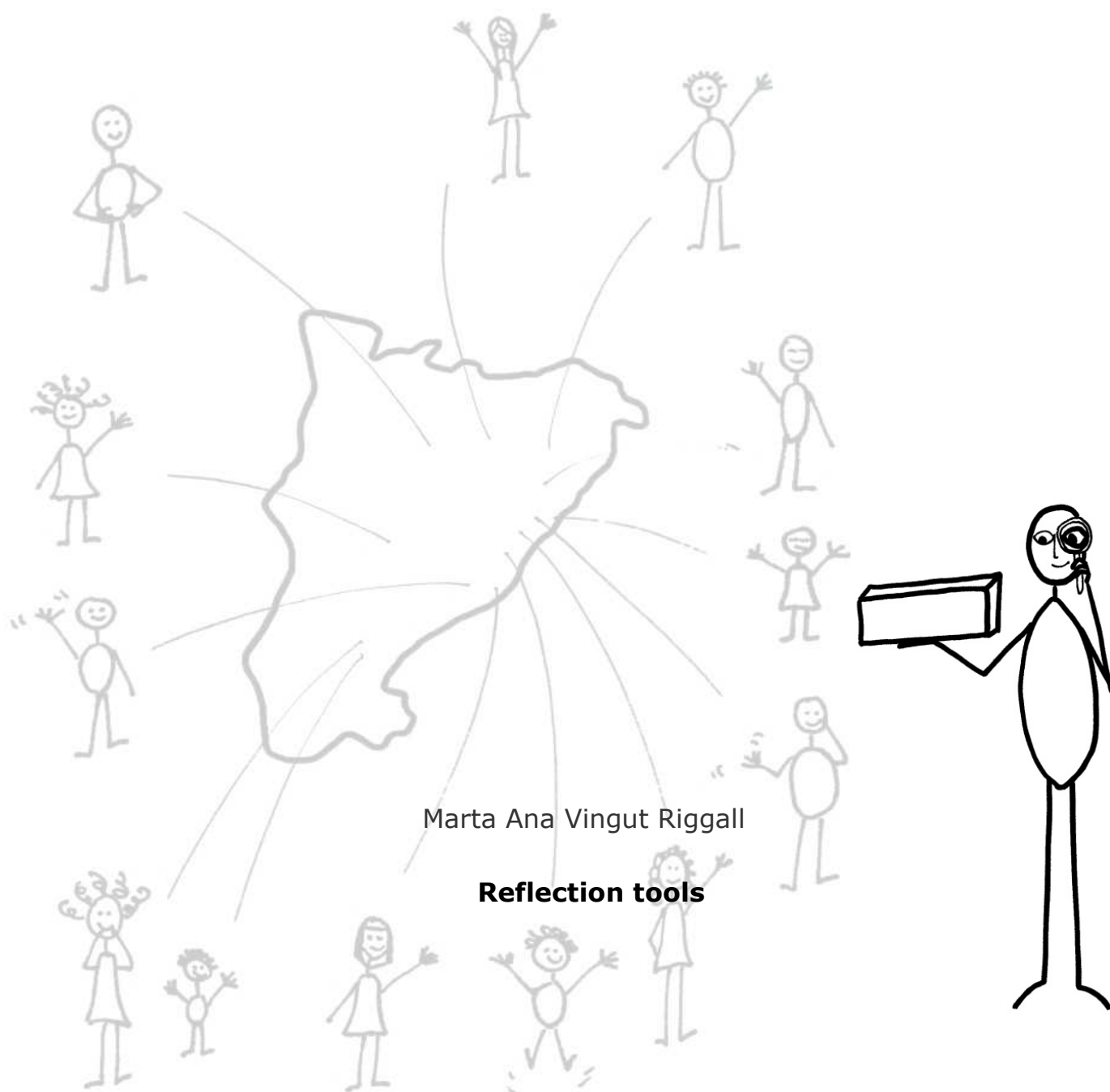


# **ECE teachers and children of immigrant origins: perceptions, implications and pedagogy**

Dissemination document



Marta Ana Vingut Riggall

**Reflection tools**

Title: "ECE teachers and Children of immigrant origins: perceptions, implications and pedagogy".

Dissemination document linked to the investigation:

Vingut Riggall, M.A. (2014). "Els infants d'origen immigrant i l'educació infantil a Catalunya. La percepció dels mestres a partir de l'anàlisi del discurs. Metodologia Video-Cued Multivocal Ethnography". Doctoral Thesis. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Available online at Tdx, Tdr and Teseo networks and also at the digital documents' deposit (DDD) at the UAB.

Text and Illustrations: Marta Ana Vingut Riggall  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.  
Barcelona, 2015.



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<https://ddd.uab.cat/record/130217>



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## Presentation

The following document presents the results of the investigations titled "Children of immigrant origins and Early Childhood Education in Catalonia. Teacher Perceptions throughout discourse analysis. Video-cued Multivocal Ethnography". Such investigation has been developed for a Doctoral thesis in Human Learning Psychology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) and can be consulted at the digital Repository of documents (DDD) of the cited university.

Research objectives focus on detecting ECE teacher perceptions regarding children of immigrant origins, alongside the needs deriving from their discourse. The methodological approach followed is *Video-cued Multivocal Ethnography* introduced by the North-American ethnographer Joseph Tobin. Such method, of ethnographic foundation, is based on focus group discourse analysis throughout participants' comments and observations when watching ethnographic videos. Following the methodological principals, the ethnographic video becomes a projective tool stimulating pedagogical practice reflection, therefore enhancing a spontaneous discourse to emerge amongst educational agents, bringing to the fore sociocultural values and beliefs regarding education and, in this case, regarding children of immigrant origins.

The results of the investigation are presented along four vast topics which have emerged from teacher discourses: on the one hand, those referring to the general ECE settings, school and family relationships and those relating to the learning language. On the other hand and more specifically, the investigation focuses on children of immigrant origins and on how the cited conditionings have also effects on such a collective. This is, precisely, one of the key points of the investigation, making evident how teachers' perception regarding children of immigrant origins cannot be analysed aside from, previously, analysing their perception regarding ECE, school and family relationships and the language topic.

Aiming to reach the teachers who have taken part in the investigation and also other agents of the educational community interested in such, the present material has been designed carefully to make the results accessible. It has been written following the *easy to read*<sup>1</sup> text guidelines and complemented with plain lineal drawings, aiming to foment a critical reading of its contents, therefore becoming a pedagogical reflection and a stimulation tool regarding the object of study: detecting Catalan ECE teacher perceptions of children of immigrant origins and how such perceptions influence their pedagogy.

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<sup>1</sup> Easy to read: Lectura Fàcil is the Easy to Read Association in Catalonia and follows the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) instructions. More information at [www.lecturafacil.net](http://www.lecturafacil.net)

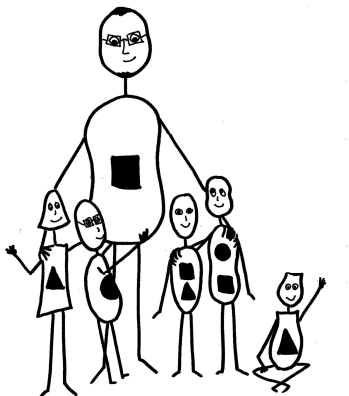
It is important to note that the investigation's objective is not to describe teacher's beliefs as a general descriptive trait of teachers in Catalonia, rather than to withdraw existing values and concerns which, admitting variability amongst teachers and the partaking schools, exists in the local pedagogy influenced by the widely existing sociocultural values. In such way, the present document is aimed to be interpreted as a tool created to generate pedagogical reflection over an existing reality without being unworthy of many of the initiatives many educational teams are developing on intercultural matters.

Finally, and more personally, I would like to thank the teachers and schools which have kindly accepted to take part in the research. Developing such an investigation has been a pleasure but also a delicate pedagogical challenge; a journey of personal growth and constant reflection, sometimes overwhelming, as I delved into my own beliefs and values, also detecting personal needs. I hope this document enhances some of these processes in other colleagues aiming to advance towards an inclusive and intercultural educational system.

To the teachers of schools A, B, C, D & E,  
for their participation, honesty and time.

To the “Micos” and “Mones” and their families.

*A kind thank you.*

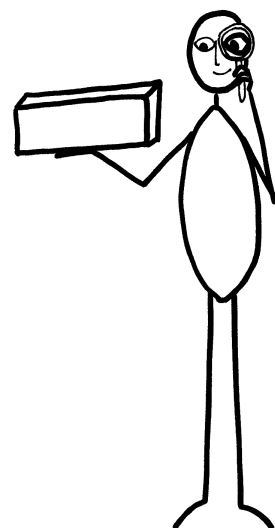


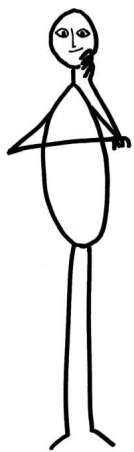
# **ECE teacher and Children of immigrant origins:**

## **perceptions, implications and pedagogy**

Dissemination document

Reflection tools







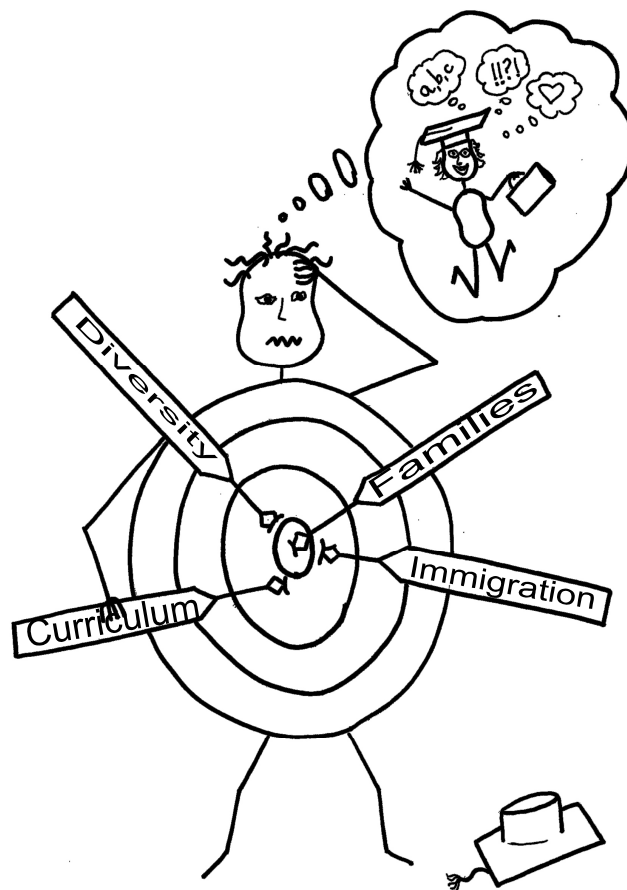
Early Childhood Education (ECE) schools  
are a world of their own where can be found  
all kinds of diversity amongst teachers, children,  
families, environments, possibilities,...

