Article

Social Sustainability and Professional Development: Assessing a Training Course on Intercultural Education for In-Service Teachers

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Abstract: Background: World-wide migration is one of the most important issues of the 21st century. One crucial problem that has arisen as a result of mass migration is how school teachers are taught to use methods and tools that both support intercultural education and the promotion of inclusion as a core pedagogical construct. For these reasons, it is unsurprising that there is an increased need for studies within the field of social sustainability that consider the effects of professional development for teachers. **Methods**: The current paper presents the assessment of a professional development training course on intercultural education addressed to Italian primary and middle school teachers. The course was framed within a sociocultural approach and had a learner-centered focus. The research methodology used within our research involved a qualitative method to assess the effects of the training course activities. The perceived professional development was analyzed through the administration of an open question survey addressed to the teachers that attended the training course. **Results**: The qualitative analysis revealed the following themes: Teachers' attitudes, teaching methods and instruments, community of practice, positive features of the course, course weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement. The results of this analysis showed that the training course was an occasion for teachers to discuss different pedagogical approaches, teaching strategies, and practices in intercultural education. **Conclusion**: The findings suggest that the activities created an environment for teachers to reflect upon their teaching approaches and practices. Our research shows that professional development interventions of this kind may help to improve intercultural pedagogical abilities among primary and middle school teachers.

Keywords: professional development; education for sustainable development; primary and secondary education; educational change; intercultural education

1. Introduction

World-wide migration is one of the most important issues of the 21st century. Migration is generally perceived as the movement of people from one political or administrative country to another. Migration has many strengths and weaknesses: It contributes significantly to the economic and social growth of the countries that accept migrants through an increase in development and investment. Furthermore, the labor market of the host country will be able to fill the shortages it experiences, and it could be a relevant poverty reduction tool. Conversely, migration could have negative social and psychological issues associated to it.

Migration is part of the social aspect of the field of sustainability and is one of the three pillars of sustainability: Environment, economy, and society [1]. Migration is a cross-cutting problem, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has acknowledged the relevance of migration on sustainable

development [2]. There is a real need to understand the surrounding variables of migration, as it could contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There are many reasons that people consider migration as a way to explore new possibilities away from their native country. As such, migration could be prompted by a number of different reasons and reasons for the movement of refugees, displaced persons, and uprooted people have to be carefully considered. Migrants tend to be particularly vulnerable and need specific attention, especially those migrating with children. Relevant focus has to be given to define the best pedagogical methodologies for promoting the inclusion of migrant and refugee children into the school system of their host country. Intercultural education offers a variety of methods and tools for the inclusion of migrants that could be used in a school setting. However, for these methods and tools to be applied, school teachers need to be taught how to use them for intercultural education and how to promote inclusion as a core pedagogical construct [3].

The current study presents the assessment of a professional development training course on intercultural education addressed to Italian primary and middle school teachers. The course was framed on sociocultural theories and based on a learner-centered approach. The research methodology involved qualitative methods to evaluate the influences of the training course activities on the professional development of the teachers. The fundamental principles of intercultural education, alongside the professional development of teachers with regard to sustainability and intercultural education, are considered to provide a theoretical background for the present study.

2. Intercultural Education at School

Goal 4 of the Agenda 2030 [2] states the need to ensure democracy and equity in educational opportunities, so as to allow all individuals to fully develop their potential. It states that attention needs to be given to the needs of students who are at risk of underachievement in schools: Children from minorities, pupils with disabilities, or children with a sociocultural disadvantage. Assuring equal access to educational experiences is a complex task, which requires the active engagement of both teachers and students. Teachers and educators should develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes to work effectively with migrant and refugee pupils in the classroom [4]; however, students also need to develop and learn skills so that they can interact and cooperate with their peers who may be coming from different cultural backgrounds. With regard to cooperation, attitude and engagement, are two of the essential features that characterize responsible citizens when considering how to construct a more sustainable future [5], and education is the foundation upon which the promotion of new attitudes is created.

