



inClusion of Refugee
ChiLdren in Education

The use of the assessment tools for prior learning



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The Booklets

On the basis of the results of the evaluation of assessment practices and tools used in the partner countries, and following a review of international literature on state-of-the-art prior learning assessment tools, three booklets of diagnostic tools developed by the partners, specifically designed for assessing the prior learning of newly arrived migrant/refugee primary and secondary school age children. The tools enable the assessment of the level of knowledge of children with minimal native (and/or English) language skills.

The tools that were designed include different assessment methods and techniques (oral, written, visual), tailored to address challenges and needs faced by migrant/refugee children (minimal native (and/or English) language skills, cultural differences, psychological trauma etc.). The tools enable the identification and differentiation between gaps in children's knowledge, which are the result of language barriers, those due to interrupted or to the lack of previous schooling and those due to special education needs.

The design of the diagnostic tool was based on the premise that newly arrived migrant and refugee students have little or no knowledge of the host country language and/or English. For this reason, the tool introduces exercises that have strong visual characteristics (e.g. symbols, images, illustrations) and the minimum amount of text possible. This enables to a degree the assessment of the reasoning and prior knowledge of every field tested than the knowledge of the language. Lack of language skills may interfere with the understanding of the given task even if the student is able based on his/her prior knowledge to fulfil it. Another design principle of the diagnostic tool presented is its alignment with the curriculum. A detailed mapping on the common learning objectives



of the curricula of the partner countries was used as the base upon which the exercises were created for primary and secondary education. What is more as tests can be intimidating for any student, the diagnostic tool takes the form of a playful booklet so that it is more friendly and welcoming.

The exercises in the tool vary. Some are selected response exercises that enable students to recognize the answers instead of recalling the relevant information and are used to match the learning outcomes. Some are problem solving exercises in order to diagnose errors and misconceptions in reasoning. And others are more task oriented, the student has to follow the instructions and complete a task to arrive at a specific result / or to create a specific product (e.g. ICT).

The table below shows the subjects that are attributed to primary and lower and higher secondary education in the diagnostic tool:

| Subjects | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Primary | Entry Interview |
| | Social and Communication Skills |
| | Logic and Arithmetic |
| | Orientation in Space |
| | Generic Sciences |
| | English Elements |
| Lower Post Primary- Lower Secondary | Entry Interview |
| | Social and Communication Skills |
| | Math |
| | Physics |
| | Geography |
| | English Elements |
| | ICT |



| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Higher Post Primary- Higher Secondary | Entry Interview |
| | Social and Communication Skills |
| | Geometry |
| | Math |
| | Physics |
| | Geography |
| | English Elements |
| | ICT |

In particular, **the first part** of every booklet is the entry questionnaire and the social communication skills. The educator is called to observe the student and his/her interaction with the booklet in the course of the completion of the exercises of the diagnostic tool and note his/her observations.

The second part of the booklet is different depending on the grade and the subjects vary.



The role of the educator in the diagnostic tool

The educator has to be prepared to:

- Introduce the booklet to the student and explain with simple terms (and/or English) that the student has to complete as many items of the exercises as possible.
- Once the student starts the entry questionnaire, the educator observes student's interaction with it:
 - In the case that the student has only oral knowledge of the host country language, the educators helps him/her to fill in the questionnaire
 - In the case that the student has no knowledge of the host country language (in oral or written form) and it is impossible for him/her to fill it, the educator can give the questionnaire and Entry Questionnaire the booklet in one of the other languages available (the available languages are: English, host country language, French, Arabic).
- Assist students with the instructions of the exercises if needed and help a student who might face a difficulty in completing an exercise or an item due to language difficulties.
- Observe students':
 - Attention (to task/listener)
 - Initiation (requesting help/ ask for guidance)
 - Communication (using language for different functions, which language the student is using: mother tongue, language of the host country, English)



- Adherence to basic rules and conventions during the completion of the diagnostic tool's questionnaire and exercises
- Complete the social and communication skills assessment while the student is completing the questionnaire and the diagnostic tool's exercises. The educator can fill in a small questionnaire about student's social and communication skills as well as keep notes of his/her observations for future use and support to the student. This questionnaire can be found on the same section of the booklet as the social and communication skills subject.

Tools and equipment needed for the completion of the diagnostic tool:

- Coloured pencils or coloured markers (red, yellow, orange, green, brown, pink, light blue, purple, blue, black)
- Pens and pencils
- Access to computer/ laptop with an active internet connection for the ICT subject (for lower and higher secondary)



How to use the assessment tools

OBJECTIVES

1. Assess the prior learning and the social and civic competences of newly arrived refugee children
2. Identify gaps and differentiate learning needs of refugee students on
3. Get to know the background experiences of refugee children and their families
4. Support the inclusion of newly arrived migrant/refugee children in education by effectively assessing and validating prior learning.
5. Reduce their chances of early school leaving and promoting their successful progression through the education system
6. Guide educational authorities and institutions in the development and implementation of the most appropriate educational methods and material to better address their needs.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Better address the actual needs of the refugee students
2. Facilitate the knowledge acquisition of newly arrived students
3. Facilitate the integration process of refugee students in the educational system



4. Identify students' strengths and challenges with respect to the desired level placement.
5. Detect the challenges and weaknesses of instruction in order to support student learning better.
6. Assess the student's prior knowledge.
7. Determine the appropriate year of school according to their knowledge.

METHODS OF DELIVERY

1. Initial interview/questionnaire with newly arrived students and their families
2. Assessment of the student in the selected topics through the exercises provided in the booklets
3. Evaluation of the results and placement of the student in the appropriate school year according to their levels of competence.
4. Based on problem-based learning and Game-based learning

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