Let's take a look at the teachers.

Certainly in ECE, teachers work together  
all having their own instructive styles  
and also different perceptions  
of what they believe is educational quality.

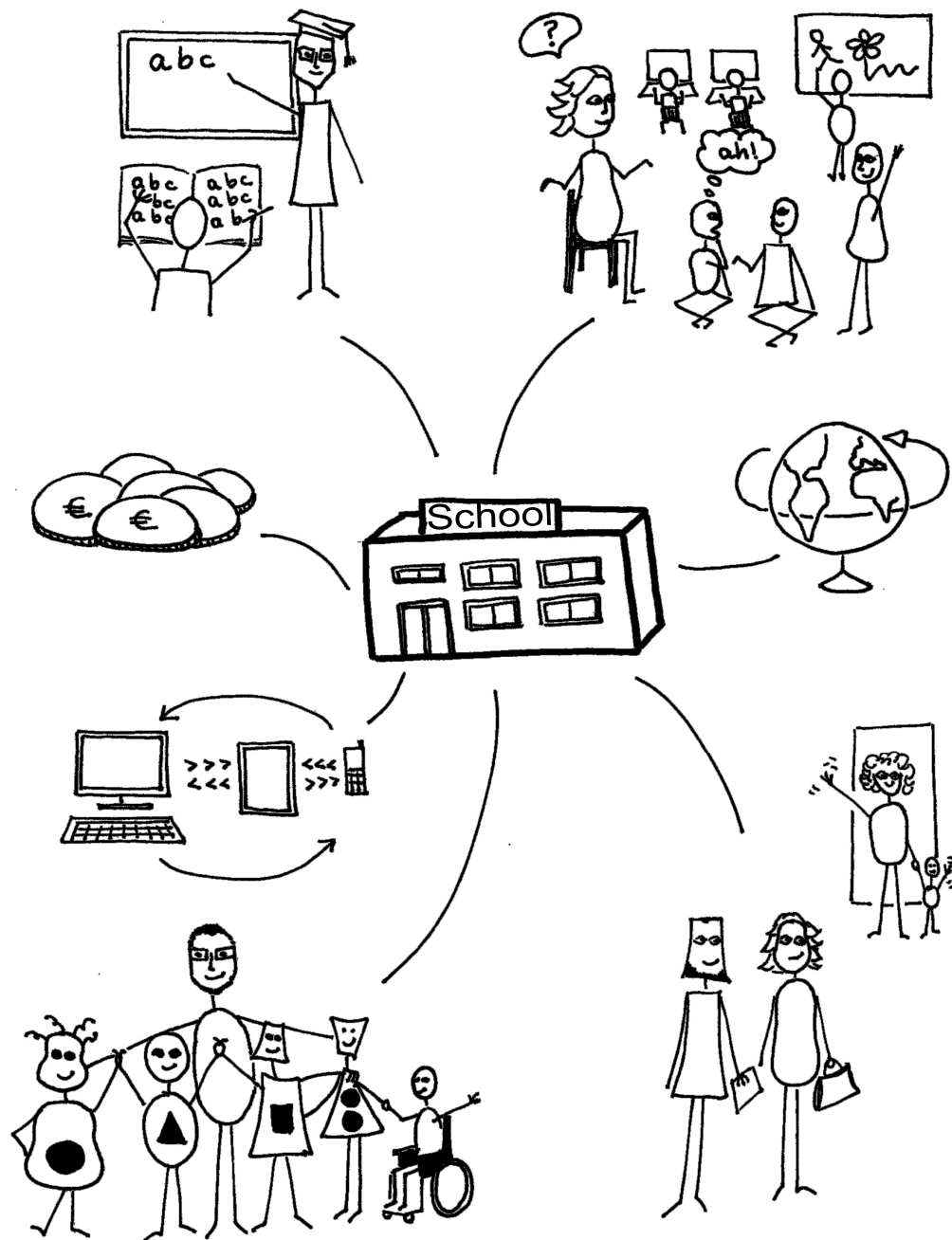


It is expected that most teachers begin their profession with great expectations and projects in mind



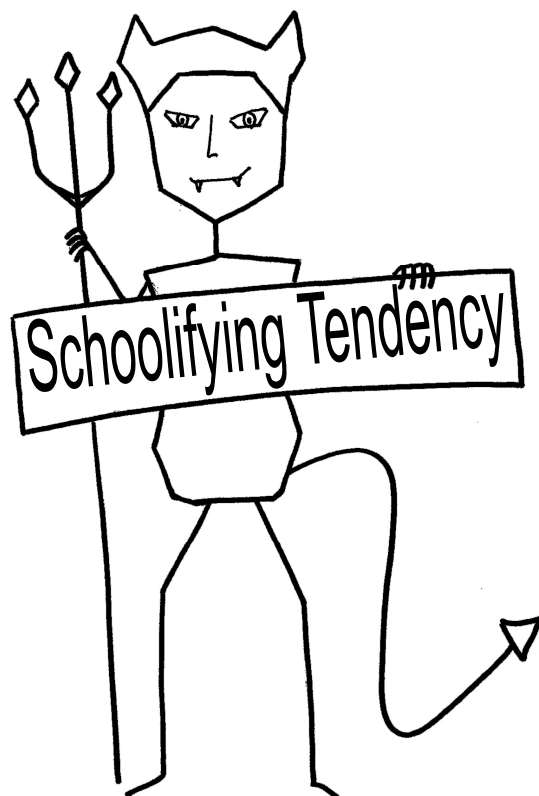
... but evidence shows how reality can sometimes be more complex than expected.

Where we do find an agreement,  
is on admitting that today's school demands  
have changed.



... but sometimes pedagogy...

perhaps has not changed that much...

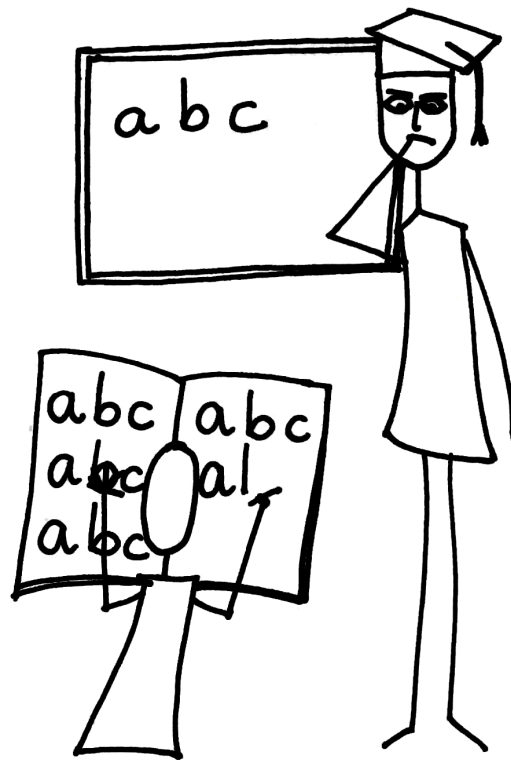


Evidence shows how ECE  
tends to reproduce a schoolifying<sup>2</sup> tendency  
where concern over reading and writing  
and cognitive contents is made evident.

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<sup>2</sup> Schoolifying is a term used by Bennett, J. (2006). *'Schoolifying' early childhood education and care accompanying preeschool into education*. Institute of Education. London.

Nonetheless, evidence also shows how ECE teachers are aware of incongruities between their actions and their pedagogical beliefs.