Intercultural education encourages exchanges between cultures that creates a democratic and peaceful co-existence between people [6]. The main aim of intercultural education is to reach what Portera [7] defined as "interactive integration". In interactive integration, people coming from different cultures live together, respecting themselves, exchanging ideas, and cooperating to create a democratic society. Becoming intercultural people means that people need to develop responsible attitudes toward sustainable citizenship [8]. The school classroom is the most suitable educational and social context for promoting attitudes and skills for an inclusive society [3]. In the pursuit of intercultural education, schools should promote and sustain an environment of reciprocal respect and give value to the differences that emerge from various cultural exchanges [9]. By adopting an intercultural approach in schools, the benefits are seen not only in children from minorities, but also in the whole student population. Instructional practice should not solely be focused on teaching content and skills, but also in promoting the development of responsible citizens. Responsible citizens have to have an open mindset, which is fundamental when considering how to welcome and cooperate with people from different social and cultural backgrounds [10].

To enhance an intercultural perspective at school, teachers should be able to act as facilitators in integrating the various cultural perspectives and negotiating different points of view within the classroom [11]. This complex task requires a multidimensional set of competences to effectively

promote an intercultural educational approach. Teachers and educators should be fully aware of their beliefs about cultures and cultural exchanges [12], to develop an open attitude in terms of welcoming migrant children and their families and integrating them into society.

3. Teacher Professional Development in Sustainability and Intercultural Education

In countries such as Italy (where the current study was conducted), migration is a daily problem, with migrants arriving every day by sea in improvised boats and inhuman conditions. When migrant and refugee children arrive at school, teachers often work in challenging conditions, with little support from international institutions. The context in which Italian schools operate is changing day by day, becoming more and more multicultural, and intercultural education is turning into an emergency. It is very difficult and challenging to define the teaching skills that teachers need to be able to manage multicultural learning environments. Schools are multicultural, and there is a need for professional development initiatives aimed at school teachers [13].

School teachers working in intercultural contexts require specific professional development training activities to acquire the teaching strategies to deal with multilingual, intercultural, and overcrowded classrooms. Teachers have to meet students' needs and require certain expertise to be able to deal with aspects such as stress and trauma linked with displacement. Migrant students may have experienced dramatic conditions during their journey before arriving at their host country, and they may also have had previous trauma caused by conflicts, battles, wars, and displacement [14]. In addition, migrant students may have heterogeneous education stories and academic skills acquired in fragmented ways. Teachers are an extremely important resource available to migrants and refugee students. Teachers working in intercultural contexts have to take care of students and to understand their previous experiences.

Professional development is a crucial issue: Teachers can enhance their pedagogical and educational abilities through their everyday work within the classroom. However, they may also benefit from continuous formal training [15]. To effectively enhance classroom work, in-service training experiences have to be based on the following six main principles [16]: The achievement of "cultural tools" (p. 324), which can help teachers in addressing the different needs of all the students; the creation of a community of practice, in which teachers share ideas and experiences, collaborating for improving educational and instructional practices; the access to follow-up support after the end of the training experience; the possibility to acquire transferable skills and knowledge to promote teachers' personal and professional growth; the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical experiences during professional development; and the adoption of a holistic view of human development, to integrate different aspects in the uniqueness of each student's personality.

Both trainee and in-service teachers could be involved in activities aimed at developing their confidence and competences in teaching in intercultural environments, where cultural differences should not be ignored or minimized but accepted, respected, and valued [17]. Professional development has to be a life-long learning process for teachers that need to continuously update their methods for dealing with multiethnic classes [13]. To sustain school teachers in their work with students from different countries, specific professional development activities can be proposed at several levels, including in primary and secondary education. It is relevant to promote not only the achievement of new contents and skills, but also to inspire discussion and to share practices among colleagues. In particular, professional development experiences should impact teachers' knowledge and practical skills as well as the definition of their professional identities, in terms of beliefs, values, and attitudes towards classroom teaching activity [18]. One of the core aspects of professional development in the field of intercultural education is to reflect critically on individual beliefs about the meanings of the word "culture", its impact on human existence, and the way in which it affects children's educational experience at school [12]. It is crucial to encourage teachers to reflect on their attitudes [19] and to discuss and negotiate them within the professional community which shares the same challenges.

