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MIGRANT PARENTS AND THEIR VIEWS ON LANGUAGE AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: THE IMPACT OF AN EMBEDDED LANGUAGE COURSE

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Abstract

The Parents in (inter)Action (PiiA) project was established in 2007 in a number of Flemish¹ cities and communities, with the aim of breaking down barriers between migrant parents and their children's school. It is an embedded Dutch as a Second Language (DSL) course for migrant parents, based in the primary school that their children attend. The project is run in partnership between the Centres for Adult Education and Basic Education that offer DSL courses and the primary schools. The PiiA concept was developed by the Centre for Language and Education at the University of Leuven. The positive evaluation that the project received following its first year, along with the positive experiences of the teachers (Colpaert and Strobbe 2009), demonstrated that its main goals had been achieved. However, to gain added insights, the Centre for Language and Education sought to gauge the parents' views on the PiiA course and its impact in greater depth. This article highlights the results of the interviews we conducted with 66 parents (45 LESLLA learners).

Keywords: embedded L2 course, parental involvement, primary school, migrant parents, qualitative study

1. Parents in (inter)action: A short overview

Parental involvement is widely seen as a key determinant of children's school performance. Recognising that language and communication are often obstacles in the interaction between the school and parents, and in parental participation (Samae 2006), PiiA sets out to enhance language proficiency and reduce barriers between schools and parents. It focuses not only on the obstacles that parents experience, but also the barriers that schools and their staff create for parents, often unintentionally and unconsciously. Hence, the objectives of PiiA are twofold: on the one hand, to increase parents' language skills and decrease the

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barriers they experience with regard to the school; and on the other, to decrease the barriers and the language requirements that the school imposes on the parents. Taken together, these objectives serve the ultimate goal of enhancing children's chances at school, parental involvement being a key determinant of a child's development (Bakker et al. 2013).

To achieve this goal, the Centre of Language and Education at the University of Leuven developed the PiiA project's core elements: embedded language lessons at the children's school and the organisation of an event by the PiiA group. The central ideas were: (1) to encourage parents to participate in the school community through participation in a safe environment, i.e. the PiiA group; (2) to learn Dutch through participation, rather than stipulating the learning of Dutch as a condition for participation; (3) successful communication as a shared responsibility between the parents and the school. As a practical expression of this, the language course gave parents the opportunity to learn core language skills based around the specific school context. In that regard, a sustainable range of language tasks was planned for the parents, through a process that involved close interaction with the school staff and organising the event. This guaranteed the necessary degree of interaction and communication between the school and the parents.

Skills such as reading letters, asking for information, and filling in forms were adapted to the context of the school and the participants' children. The PiiA group members learned, for instance, how to read the school's official letters, ask their children's teacher for information, and fill in a form issued by the school. They also visited their children's classroom to observe a lesson, ask questions and search for information. The event organised by the parents was undertaken at a whole school level. This featured, for example, a healthy breakfast, an exhibition in the entrance hall, or a photo contest where the parents had to collaborate with other parents, school staff and children. Through these embedded language lessons and events parents learned not only how to communicate with the school, but also gained a better knowledge of the school and academic life. The school, for its part, gained a better knowledge and understanding of the parents and those aspects of communication that gave them difficulties.

Since 2007, PiiA groups have been organised in various communities and cities across Flanders. Currently, there are several such groups, mostly concentrated in the city of Antwerp, where, in an average year, there are fifteen PiiA groups. Although precise numbers are not available for the rest of Flanders, there is at least one PiiA group in operation each year. The main difference between Antwerp and the rest of Flanders is that Antwerp's city administration supports the project and coordinates the running of individual PiiA groups.

Despite this central coordination, most groups are heterogeneous, in terms of the levels of participating parents' education and language proficiency. Although the PiiA course is designed at the A1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2001), all parents wishing to learn Dutch in the context of communication with the school may participate. As a result, PiiA groups contain participants with differing levels of proficiency. Low- and high-educated parents attend the course together, but separate groups are sometimes created for participants who are LESLLA learners or non-literate. All participants are offered a PiiA course that runs for one year. If they wish to pursue Dutch lessons thereafter, they must then follow a regular DSL course at a Centre for Adult Education or Basic Education.