*"I don't know why we do this  
when what children really need in such early ages  
is to socialize, experiment and gain in autonomy..."*

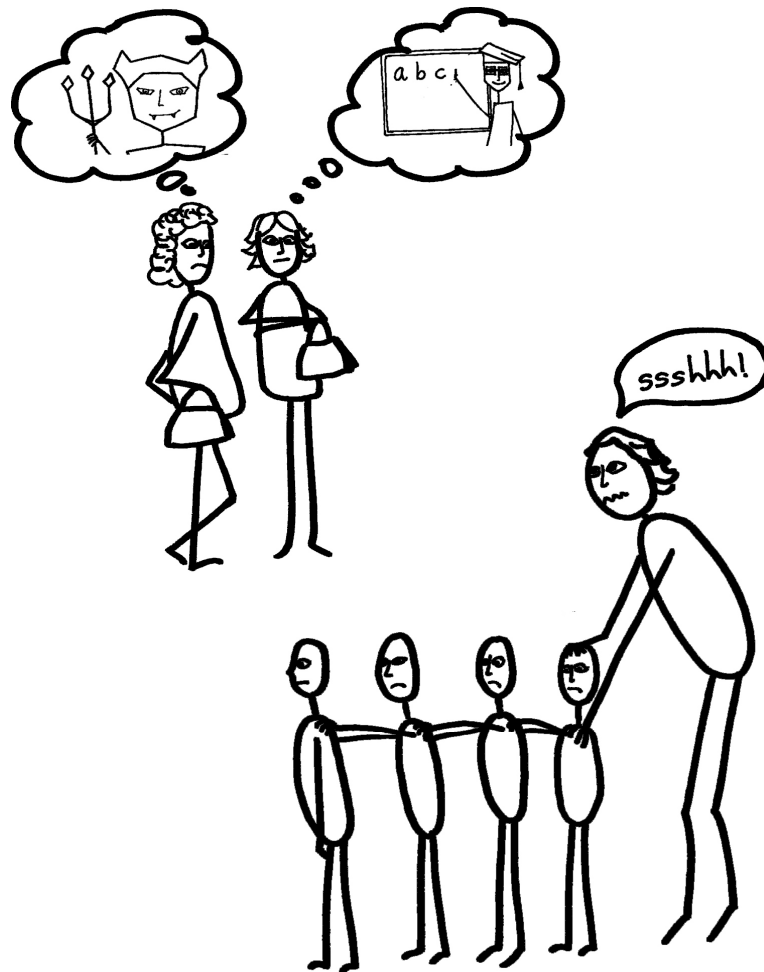
So where does this pressure come from?

Perhaps pressures are external?

Everyone talks about educational quality...

about what “should be” a “good” education

or what is believed as such...



As is natural, children’s families also talk about this,

and a lot!...

they also compare with others...

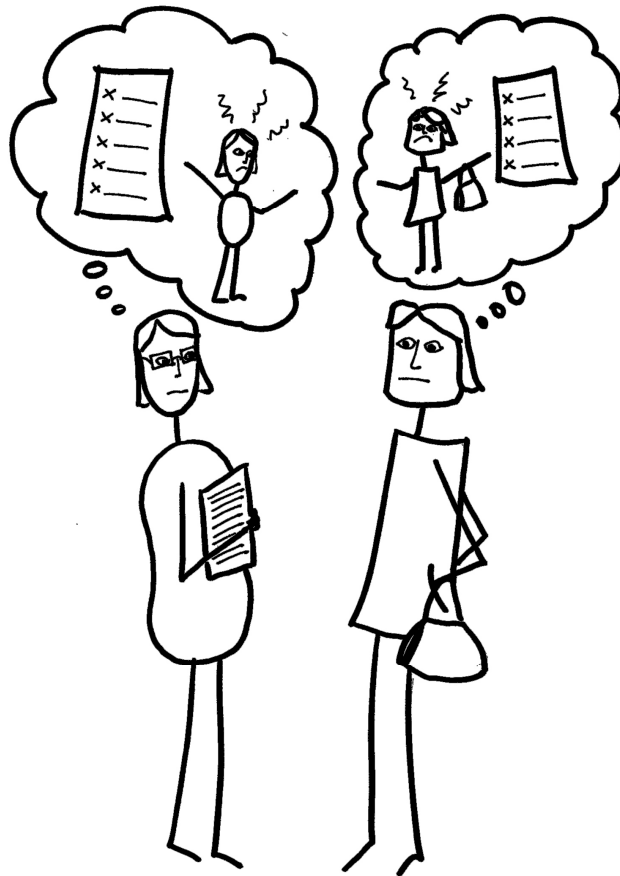
As could be expected,

they want the best for their children, but...

... time and opportunities often fail

(sometimes, a little energy and willingness too).

Therefore, it is not strange that, occasionally,  
distances are kept between schools and families.

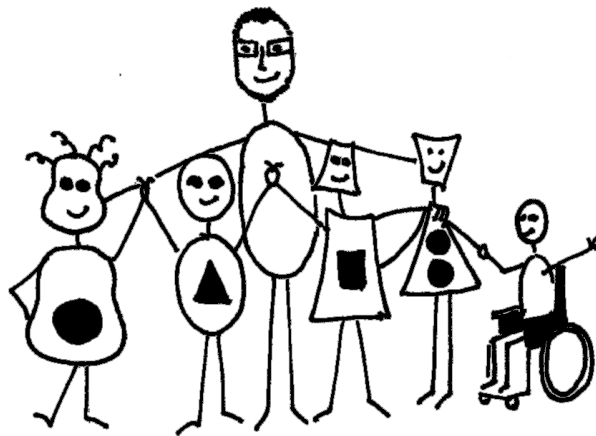


Obviously, when this is the case,  
it is very difficult to coordinate mutual efforts  
and share a common educational project.

Could it be that they have all forgotten  
that ECE settings are not compulsory?

Going back to the system's quality discourse,  
recently there is a lot of talk on children's diversity.

Teachers prove to be aware of such  
and many make efforts to advance towards inclusion,  
reducing *barriers to learning and participation*.



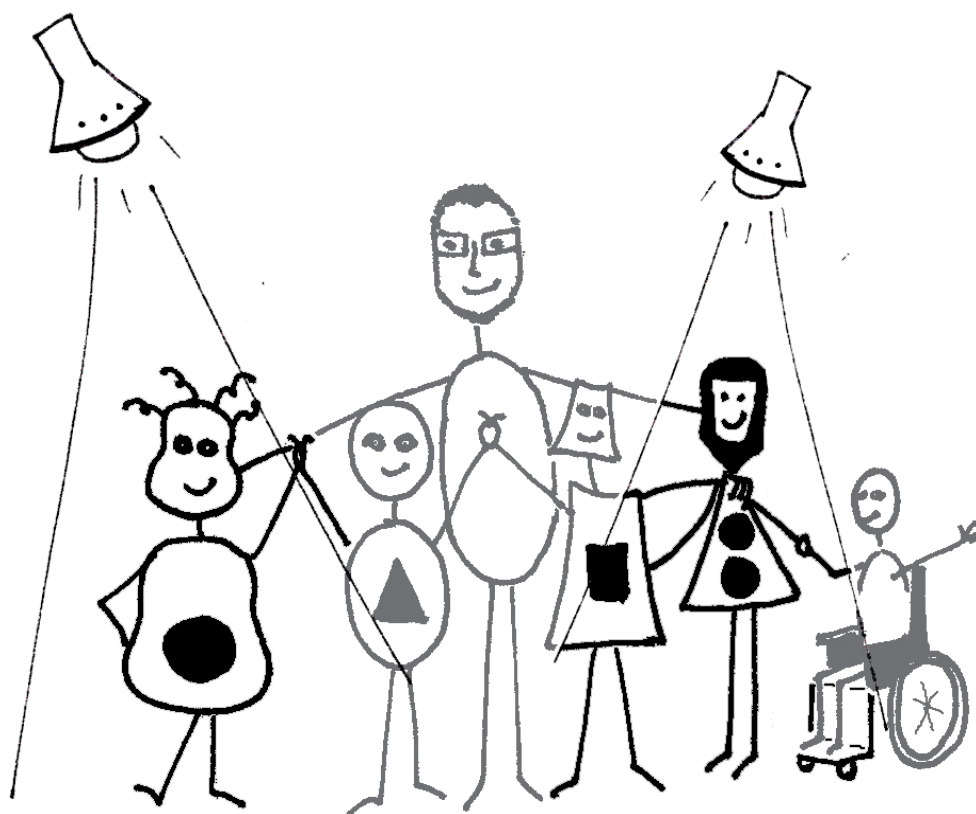
But, not everyone is convinced...

*"Yes, diversity is good, of course,  
but it delays the rhythm of the rest of the class"...*

Have they forgotten that the objective of ECE  
is to fulfil the educational needs of children  
who cannot reach these at home?

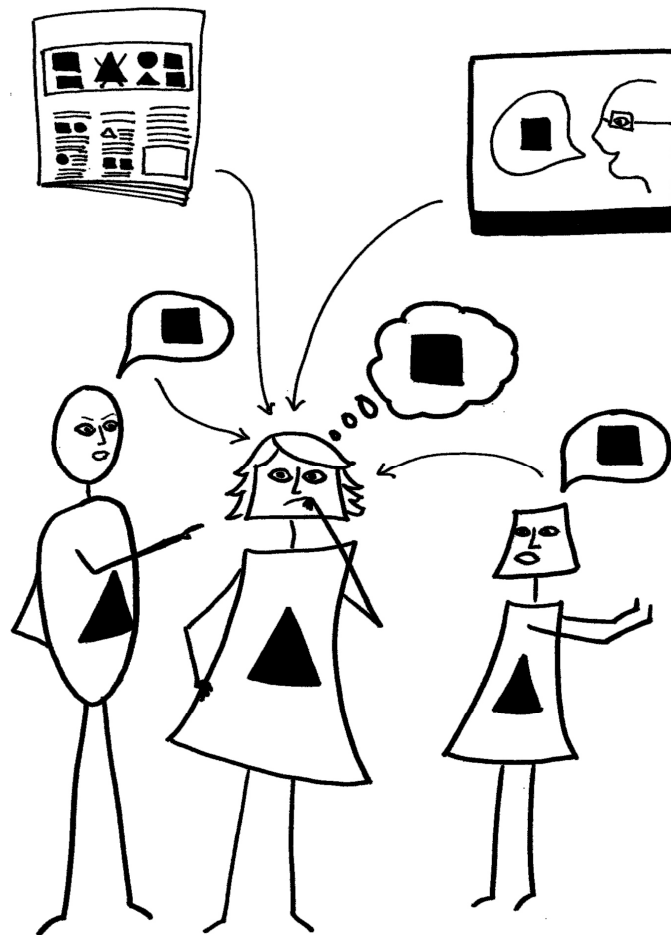


Amongst so much diversity,  
now everyone talks about cultural diversity.