4. Method

4.1. Aim of the Study

The aim of the current study was to assess the impact of a training course on teachers' professional development, considering the enhancement of attitudes and skills related to intercultural education. The evaluation focused on three main aspects connected with professional development [20]: The perceived experience of the teachers engaged in the course, their achievements in terms of knowledge and skills developed as a result of their participation in the course, and the self-assessment of their confidence with new teaching methods and strategies for promoting children's inclusion in the class.

The research questions were as follows:

1. What were the main features of the course that participants found most useful for their professional development?
2. What enhancements did the course promote in participants' teaching skills?
3. What impact did the course activities have in improving participants' intercultural competence?

The current research was conducted in accordance with the ethics standard of Code of Ethics and Conduct of the British Psychological Society [21] and of the Declaration of Helsinki [22].

4.2. Participants

Teachers from three school institutions in the North-East of Italy participated in the training course. They were 53 primary and middle school teachers (mean age = 46, SD = 8.5; age range 25–63); the majority were women (50, 94.34%), and only three were men (5.66%). Most of them worked as teachers in a primary school (35, 66.04%), while some of them taught different subjects in middle school (18, 33.96%).

Participants enrolled spontaneously in the training course. They participated in all the professional development activities and, at the end of the course, they completed voluntarily the written assessment survey. They were informed that the data collected would remain anonymous and used for research purposes only.

4.3. The Educamigrant Project

The training course for in-service teachers was part of module two of the ERASMUS+ KA2 Strategic Partnership international project "EDUCAMIGRANT ensuring equability in education for migrant and refugee pupils". The project, led by Turkey, involved school and academic institutions from three European countries (Italy, Spain, and Turkey), with the aim to enhance school inclusion for migrant and refugee children in a perspective of democracy and sustainable development. Throughout the duration of the project, intercultural experiences were shared, and participants worked collaboratively. The main objectives of the project were focused on the migrant and refugee children, their families, the teachers, and the educational institutions of the partner countries. More specifically, the project tried to:

*   Improve the educational experience of migrant and refugee children in primary and secondary schools;
*   Define strategies for supporting migrant and refugee families in the school experience of their children;
*   Share and structure effective methods and activities for teachers working in multicultural classrooms;
*   Raise awareness among educational institutions about educational inclusion for all students, with particular reference to migrant and refugee pupils.

The project included three modules: Module one, which focused on the tutoring of instructors who were to work in teacher training programs in each partner country; module two, in which the training activities for teachers were defined; module three, including the class activities that teachers could propose in their educational work with multicultural classes.

4.4. The training Course for Teachers

The training course was part of module two of the EDUCAMIGRANT project and consisted of professional development activities addressed at primary and middle school teachers. The training course included three workshops of three hours each for a total of nine hours. The workshops were dedicated to the achievement of knowledge about intercultural education as well as the improvement of a set of abilities involved in working in primary and secondary school classes with migrant and refugee children. The first workshop was based on orientational skills, the second on pedagogical and linguistic skills, and the third on intercultural skills. During the first workshop, the abilities that a teacher needs to effectively create a welcoming and inclusive class were discussed, e.g., skills for mediating and managing cultural differences in the classroom, or skills for acting as a learning facilitator. The focus was on developing strategies for helping migrant children who have just arrived at the host country. The skills for creating an inclusive classroom dealt with linguistic support, the creation of positive social interactions within the classroom, cultural exchange, and acquaintance with the new spaces of the school. The second workshop addressed specifically the fundamental abilities and strategies for working with migrant and refugee children to achieve linguistic literacy. Participants were introduced to the most innovative methods for language acquisition, such as the content and language integrated learning. In addition, the main features of the communication process were discussed, including the promotion of communication skills and abilities related to interdisciplinary teaching. The third part of the course was focused on intercultural competence: During this workshop, participants examined the different dimensions of the concept of "culture", discussing and exchanging ideas about the impact that their cultural backgrounds has on their professional activity. They were also invited to reflect on how students' culture could affect their educational experience at school. This workshop aimed to foster self-reflecting capabilities, critical thinking, self-awareness, and the adoption of a learner-centered approach in teaching.