2. Research: giving parents their say

In the 2011-2012 school year, exactly five years after the first PiiA groups started, the city of Antwerp funded a study to determine the impact of its local groups. Rather than asking teachers, school heads, staff, or policymakers, the decision was made to give the parents their say and gain their impressions about the PiiA project. A qualitative research programme was undertaken, based on semi-structured interviews with parents who had attended a complete PiiA course, i.e. a whole school year, during the period from September 2007 to June 2011. Its aim was to determine whether or not the parents felt that the PiiA project had met its objectives. It focused on three specific questions:

1. Has PiiA contributed to a change in parental involvement?
2. Has PiiA contributed to an increase in the parents' language proficiency?
3. Has PiiA contributed to making the school more accessible to the parents?

Over the five school years, a total of 586 parents had taken one year's PiiA at a school in Antwerp. At the start of each year an intake event was organised for interested parents, at which the aims of PiiA were explained and basic background information was gathered. During the intake process, the learners were categorised into three groups: non-literate, low-educated (less than ten years of schooling) and higher educated. Based on the profile of the majority of the parents at the school, a teacher from a Centre for Basic Education or a Centre for Adult Education was assigned to the group.² When referring to LESLLA learners in this study, we mean parents belonging to 'non-literate' and 'low-

educated' groups, on the basis of information provided at the intake event. 330 of the 586 were LESLLA learners. We interviewed 66 parents, 45 of whom were LESLLA learners (19 non-literate and 26 low-educated). In the semi-structured interviews, parents were asked questions about their levels of involvement and language proficiency.

The questions about parental involvement recognised its multi-dimensional nature: they included knowledge-based, emotional, belief, competence and behavioural issues. Parental involvement is manifest in both the home and school environments. It encompasses giving information (by the school and the parents) as well as the participation or involvement of parents at a policy level: schools and parents together realise parental involvement (Boeraeve and Van Rijn 2010; Cijvat and Voskens 2008; Deboutte 2004; Samaey and Vettenburg, 2007). The questions about language proficiency focused on situations where it is common for schools to communicate with parents and vice versa. These language-use situations form part of the PiiA curriculum (Leerplan NT2 – R1 School en Ouders 2012). Examples of these language-use situations include: enrolling your child; following up the school report, timetable and homework; participating in parents' meetings and school activities; reporting your child's absence; and conversing with your child's teacher and other parents.

In the first instance, parents were asked about the current situation, having regard to each topic about parental involvement and each language situation: *How are things now?* Secondly, the questions focussed on the difference between the periods before and after PiiA, and on the influence of PiiA as perceived by the parents: *Can you see a difference between the time before and after PiiA? Did PiiA change anything?* Along with these two topics, some additional background information was gathered: personal details (age, schooling, profession, number of children) and information about the participant's PiiA-group (year, school, PiiA teacher). The interviews were mainly conducted with the parents at home, or occasionally at their children's school, according to their choice. Depending on their language skills, the interviews were conducted in Dutch, French, English, or the parent's native language. In the latter case, use was made of an interpreter.

All interviews were transcribed. When analysing the responses, we focused on the changes in language proficiency and parental involvement cited by the parents and the links they explicitly made between these changes and PiiA.

3. Results

Of the 66 participants, 56 (including 37 LESLLA learners, of whom 17 were non-literate and 20 low-educated) reported that PiiA had made a positive difference to their language proficiency and level of parental involvement. These parents said that the changes were a direct consequence of their participation in PiiA. Notably, these changes covered several aspects of the communicative relationship between parents and schools: they ranged from informal contact about activities for parents at the school to gaining an understanding of the school rules. For the remaining group of ten parents, PiiA brought no changes. In the following section, we will attempt a more detailed explanation of the specific differences PiiA made and the numbers who benefitted from these (including LESLLA parents). Additionally, we will assess the reasons why PiiA made no difference for some parents, along with the impact the project had on participants' communication outside the school and on the next stage of their DSL-trajectory (see also Drijkoningen 2012).

3.1. More and better communication and contact between parents and school

Among the 56 parents for whom PiiA made a difference, the changes related to different aspects of communication and participation in the school context. Although, by way of a generalisation, these parents all experienced more and better communication and contact, the outcomes varied in relation to more specific aspects. We shall now focus on these in more detail.

Verbal contact with teachers (LESLLA parents in brackets)

Parents can have several types of contact with their child's teacher: those that are more formal, e.g., attending a parents' meeting, and those that are more informal, such as face-to-face conversations about an event at home or chatting at the school gate.