It has suddenly become very visible.

And cultural diversity  
makes everyone think about immigration...

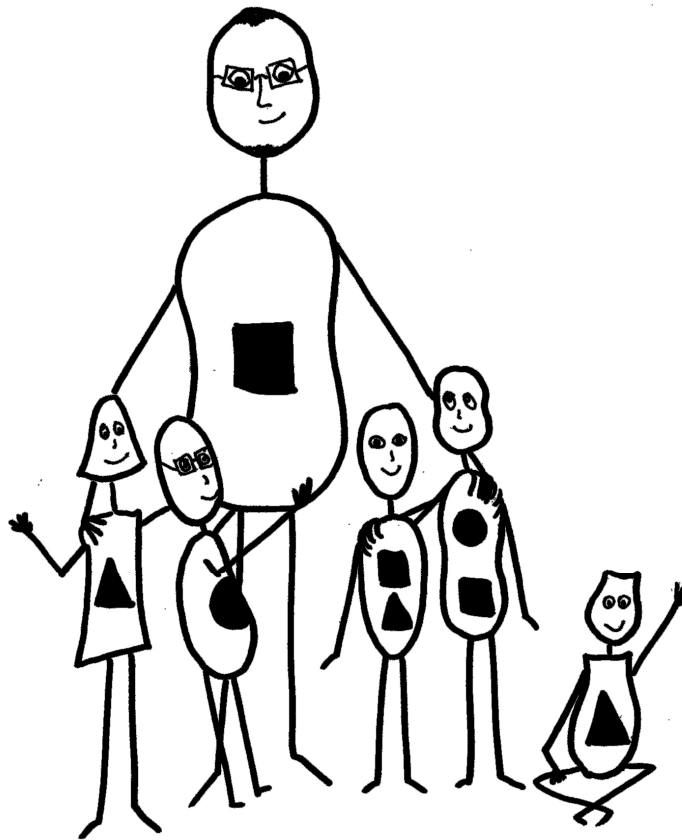


*"I've heard that..."*

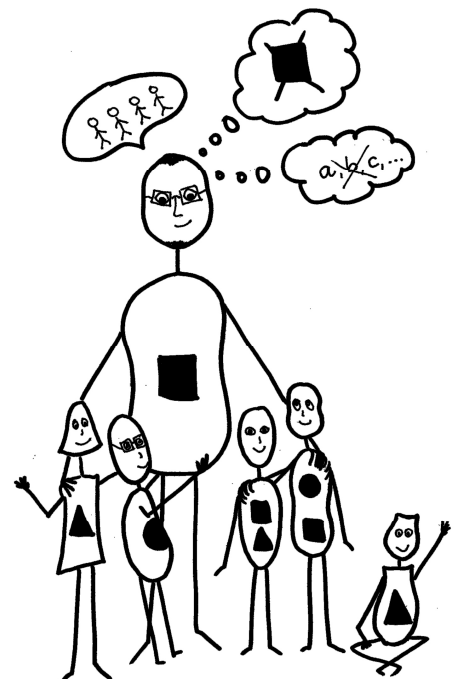
*"Wow! The things I've heard about that!"*

So much talk about it, sometimes,  
one comes to believe it...

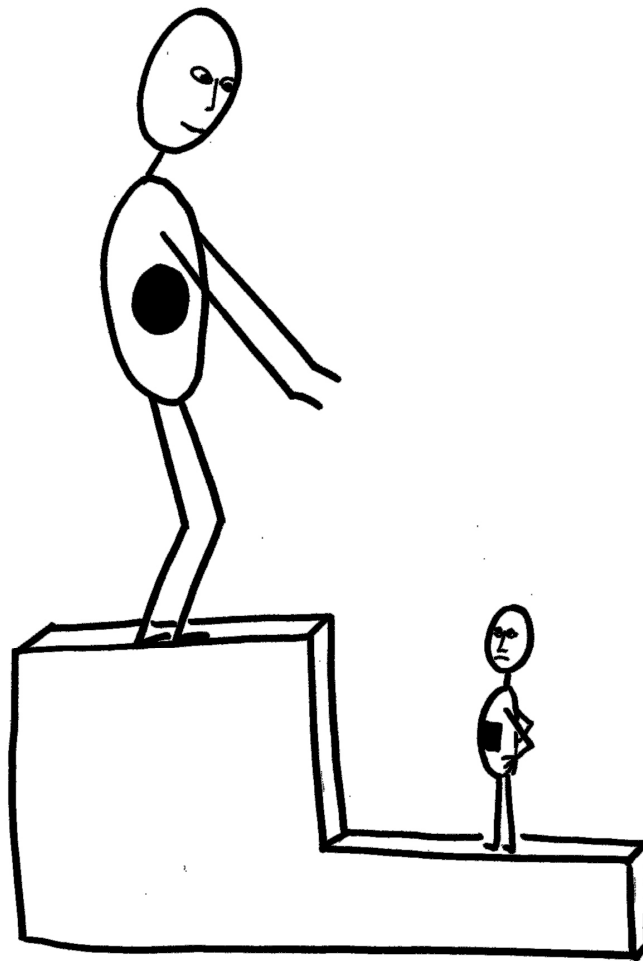
But teachers' are educational professionals and are, by all means, caring and loving with all children.



Still, they may be influenced by all they hear and may affect their expectations of children.



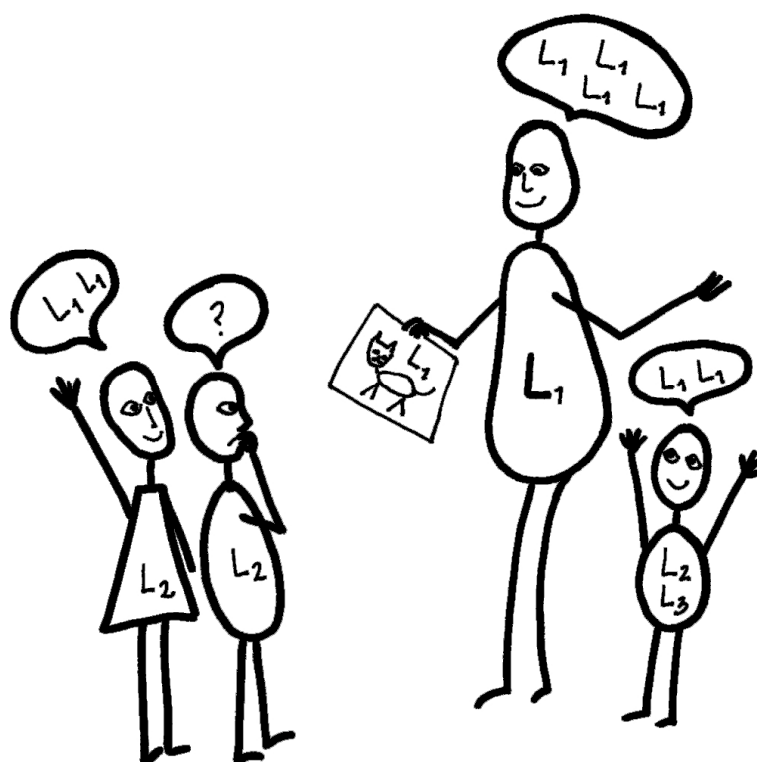
In any case, many schools and teachers are aware of cultural diversity and strive to make children welcome.



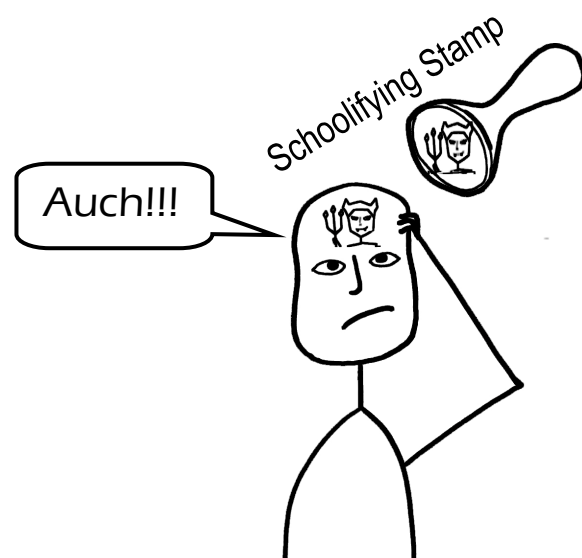
Many schools outstand by their multicultural projects...

*"Come here, sweetie,  
I'll show you all the important things whilst you tell me  
a tale or two from where you come from".*

...They also work hard to teach the language as soon as possible.

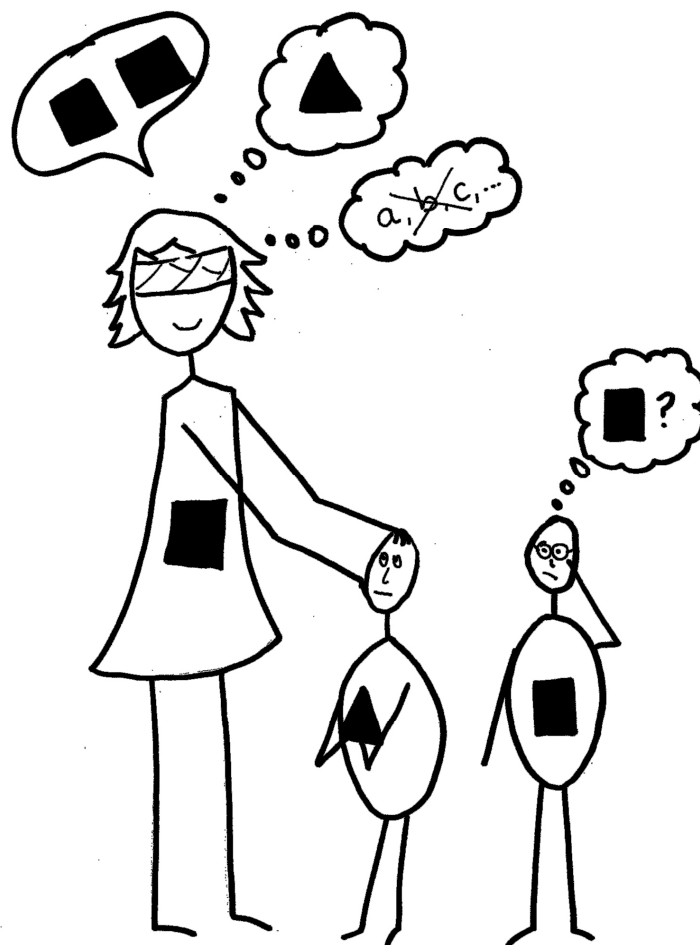


Of course! While these children do not speak the language, *"you can't work proper contents"*.