The methodology of the workshops was based on a student-centered method, with a preliminary discussion of theoretical models, and follow-up practical sessions, in which teachers worked collaboratively in small groups to reflect on the stimuli proposed and develop educational activities related to their experience in multicultural classrooms.

4.5. Data Collection and Survey

A written survey with open questions was proposed to the participants at the end of the activities for assessing the effectiveness of the training course. Participants were invited to think about their experiences during the training course and to respond to open questions about the aspects of the course they found most useful for their professional development, the new skills and strategies they had acquired during the workshops, the critical points of the course, and the aspects to be improved. The complete list of questions is reported in Appendix A.

An informed consent was obtained from the respondents: They were informed that their answers would remain anonymous, and data collected would be used for research and academic purposes only.

5. Results

5.1. Qualitative Analysis

An inductive qualitative analysis was used to examine the participants' answers to the written survey. More specifically, content analysis based on grounded theory was applied to the qualitative material collected. This method has already been successfully adopted for assessing the effectiveness

and usefulness of training projects [23,24], allowing to identify the main features and educational meanings of the professional development experience. The analysis was characterized by a coding process as follows. In the preliminary phase, researchers read the written material several times, acquiring a deep level of familiarity with it. Then, they worked independently, dividing the text into smaller sentences and assigning a specific code to each of them. In a following phase, researchers revised ambiguous statements and discussed individual interpretations, verifying whether the identified codes were the same. Researchers compared their results and eliminated possible redundancies. Similar codes were discussed and clustered to reduce the codes to as small a number as possible. Later, relations between codes were identified, and a number of categories, which included the individual codes, emerged from the analysis. At the end of the discussion, all the members of the research team had a shared understanding of the codes and categories, and the confirmed codes were organized in a list as units of analysis. Researchers revised the codes and categories, and from this final phase, twenty-six codes and five categories were confirmed.

At the end of the analysis, the collected written responses were translated from Italian to English. The accuracy was checked with a back-translation from an expert native speaker.

The following five categories emerged from the inductive analysis:

1. Teachers' attitudes (4 codes);
2. Teaching methods and instruments (4 codes);
3. Community of practice (3 codes);
4. Positive features of the course (4 codes);
5. Course weaknesses and suggestions (3 codes).

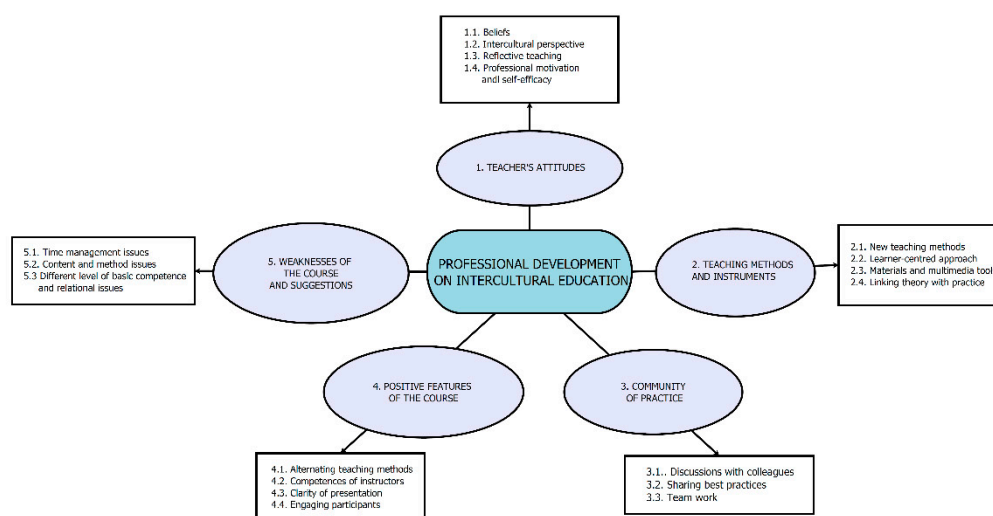Figure 1 summarizes the relationships between categories and codes.