In the interviews, 55 (36) parents cited informal forms of contact, and 47 (32) referred to attending a parents' meeting. 45 (28) felt that PiiA had helped them gain - and retain - a better quality of informal contact, but for 4 (3) this improvement had only lasted during the PiiA year, and 6 (5) reported no impact whatever. With regard to attendance at parents' meetings, 33 (22) said that PiiA had made a positive impact (see Table 1).

Table 1: *Impact of PiiA on verbal contact with the teacher*

		During PiiA and retained to date	During and after PiiA only	No impact
Informal contact (n=55)	LESLLA-parents			
	- Non-literates	13 (23.6%)	3 (5.4%)	1 (1.8 %)
	- Low-educated	15 (27.2%)	0	4 (7.2 %)
	Other parents	17 (30.9%)	1 (1.8%)	1 (1.8%)
Parents meeting (n=47)	LESLLA-parents			
	- Non-literates	11 (23.4 %)	1 (2.1%)	4 (8.8%)
	- Low-educated	10 (21.2%)	0	5 (10.6%)
	Other parents	12 (25.5%)	0	3 (7%)

For many parents, PiiA marked a turning-point. Prior to the course, they did not have any contact with their child's teacher. During the course they had their first-ever contact with them, and after completing PiiA they had maintained this verbal contact. The content and extent of this dialogue varied, ranging from small informal conversations to discussions about more complex matters. Even for those parents who already had contact with the teacher before PiiA, the course brought changes. They now have more contact with the teacher, and speak more Dutch, instead of French or English or relying on the help of a translator. In addition, they now meet the teacher themselves instead of in the company of their partner or child.

Parents mentioned different reasons for these changes. In the first instance they cited increased language proficiency. PiiA taught them what they could ask and how they could formulate this. A better understanding of the school was also an important element. Parents got to know the school staff, where the classes are located in the school building, and how the parents' meeting is organised. In addition, they spoke of the added confidence the PiiA teacher had given them in making contact with their child's teachers. Through the medium of tasks during their course, where parents had to approach their child's teacher, the PiiA teacher provided the necessary impetus to let this contact develop. At the same time, the children's teachers got to know the parents better. The parents found that the teachers tried to speak more Dutch and engage in more conversation with them. Not only that, the teachers appeared to be more patient and encouraging when the parents attempted to converse with them in Dutch. All of these elements gave the parents greater confidence in making contact and communicating with the teachers and positively changed the quality of that contact.

Written communication at the school

The business of dealing with written communications embraces many aspects. These include writing letters, filling in forms and reading a variety of texts: letters from the school, the academic diary (and follow-up action on homework) and their child's school report. In the interviews, 49 parents spoke of being able to 'understand letters', 39 about 'reading the school diary and following up on homework', 35 about 'understanding their child's school report' and 47 about 'writing a letter and filling in a form'. The majority said that the impact of PiiA had been positive (see Table 2). They reported that they now follow up on written communications from the school. Many did not even look at these before they enrolled in the course. They understand now what is written and how important it is to follow it up. After following PiiA, the parents now read and write more fluently and independently: previously, they needed the support of someone else. They are now able to understand the content of school communications and the response they need to make and can sometimes fill in a form or write a short message unaided.

Table 2: *Impact of PiiA on dealing with the written communication with the school*

		During PiiA and retained to date	During and after PiiA only	No impact
Understanding letters (n=49)	LESLLA parents			
	- Non-literates	8 (16.3%)	2 (4%)	5 (10%)
	- Low-educated	15 (30.6%)	0	1 (2%)
	Other parents	14 (28.5%)	0	4 (8.2%)
Understanding diary (homework) (n=39)	LESLLA parents			
	- Non-literates	9 (23%)	3 (7%)	0
	- Low-educated	12 (30.7%)	0	0
	Other parents	8 (20.5%)	0	7 (18%)
Understanding school report (n=35)	LESLLA parents			
	- Non-literates	11 (31.4%)	0	2 (5.7%)
	- Low-educated	11 (31.4%)	1 (2.8%)	1 (2.8%)
	Other parents	5 (14.2%)	0	4 (11.4%)
Writing a letter and fill in a form (n=47)	LESLLA parents			
	- Non-literates	6 (12.7%)	3 (6.3%)	2 (4.2%)
	- Low-educated	14 (29.7%)	0	2 (4.2%)
	Other parents	14 (29.7%)	3 (6.3%)	3 (6.3%)