Now again, the language is not a problem.

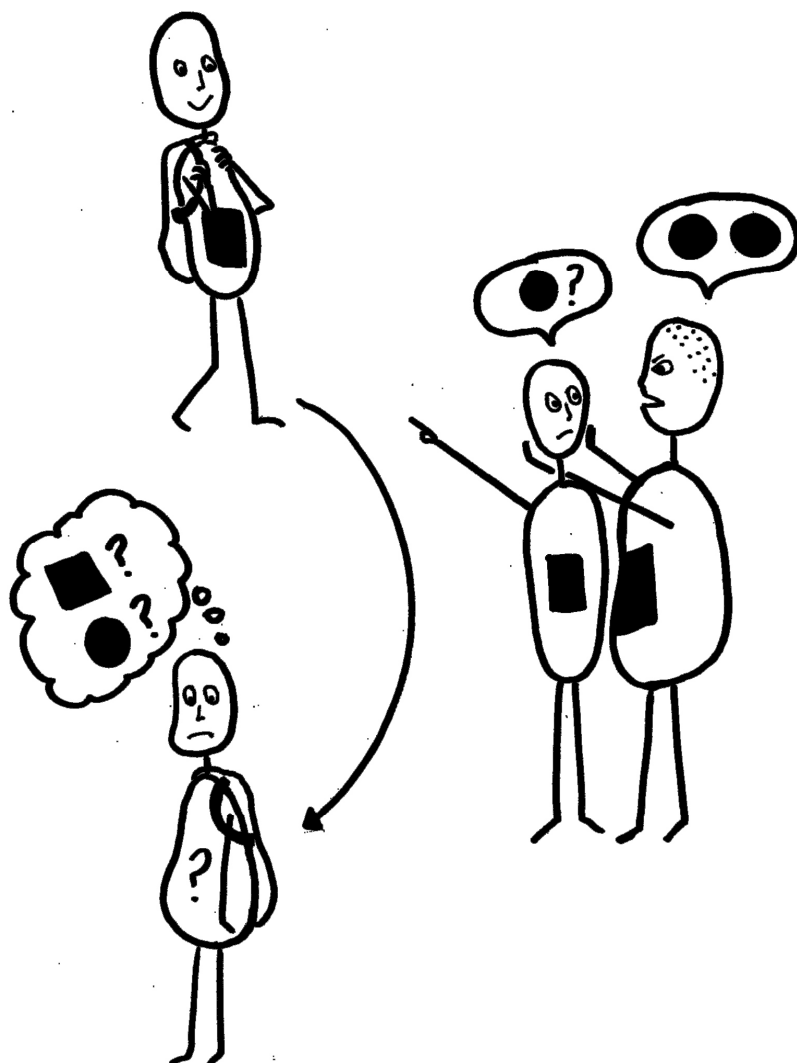
ECE teachers admit that, with time and caring attentions, children of immigrant origins quickly learn the language and become one more in the group.



Then...

*"all children are the same".*

But children are not the same,  
and society reminds them of their differences.



Is it necessary to ignore the differences?  
Should they be made evident?

How about the children's families?

*Oh! The things they hear!*

As communication is delicate,

some families opt to take their children away.

Consequently, the school becomes occupied by new arrivals...

therefore favouring the creation of ghetto schools.



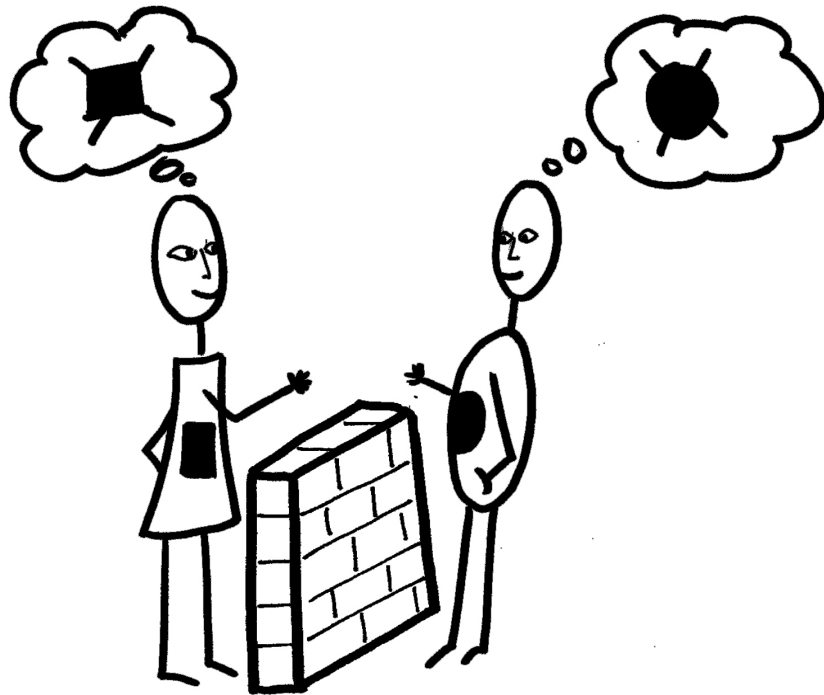
Some teachers also show concern  
about such schools,...

They say they've heard a lot of things about  
working in these schools...

Will that be true?



Certainly, evidence shows how special efforts of close contact between school and families of immigrant origins occur and positive links are established, sometimes, even affectionate...

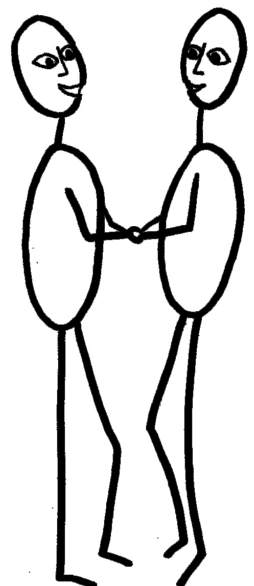


... but these often prove to be cordiality attitudes of interest for cultural anecdotes...

These are definitely gestures of multicultural proximity but, are they intercultural?

This opens a new question:

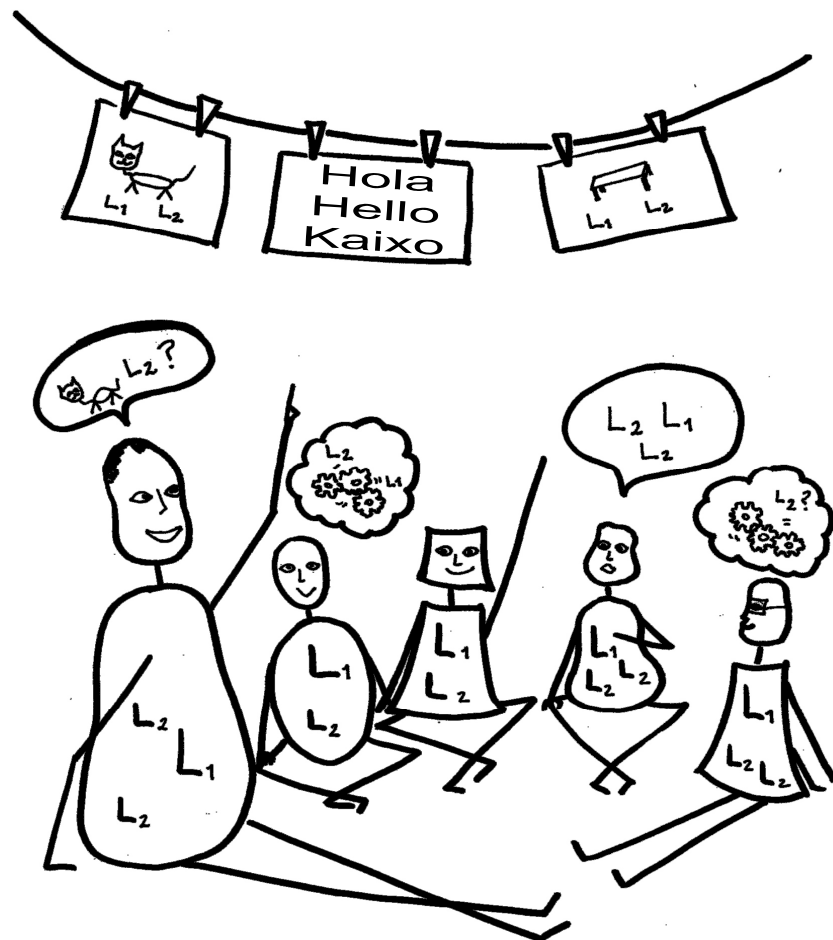
Do teachers know the difference between multiculturalism and interculturality?



Meanwhile,

children's cultural diversity's educational potential is wasted.

