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Newcomers in Educational System: The Case of French-Speaking Part of Belgium

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Author(s)

Altay A. Manco, Patricia Alen

ABSTRACT

According to the Lisbon strategy for a knowledge society, entering school plays a significant role for any young immigrant. In Belgium, this issue is very worrying, as equity between native born students and those of foreign origin seems to be lacking. Finally, the situation in French-speaking Belgium is even more difficult than in the Flemish part of the country. Also, this paper aims to explore the strategies in place to welcome and integrate these children. It portrays specific guidance devices for young newcomers and analyzes possible correlations between them and the rate of academic success. In light of particularities of the Belgian educational system especially linked to the fact that we are in a federal state with different languages of reference, our study covers the portion of the federal state where French is the official language. The targeted group is that of newcomers of age to attend secondary school. The method of analysis and synthesis of available information includes both quantitative and qualitative data. Our approach was based on the description and analysis of the context of recognition and knowledge acquisition of young students of foreign origin in secondary education. Our analysis focuses on: accessibility to education and equality of success; adequacy to requirements, consistency and efficiency, as well as effectiveness of the education system; the relevance and specific training of teachers adapted to the newcomers; sustainability of the results: the insertion and future integration of youth; and finally, various linguistic, social and psychological dimensions, as well as citizenship. The report identifies some key elements of the context of schooling for young newcomers and offers brief elements of understanding of the history of immigration in this region. Specific and general practices for integration and schooling of young migrants, including accompanied or unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, are described. Finally, these elements are analyzed in terms of accessibility standards to school education, criteria for adequacy of such education to the specificity of immigrant children and finally, criteria for system effectiveness, and practical tracks are proposed.

KEYWORDS

Migrants; Newly Coming Families; Educational System; French-Speaking Part of Belgium; Assessment

Cite this paper

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