Figure 1. Categories and codes that emerged during the inductive analysis.

In Table 1, examples of quotations associated to each identified code are reported.

Table 1. Codes and example of quotations for each category that emerged from the content analysis.

Categories.	Codes	Quotations	Explanations
1. Teachers' attitudes	**1.1. Beliefs**	"[An input for professional development was] not to take for granted the importance of relationships and empathy".	These quotations address attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives that participants reported having developed or been empowered with as a result of their participation in the training course.
	1.2. Intercultural perspective	"[An input for professional development was] to give more space for intercultural exchange for fostering a more inclusive class".	
	1.3. Reflective teaching	"[Inputs for professional development were] stimuli for paying more attention to our own behavior" [ed. teacher's behavior].	
	1.4. Professional motivation and self-efficacy	"[An input for professional development was] To believe in what I have already applied in classroom."	
2. Teaching methods and instruments	**2.1. New teaching methods**	"[An input for professional development was] to try to adopt different new teaching methods".	These quotations address the teaching skills, strategies, and instruments that participants have acquired or developed as a result of their participation in the training course.
	2.2. Learner-centered approach	"[An input for professional development was] the unconditional attention to understand how to act with each of them [ed. the students], referring also to Italian native students".	
	2.3. Materials and multimedia tools	"[An input for professional development was] the knowledge of new materials that can be used with migrant children."	
	2.4. Linking theory with practice	"[An input for professional development was] the strong interaction between theoretical aspects and practical activity".	
3. Community of practice	**3.1. Discussions with colleagues**	"[A positive aspect of the course was] the discussion with colleagues from different school grades and levels".	These quotations address the social aspects that have been promoted among the participants by the course, resulting in the creation of a professional community of practice.
	3.2. Sharing best practices	"[A positive aspect of the course was] sharing best practices with colleagues".	
	3.3. Team work	"It became evident how much it is necessary to work in team for creating common and transversal activities for supporting inclusion at 360°".	
4. Positive features of the course	**4.1. Alternating teaching methods**	"[A positive aspect of the course was] the use of different teaching methods (alternating lectures and collaborative activities)".	These quotations address the weak points and aspects to be improved of the course that have been highlighted by the participants.
	4.2. Competences of instructors	"We recognize specific psychological competences of the instructors".	
	4.3. Clarity of presentation	"[A positive aspect of the course was] the clarity of presentation".	
	4.4. Engaging participants	"I loved the way in which topics have been presented, engaging participants' attention and interest".	
5. Course weaknesses and suggestions	**5.1. Time management issues**	"The course should be better organized with reference to time management, giving the proper space for examining more in depth the topics presented".	These quotations address the weak points and aspects to be improved of the course that have been highlighted by the participants.
	5.2. Content and method issues	"I would have preferred more information about how to interact with people from different cultures".	
	5.3. Different level of basic competence and relational issues	"It is necessary not to take for granted in the theoretical discussion that all participants have the same basic competences and knowledge".	

5.1.1. Description of Categories

The five categories that emerged during the qualitative analysis were as follows:

5.1.2. Teachers' Attitudes

The first category is composed of four codes, focused on attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs developed by teachers about intercultural education as a result of their involvement in the training

course. Participants reported that the training course induced them to reflect about the main topics proposed, as stated by one teacher: "[An input for professional development was to understand] that it is important to verify if the teaching method is effective for the students' needs." The attendance at the training course made participants aware of the importance of an intercultural approach in teaching, as expressed in the following quotation: "[An input for professional development was] to give more space to intercultural exchanges between children, as a mean for promoting school inclusion." During the course activities, participants were invited to reflect on their professional experience, and this task stimulated the adoption of a reflective approach to teaching, as stated in the following passage: "[Some positive aspects of the course were the] good stimuli for reflection about our own teaching activity". Finally, other mentioned aspects were the enhancement of teachers' motivation in making an effort to work more effectively in multicultural classrooms and the empowerment of teachers' sense of efficacy.

