with the Member States in order to develop common strategies built on an exchange of good practices and dissemination of research results. Education Ministries across Europe face considerable challenges at present and are looking beyond their national borders for solutions and successful policies. They can also ask the European Commission to help organizing peer learning activities, where a small number of countries visit one Member State to discuss a particular issue. An example of this was a seminar in Sweden in April 2016 about integration of newly arrived migrant children. The reports from such events are published on the Commission's web site, where you can also find research papers and policy briefs which are relevant for multilingual families. One recently published report which I can recommend is called Language teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/multilingualism/multilingual-classrooms_en.

You have just organized a conference " a Great start in life- the best possible education in early years" what were the aims of this event and how do you plan to go forward?

Yes, the conference was another example of fruitful cooperation at EU level. Researchers, policy makers and practitioners (teachers, educators) exchanged experiences and expectations of their work with children from 0-12 years. There was also a large networking area, featuring an exhibition with publications and other projects from a large number of European and international projects and networks with relevance for the topics discussed.

High quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) and primary school can provide a solid base for good education outcomes and prevent early school leaving. The conference aimed to find answers to common challenges, to explore differences and similarities and how to create the best possible transition from ECEC to school. Professionals from different countries and backgrounds participated in order to learn from each other, to create knowledge together, to network and to improve evidence-based policy-making.



KRISTINA CUNNINGHAM, policy officer in the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture.

By engaging people at local level and building awareness and increased understanding for the challenges and opportunities of multilingual families you help building new knowledge.

The presentations at the conference, as well as a report with conclusions and recommendations, will be published on the event web site https://ec.europa.eu/education/great-start-in-life_en, and will feed into the continued discussion at the political level about reforms ECEC and primary school systems that will take better account of diversity and inclusion.

How could the ENSA European Network of Social Authorities and the partners of this project cooperate in the policy dialogue you are building at international level?

You are already doing just that by your participation in the conference mentioned above and in other events, through your web site and the advocacy you are involved in. By engaging people at local level and building awareness and increased understanding for the challenges and opportunities of multilingual families you help building new knowledge. Together we can change both attitudes and practices, so keep up the good work!

Shortly after our second meeting another one will take place.
MULTILINGUALISM
will also be
the central issue
here

ENSA Open working group meetings Child,
Youth & Family, Social Inclusion in LONDON,
18 & 19 January 2017

Venue: University of West London,
Paragon House, Brentford, TW8 9GA

The **ENSA working groups Social Inclusion, Child, Youth & Family** organize an **open meeting** in London on **18 & 19 January** at the **University of West London**, Paragon House, Brentford, TW8 9GA.
Everybody's welcome!

There's no participation fee, but you do need to register.
For the full programme and to register: send an email to

Quentin.Callens@integratie-inburgering.be

The topic of this meeting is "Multilingualism in social services" with a specific focus on Family Centres. These structures stimulate a more intensified cooperation between services as daycare, preschool, healthcare, family support, ... Professionals working in these services deal with families, children and youngsters coming from a more and more diverse background. This creates specific challenges in terms of communication as well as in the way professionals approach their clients. Misunderstanding or misinterpretation of attitudes and non-verbal communication could undermine a good relationship between professional and client. During this ENSA meeting, we will exchange good practices and common challenges and we will explore opportunities for developing a common EU project on this topic.

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