Clearly, the extent to which parents can understand the written texts, what they are able to write, and how independently they can do this, relates directly to

their level of literacy. After completing PiiA, the more literate parents can understand letters from the school (if they are not too complex), the timetable and their child's school report. They can now also write a short note and fill in a form. The less literate parents, the LESSLA learners, reported that they learned strategies for reading, namely, deciphering the meaning of a letter, determining whether it is addressed to them, and recognising the date and their name or the name of their child. They have learned how, independently, to identify in the timetable whether or not their children have homework to do. They can also understand from their child's school report whether or not s/he has been doing well. Some of them can now successfully fill in the basic personal data in a form.

Along with increased language proficiency and a greater awareness of the school and its procedures as a result of PiiA, the course participants find it particularly important that they now possess a better understanding of the school's written communications. By using examples of these communications as *realia* in their PiiA-lessons, parents came to understand what is being conveyed in such letters. They learned what subjects are taught at school, thus giving them a better awareness of the school timetable and their children's report in which these subjects are listed. With respect to the school report, PiiA focused on how results are set out, and what the grades and teachers' remarks mean. Taken together, this helped the parents to engage more effectively with the school's written communications.

Understanding the rules and internal organisation of the school

The PiiA parents reported a wide range of matters that they now understand with respect to school regulations and governance. Because PiiA focused on these aspects and incorporated them in language tasks, the parents were able to accumulate a body of related knowledge and skills. As previously highlighted, these insights greatly contributed to a better level of communication between the parents and the school. At the same time, knowing and understanding how the school, and education in general, is organised, gave the parents a better appreciation of what the school expects from them. They said that, thanks to PiiA, they now know what to do when their child is absent or sick; how and how much they have to pay for food or drinks at school; what is prohibited and what is permitted. This clearly reduces misunderstanding and builds better relationships between parents and the school. It is important to note here that many parents reported that, before enrolling in PiiA, they had not been told about the school rules. Twenty seven of them referred to the school rules, of which 19 said that they learned about these through the PiiA course, as against 8 who said that they had been informed of these by the school (see Table 3). Whatever the reasons for this, it is important for schools to be aware that many

parents will not know the rules or understand the school system. This may in turn affect the relationship between the school and the parents, and the level of parental participation.

Table 3: *Impact of PiiA on understanding the rules and organisation of the school*
(n=27)

	Informed through PiiA	Informed by the school
LESLLA parents		
- Non-literates	5 (18.5%)	4 (14.8%)
- Low-educated	9 (33.3%)	1 (3.7%)
Other parents	5 (18.5%)	3 (11.1%)

Attending parents' activities at school

Because the interviews were so wide-ranging in aspect and outcome on this topic, our research did not yield clear conclusions as to whether or not PiiA has a positive impact on the level of parental participation in school-based activities. However, some general trends were revealed. The PiiA course was, for many parents, their first visit to their children's class - this despite the fact that they felt such visits were important. Our data did not show any clear proof that, following PiiA, parents are continuing to make class visits. Another trend is that, although the schools in question regularly organise a wide range of activities, on those occasions when they ask for parental assistance, this is mostly limited to simple requests, such as providing an item of food. The schools rarely plan activities jointly with parents or seek their assistance in running them. Although the PiiA participants played an active and leading role by organising an event during their course, the schools in question no longer seek the parents' co-operation in similar initiatives.

Contact with other parents

In terms of attendance at school activities, the data is unclear as to whether PiiA has an impact on the level of contact the participants have with other parents at the school after completing the course. PiiA aims to foster contacts between parents, and specifically, between course members and their Dutch-speaking counterparts. This furthers the ultimate aims of creating a working network for all parents at the school and improving migrant parents' language proficiency through maximising opportunities for social contact. As PiiA is only a one year course, more practice is needed for participants to improve their Dutch language skills. Some of the parents said that they now have more contact with other

parents than before they enrolled in PiiA, but it is not clear whether this contact is conducted in their own language, a contact language or in Dutch. The majority, however, already had many contacts with other parents before taking the course. Their responses, however, do not explicitly reveal whether PiiA helped participants make more contacts with other parents, or speak more Dutch. While our evidence demonstrates that a wide range of contacts exist between the parents at their children's school, it cannot therefore be deduced that PiiA has succeeded in creating a network between migrant and Dutch-speaking parents after the former have completed the course.