5.1.3. Teaching Methods and Instruments

In this category, four codes were included, addressing the new methods and strategies that participants acquired or improved during the training course. Teachers recognized that the workshops encouraged them to adopt innovative teaching methods in their didactic activities. They stated a less lackadaisical attitude than before when it comes to structuring their lessons based on a learner-centered approach, as reported by one participant: "[A positive aspect of the course was] a shared experience that has led to . . . a "new" perspective of the individual and of the class, which is invited to welcome [migrant students]". Another aspect that was offered by the course was the presentation of new materials and instruments for supporting teaching activities with migrant children: "[An input for professional development was] to learn about materials that can be used with migrant children". Participants reported that their training experience helped them to find connections between theoretical concepts and the practical work of classroom management, as one teacher stated: "[The course] allowed me to make theoretical activities more applicable in practice. From theory to practice". This offered participants the possibility to successfully apply certain strategies and activities during their work in the multicultural classroom.

5.1.4. Community of Practice

This category was characterized by three codes, focused on the social dimension of the training experience. The possibility to discuss their individual professional experiences with their colleagues was valued most by the participants. One of them stated that "[An input for professional development was] the possibility to discuss and to have a dialogue [with colleagues]". The social exchanges with other teachers paved the way for sharing and spreading best practices, as reported in the following passage: "[A positive aspect of the course was] the exchange of dialogues and experiences between teachers with different point of views ...". In addition, participants recognized the importance of empowering team work between colleagues of the same school: "It became evident how much it is necessary to work in team ..."

5.1.5. Positive Features of the Course

This category included four codes related to the main aspects of the course that participants valued most. Teachers found the course methodology very useful, which integrated different teaching strategies for encouraging an active role of the participants, as reported in the following quote: "[A positive aspect of the course was the use of] different teaching modalities (lectures and collaborative learning activities in groups)". Another important aspect of the course in terms of effectiveness was the competence of the instructors, who were professional, skilled educators in educational psychology and pedagogy. They offered participants a multidimensional perspective, highlighting the psychological, emotional, and educational features of intercultural education. In addition, the instructors' clarity of presentation was considered a positive aspect, as reported in the following quotation: "[Some positive

aspects of the course were] the clear explanations". Participants recognized the importance of linking the contents of the current course to their previous training experiences. An aspect that enhanced their interest in the topics discussed, as it appears in one participant's answer, was: "reorganization of competences already achieved in previous training experiences". Finally, teachers valued positively the social environment created by instructors during the workshops, which sustained participants' interest and engagement, as reported in the following passage: "[Some positive aspects of the course were] the interesting and engaging activities".

5.1.6. Course Weaknesses and Suggestions

The last category addressed the aspects of the course that participants suggested for review and improvement. Some difficulties were related to the lack of time, which reduced the number of practical sessions and limited the discussions among participants. Other issues were related to the contents and methods, as teachers asked for specific topics and strategies that, according to them, were not given enough attention during the training course activities. An aspect that participants suggested improving was the reduction of theoretical presentations, and, conversely, the introduction of more practical activities. A problem that was mentioned by some teachers was the different level of professional competence of the participants: Some of them complained that they already knew some of the concepts presented during the course, while others admitted they encountered some difficulties related to their lack of previous knowledge about the topics discussed. These two positions are summarized in the following passages: " . . . we do not have to take for granted in the theoretical discussion that all participants have the same basic competences . . . " and "... the audience includes teachers/people very different each other". Participants referred also to some relational issues: They reported feeling annoyed by some comments made by their colleagues that were not always relevant to the topics of the workshops. In addition, they suggested addressing specifically the theme of prejudice reduction, a basic premise for working in an intercultural perspective. Finally, teachers claimed it would be a good idea to encourage more discussions within the groups and to offer more materials for working in intercultural classes.