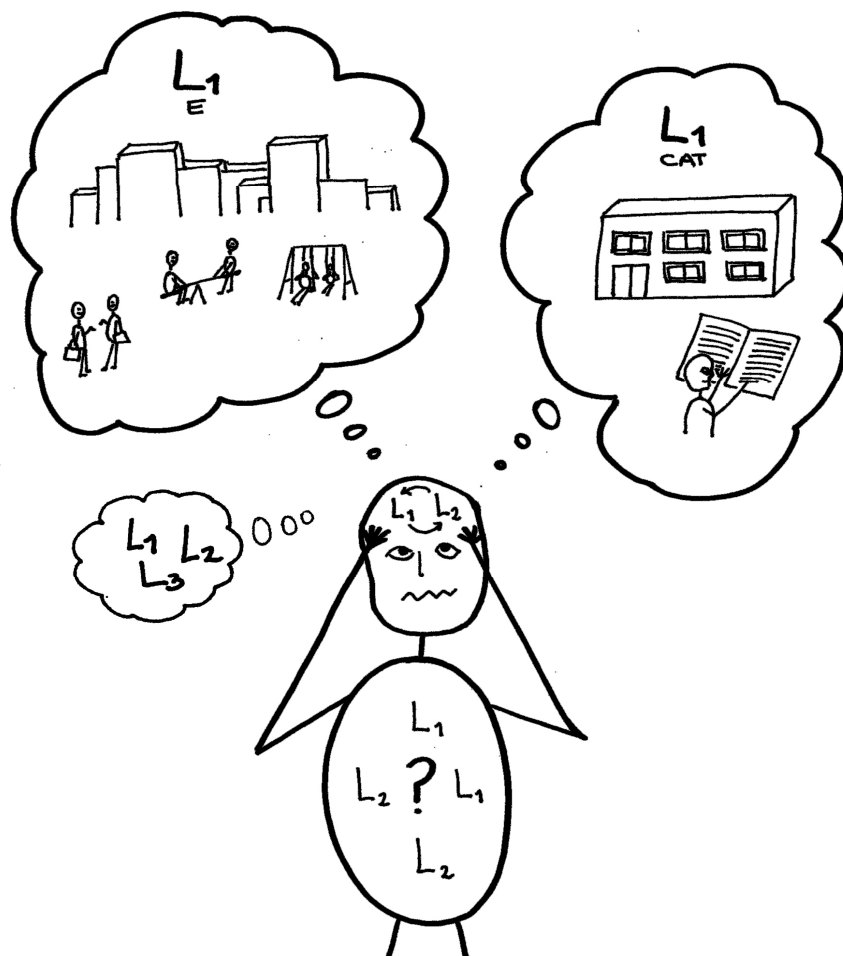
Furthermore, educational potential of their linguistic diversity is also wasted when aiming to foment a plurilingual competence addressing all children.



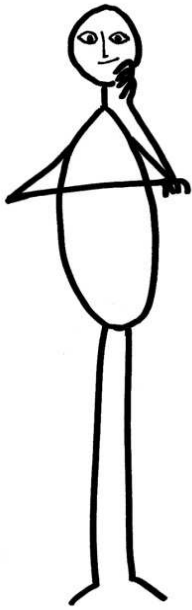
Once again, a question is opened:

Do teachers understand the meaning of *plurilingual competence*?

In the particular case of the Catalan language, developing a plurilingual competence is of utmost importance when facing the arrival of children of immigrant origins.



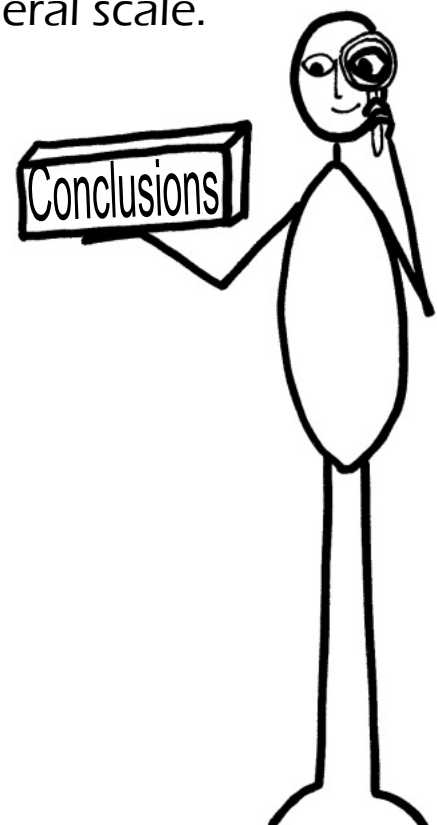
This is a new challenge for the Catalan linguistic model: making new languages present and, at the same time, watching over Catalan as the learning language in a social environment where Spanish is widely extended.

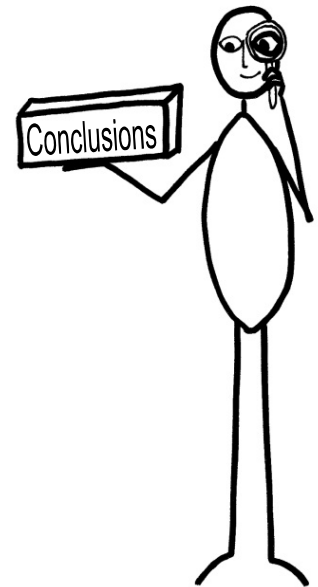


Searching for conclusions  
throughout ECE teacher's discourse...

... a number of conditionings emerge  
which should be taken into consideration  
when dealing with ECE settings and intercultural contexts  
which can also be considered on a general scale.

The investigation highlights:





On the one hand,

### 1. Teacher training needs in:

- **Early Childhood Education:**

Before focusing on a child's origin, it is important to revise the pedagogical fundamentals of the educational stage, in this case, ECE's.

- **Intercultural Education:**

On a parallel, it is necessary to delve into intercultural education, understanding such as a mutually committed and critical sensitive attitude towards diversity, different to multicultural education.

- **Plurilinguistic Competence:**

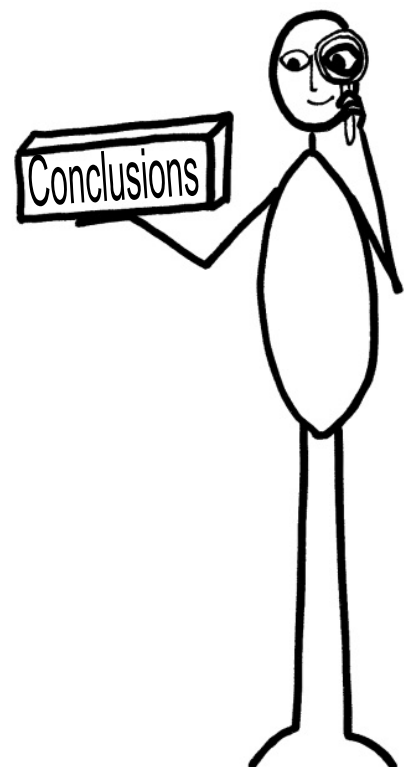
Having understood the previous concept, it is necessary to advance towards a plurilinguistic competence, entailing second language learning implications and adjusting the existing immersion policies towards the new context.

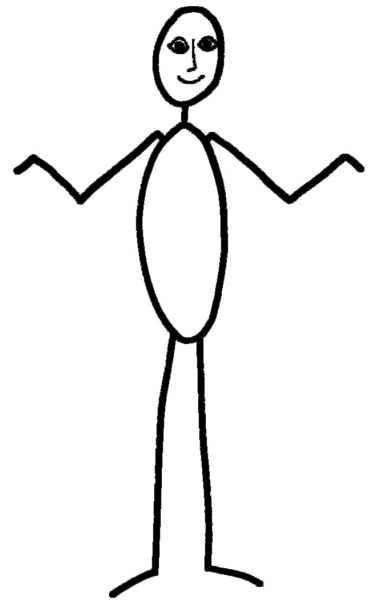
On the other hand,

the investigation also highlights a need to establish:

**2. Close and affective links between school and families:**

It is necessary to share expectations and concerns,  
dismantle stereotyped perceptions  
and find meeting points,  
both with local families and also  
with families of immigrant origins.

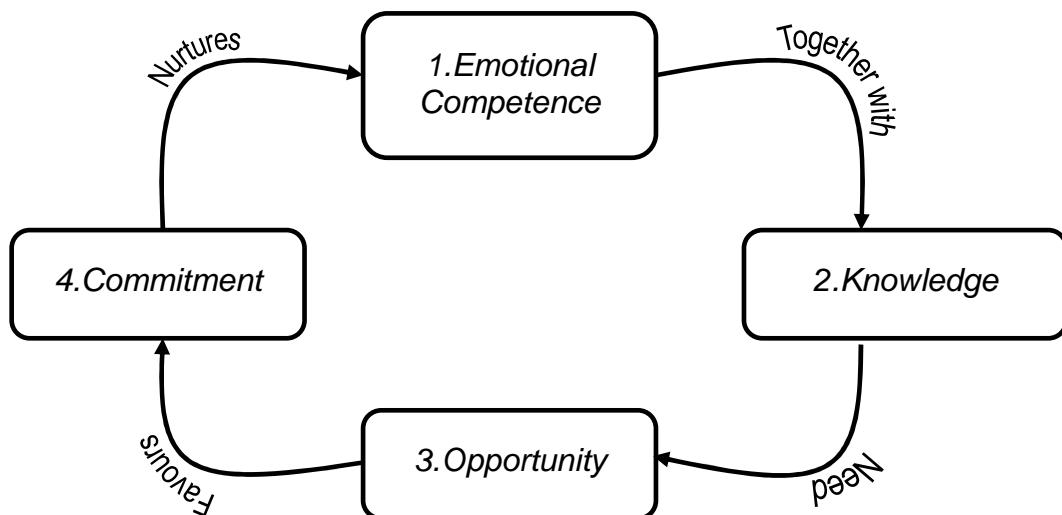




So now, what?