3.2. Reasons for non-impact

For ten participants in the study (including eight LESLLA-learners, two of whom were non-literate and six low-educated), PiiA produced no major changes in their level of communication or other forms of involvement with their children's school. This does not, however, mean that they learnt nothing or were dissatisfied by their experience. They picked up some words, learnt to write a little, went to visit their children's class for the first time, and so on; but the differences before and after attending PiiA were too limited for them to demonstrate clear progress or secure a lasting change after finishing PiiA.

We have identified several reasons for this lack of impact. Five (four LESLLA) parents were already capable of reading letters, understanding school reports and the timetable. They also engaged their children's teacher in conversation and attended parents' meetings. But they found that the PiiA lessons were too easy. Some had previously taken DSL courses and therefore had enough knowledge of Dutch to communicate with the school and involve themselves in its activities. Hence PiiA did not make a significant difference to them. The other five (four LESSLA) parents did not have any contact with the school, either before or after PiiA. While taking the course, they involved themselves in school affairs, but on completion, they stopped participating in school life. Letters from the school are still read by their partner; and they no longer attend parents' meetings or other activities. The course did not give them the necessary level of confidence and assertiveness. They are still afraid to make contact with the teachers and visit their children's school. In essence, then, the PiiA experience was too short for some and too difficult for others to make a lasting difference.

3.3. Impact on the outside world of the school

Although PiiA is an embedded L2 course, where language tasks are based on communication and involvement between parents and their children's school, 33 participants (26 LESLLA) reported a series of positive learning outcomes beyond the school environment (see Table 4). They experienced differences in the quality of their daily lives, which they then fed back into their PiiA course. Firstly, they can now understand and communicate more in a variety of daily contexts, for instance, when shopping, at the doctor's and other situations involving the National Health Service, at the town hall or at the bank. They can read the prices of items, make an appointment and exchange goods in a shop. Secondly, the parents can for the first time understand several key aspects and rules of daily life, such as how to catch a bus or make a bank transfer, the sum of money they need to pay for a particular item and so on. PiiA has brought them more independence, not only in the school, but also in the street. Before enrolling in PiiA, many of these parents were forced to rely on family or friends, but now they can and will do these things for themselves. They have become sufficiently confident and assertive to speak Dutch and make social contacts.

Eleven parents (including seven LESLLA learners) found that pursuing a PiiA course had made no impact on their daily lives (see Table 4). In some cases, this was because they could not transfer what they had learned in the context of their children's school to their everyday lives. Other parents stated that they did not need Dutch outside the school. They rely on relatives or use another language: their native or a contact language.

Table 4: *Impact of PiiA on communication in daily life (n=44)*

	Yes	No
LESLLA parents		
- Non-literates	13 (29.5%)	5 (11.3%)
- Low-educated	13 (29.5%)	2 (4.5%)
Other parents	7 (15.9%)	4 (9%)

3.4. Parents in (inter)action in the L2 trajectory

The main goal of PiiA is to enhance communication and parental involvement in the context of their children's school. It also seeks to contribute to the L2 trajectory of migrant parents. Firstly, PiiA aims to reach foreign speakers who do not access regular DSL courses, which address a wide range of topics that are

important to daily life, independent of the learner's specific needs. These courses are, however, often organised at places and at times that are difficult for participants to combine with taking their children to and from school. Through courses that take place during school hours in their children's school and which are based on content that really matters, PiiA aims to tailor itself to the needs and aspirations of migrant parents. Secondly, PiiA actively encourages parents to continue taking courses in Dutch. As previously mentioned, the PiiA programme covers a single school year. If the migrant parents wish to learn more Dutch they have to take a course in another location: at a Centre for Adult Education or Basic Education or with a voluntary organisation.

Regardless of the differing impacts on participants that we have outlined to date, it is clear that PiiA plays a key role in their L2 trajectory. 32 of the 66 who participated in this study reported that PiiA was the first DSL course they had ever taken. 39 parents enrolled on further Dutch courses after completing the PiiA programme (see Table 5). Of the 34 parents who had started a Dutch course on a previous occasion, eleven had abandoned their studies after a very short time. PiiA was the first Dutch course they had seen through to completion. For 12 of this group of 34, PiiA marked a new beginning in their L2 trajectory: there had been a gap of between four and eleven years since their previous Dutch courses. We can therefore conclude that, even for those parents who had already participated in DSL courses, PiiA encouraged them to pursue their studies to completion for the first time or restart a DSL courses after many years of absence.