6. Discussion

The aim of the current study was to assess the effectiveness of a training course in promoting teachers' professional development and enhancing their competence for intercultural education. Five main themes emerged from the analysis of participants' responses, related to teachers' attitudes towards an intercultural approach and education of migrant children, teaching methods and instruments for working in multicultural classes, the role of the community of practice in improving teachers' competences and enhancing their motivation through an intercultural approach, and the strengths and weaknesses of the course itself. The results showed that the training course was an occasion for teachers to discuss different pedagogical approaches, teaching strategies, and practices in intercultural education. Findings provided evidence that the course succeeded in promoting the achievement of new contents and strategies related to migrant children's education, and enhanced critical reflections among participants [25,26].

Regarding research question one (What were the main features of the course that participants found most useful for their professional development?), teachers really appreciated the methodology used during the training course, which was based on an interdisciplinary approach. Teachers were offered a multidimensional perspective, analyzing the events considering several perspectives, such as the psychological, emotional, and educational features of intercultural education. The interdisciplinary approach provided a comprehensive scenario and contributed to enhancing their critical thinking skills on intercultural issues. The training course was also based on the promotion of participation and collaboration among colleagues. The friendly social setting was considered valuable and encouraged teachers to share their views and to reflect about their beliefs on intercultural education. In addition,

the possibility to exchange experiences was crucial in terms of enhancing the intercultural skills of the teachers and for their professional development.

Regarding research question two (What enhancements did the course promote in participants' teaching skills?), the findings suggest that the activities induced teachers to reflect on their teaching approaches and practices and to increase their self-awareness regarding their way of working [27,28]. They were aware of the importance of verifying whether their teaching method was effective when it comes to the students' needs. The process of professional development that took place during the workshops led to the acknowledgement of the importance for teachers of adopting team work. Sharing experiences, ideas, and issues to be solved with their colleagues from different school levels are fundamental processes that need to be enhanced in the profession of teaching. There was also a call that laid the groundwork for the creation of a community of practice among teachers [29]: They experienced an additional enrichment derived from the possibility to present experiences, to discuss ideas, and to find solutions with professionals who encounter similar challenges in their work with students. Such kinds of professional development interventions may help to improve intercultural pedagogical abilities among primary and middle school teachers.

Regarding research question three (What impact did the course activities have on improving participants' intercultural competence?), the impact of the training course on participants' attitudes toward the intercultural approach in education responds to the need to discuss and re-negotiate teachers' beliefs about the main features of education and intercultural education [12]. Participants acquired a new way of thinking of the role of culture in school, becoming sensitive to the recognition of different perspectives and respecting individual differences deriving from several cultural backgrounds [17]. Teachers' intercultural competence was developed, and teachers increased their attention on the cultural backgrounds of their students and the impact that culture has in the educational process. Teachers started considering cultural differences as a way of encouraging social inclusion [3] and the full development of their students in a perspective of sustainable development [17]. The training experience also led the participants to think about themselves as learning facilitators who can integrate their professional practical experiences with the theoretical knowledge about intercultural education and sustainable teaching methods [16].

7. Conclusions

The results have shown that the training course was an occasion for teachers to discuss different pedagogical approaches, teaching strategies, and practices in intercultural education. We can wonder how the results of the current paper could be pertinent in terms of acknowledging the relevance of migration in sustainable development. Migration could be considered a transversal issue that affects the social level of society. Schools are fundamental contexts where migrant children's integration can progress. Some inputs were provided to understand the surrounding variables and the problems that teachers face in improving the integration of migrant children at schools. What could be considered in follow-up research is how migration could contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and how it could be framed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The current study presents some limitations, mainly due to the restricted number of teachers that were engaged in the training course. Participants were teachers from a region of Italy, and further investigations are needed to understand more in depth what level of intercultural competence primary and secondary teachers have and how it can be fostered with specific training opportunities for professional development. Other aspects that can be examined refer to the design of training activities in an intercultural framework also for administrators, to promote an approach to intercultural education that involves the whole educational institution.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Questions for the final survey proposed to participants

1. What were the positive aspects of the activities of the course?
2. What were the aspects of the course that should be improved?
3. What input for your professional development did the course offer you?
4. Do you have other comments or suggestions?

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