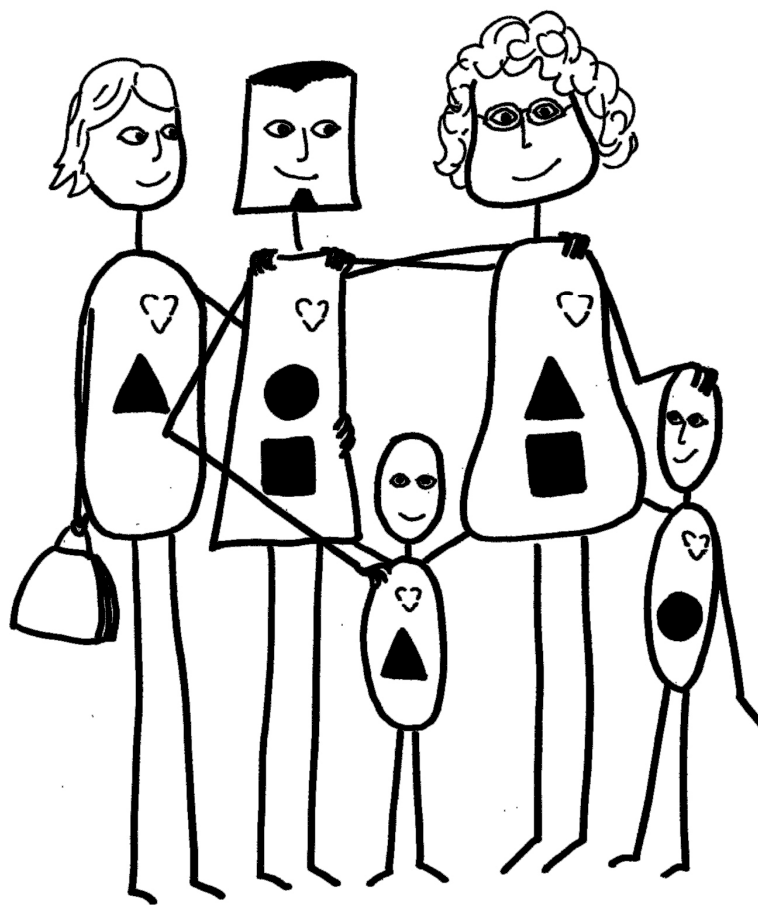
Towards a definition of proposals

In relation to the detected needs,  
the investigation suggests advancing towards  
an intercultural educational model  
closer to the *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy* concept  
referred by B. Osborne,  
and founded over four axes:



## 1. Emotional Competence

Understood as the foundation of all educational action, referring not only to children, but also to their families and the professional colleagues networking...



...emotional competence is perceived as the main trait of teacher's excellence, independent of a child's characteristics or the educational context.



## 2. Knowledge

More so, teachers must have good **training**;  
in this case, pedagogical training in ECE  
and also in **intercultural education**  
and **plurilingual competence**.

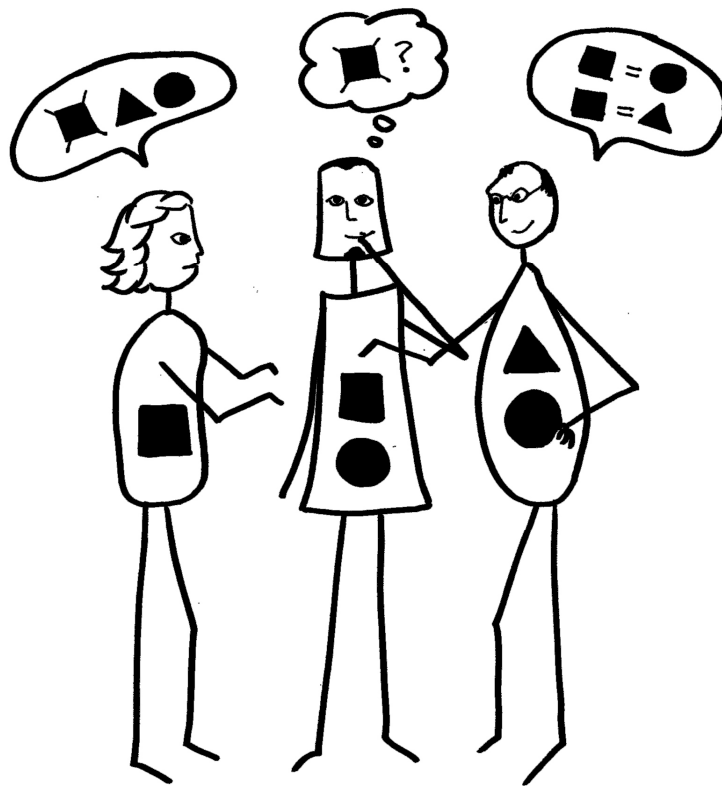


Incoherence between teacher's pedagogical actions and beliefs cannot occur when ECE priorities are clear. Alongside, teachers should not be so vulnerable to external pressures or be influenced by stereotyped perceptions without questioning them and behaving in a compromised manner.

### 3. Opportunity

Furthermore, **opportunities** for reflexive inquiry should be enhanced:

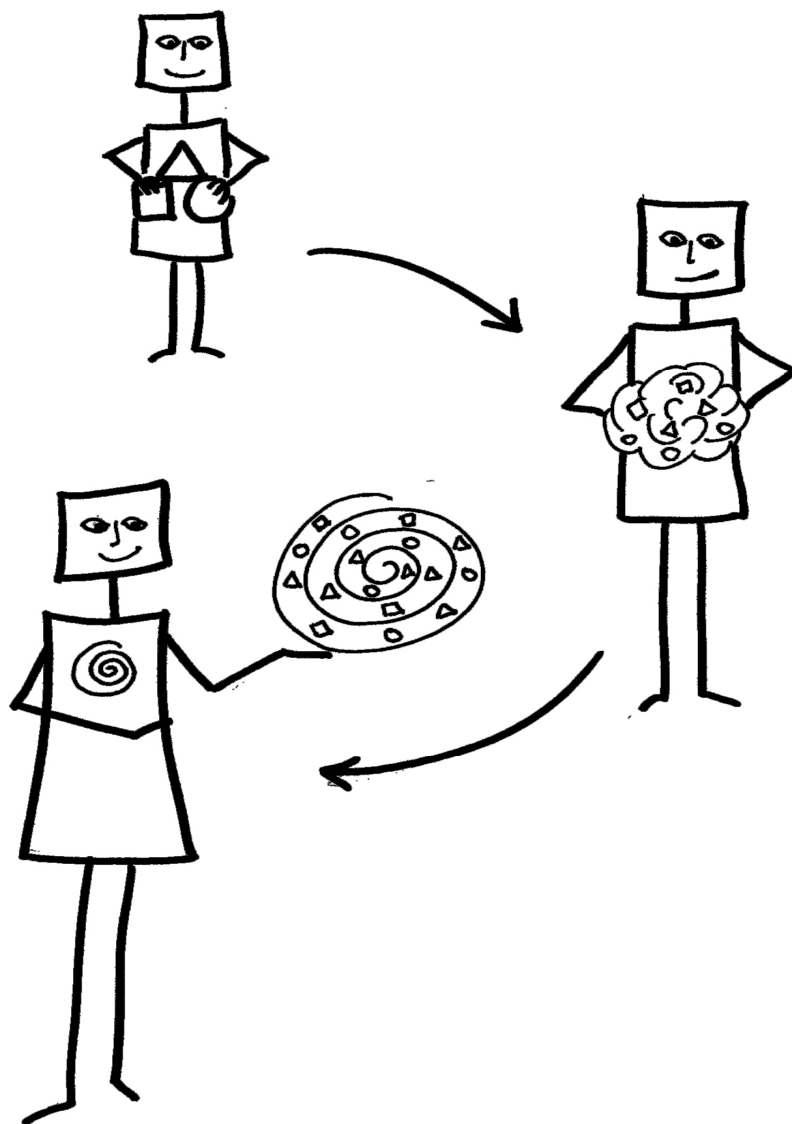
it is necessary to question presuppositions and dismantle stereotypes.



Such opportunities should occur also amongst children's families, either local or of immigrant origins. The investigation shows how such opportunities allow to build much more critical perceptions over cultural diversity.

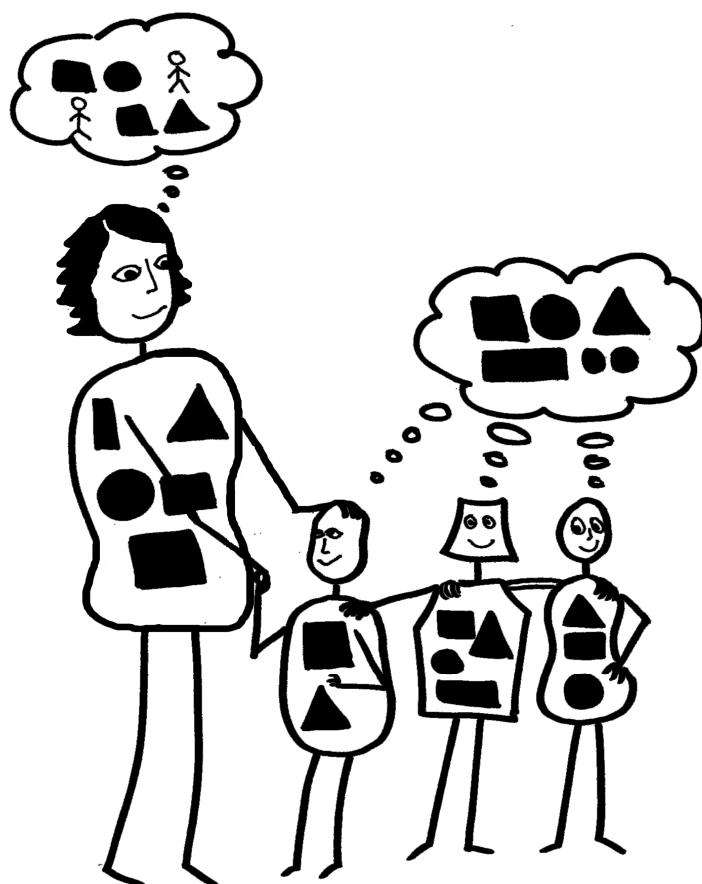
## 4. Commitment

None of the previous axles will make sense without a **committed attitude**, both personal and collective.



Shall we get started?

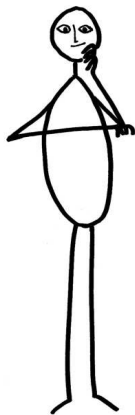
Children are children,  
with multiple languages of origin,  
customs, expectations, illusions, knowledge and possibilities.  
Schools and teachers are, up to a great extent,  
responsible of their evolution today and tomorrow.

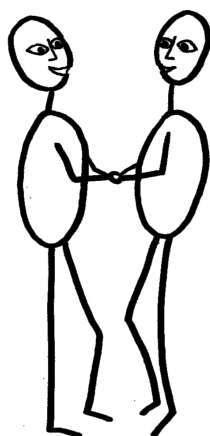


Lets work together, step by step,  
with coherence, critical responsibility and sensitivity.  
Lets work together towards an inclusive  
and culturally responsive pedagogy.

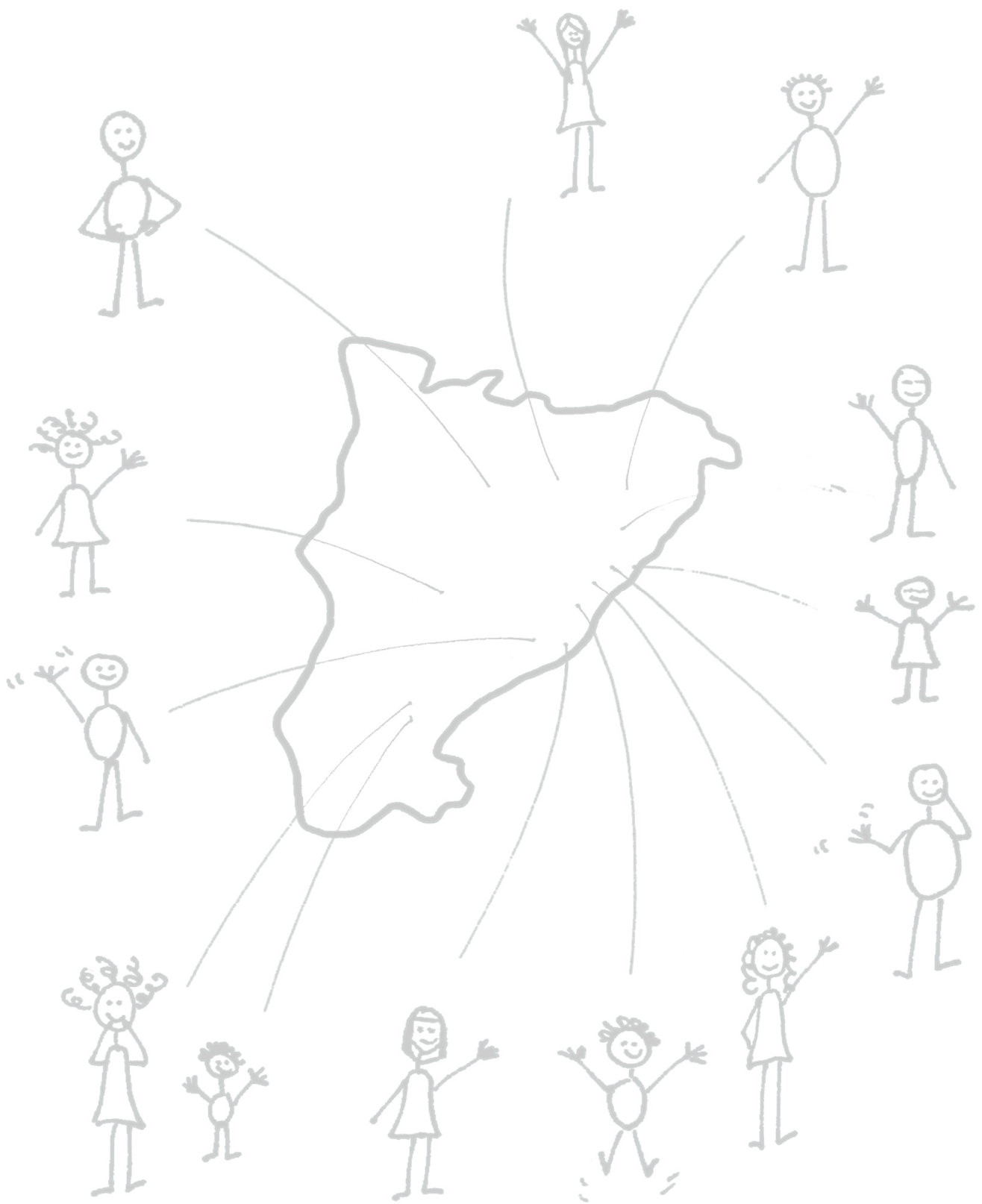
*"Cowardice asks the question - is it safe?  
Expediency asks the question - is it politic?  
Vanity asks the question - is it popular?  
But conscience asks the question - is it right?  
And there comes a time  
when one must take a position  
that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular;  
but he must do it  
because conscience tells him it is right"*

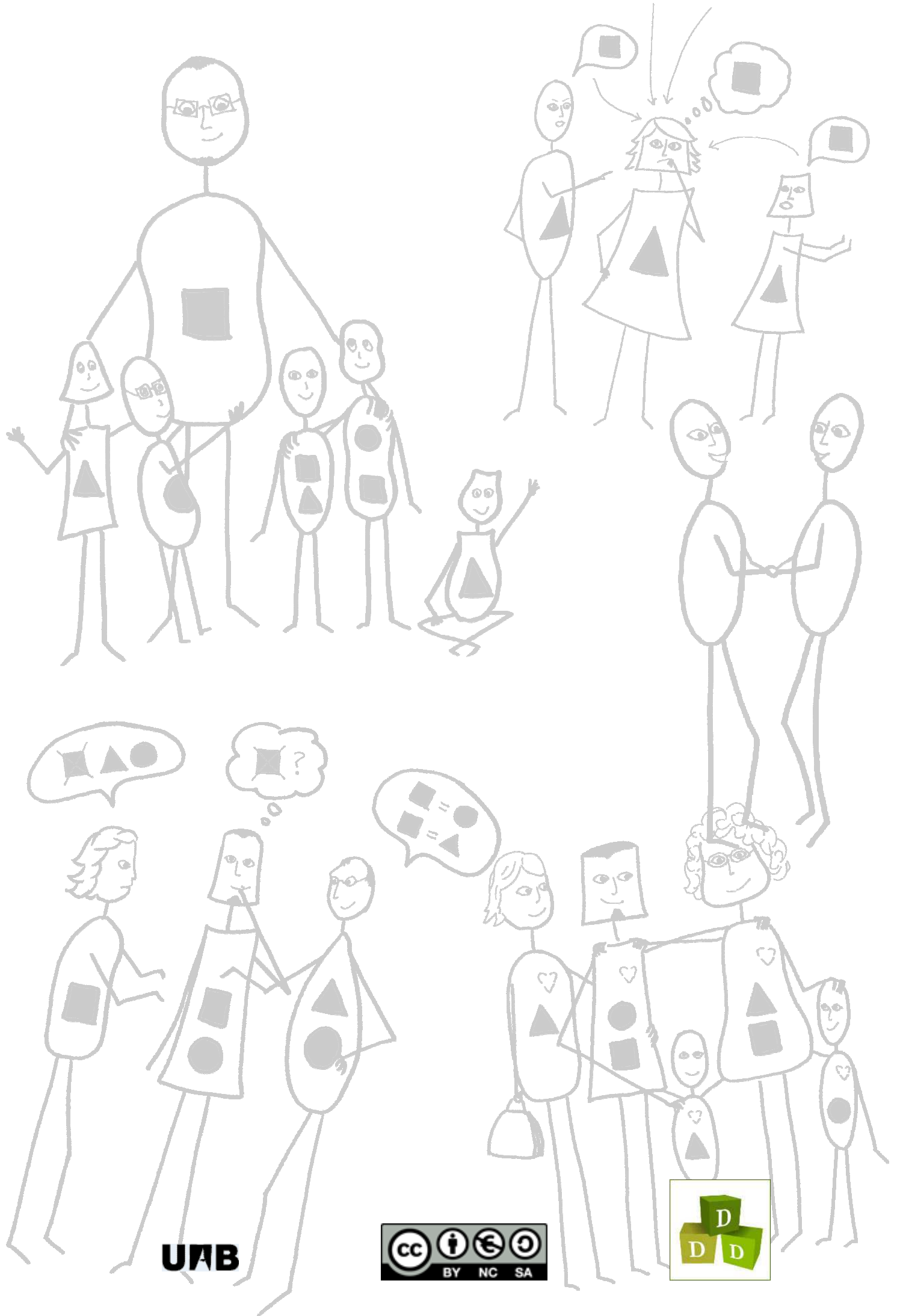
Dr. Martin Luther King





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UAB