Table 5: *The role of PiiA in the DSL trajectory (n=66)*

	Only PiiA	PiiA → DSL course	DSL → PiiA	DSL → PiiA → DSL
LESLLA parents				
- Non-literates	2 (3%)	10 (15.1%)	4 (6%)	3 (4.5%)
- Low-educated	7 (10.6%)	3 (4.5%)	6 (9%)	10 (15.1%)
Other parents	4 (6%)	6 (9%)	4 (6%)	7 (10.6%)

4. Conclusion

In this qualitative study, 66 parents, including 45 LESLLA learners, were interviewed about the embedded Parents in (inter)Action language course, based in their children's school. They were asked about the impact of PiiA on

their language proficiency with regard to their level of communication and wider involvement with the school.

For a minority, PiiA made no impact. For some, PiiA gave them no new knowledge or skills. They already knew what was needed in order to communicate with the school and participate in its activities. For others, the course was too short or too difficult to help them tangibly improve their level of contact and communication with the school.

For a majority of the parents, however, PiiA marked a turning point. After completing the course, the level of their participation and communication had improved, both qualitatively and quantitatively. This was due not only to better language proficiency on the parents' part, but also, to moves towards greater accessibility by the school. Here it is important to stress that the positive impact was not limited to the period during or immediately following the PiiA course, but has been sustained for several years thereafter.

By focusing on different events and aspects of school life and children's education, in which the roles of communication and contact are important, PiiA enhances the level of parental participation. Parents take follow-up action on the school timetable and written communications; they attend parents' meetings and converse with their children's teacher; they understand their children's school report, and so on. The parents point to their increased language skills as a reason for this success. Moreover, they report a better understanding of the school: its organisation, rules and conventions, the meaning of its written communications, expectations and so on. This leads to a better atmosphere, greater confidence, self-esteem and assertiveness in making contact with the school and communicating more independently, i.e., with less reliance on family and friends. The study shows that an embedded course and working with authentic material is also possible and has a positive impact for beginning language learners (level A1) and LESLLA-learners. PiiA succeeded in engaging all learners in dealing with daily oral and written communication, questions or talks, in ways that helped them acquire strategies and coping mechanisms, regardless of their literacy or language skills.

For the schools' part, specifically in relation to accessibility, PiiA also brought positive changes. One of its main aims is to help schools break down the barriers that prevent migrant parents from participating in their children's school. The interviews make clear that parents now experience a more positive and constructive attitude from the school staff towards them. School heads and class teachers appear to be making greater efforts to speak with the migrant parents, and particularly in Dutch, rather than in French or English or with the help of an interpreter. The parents also find it encouraging when school staff compliment them on their efforts to converse in Dutch. With respect to written

communication, the data do not indicate any clear changes. The PiiA parents seem to have a better understanding of their content, and are following these up to a greater degree. Whether, however, this is due to their greater awareness and language skills, or to less complex and more accessible texts from the school, is not altogether clear.

Finally, PiiA impacted on two other aspects. Firstly, its benefits were not limited to the school environment. Course members displayed positive changes in their wider daily lives. As with their dealings at their children's school, most of the parents can now communicate better and organise their lives more independently. Instead of falling back on relatives and friends, they arrange key aspects of daily life for themselves, for instance, at the doctor's, dealing with public officials, and so on. Secondly, PiiA is an important link in the learners' L2-trajectory. The course succeeded not only in encouraging migrants to take a DSL course for the first time, it also led participants to commit themselves to further Dutch lessons in the medium to long term as a way of increasing their language proficiency. For LESSLA learners in particular, the step to a regular DSL course is often too great because they have difficulties in finding out where courses are provided or how to access these centres. PiiA helped them learn about the wide range of DSL courses available, what is suitable for them and how they can access them. This, supported by further language learning, will hopefully afford migrant parents an even greater level of confidence and participation in society, with a positive impact on their children.

Notes

- 1 Flanders is the northern part of Belgium. The official language is Dutch.
- 2 In Flanders, migrants can follow a regular DSL course, either at a Centre for Basic Education (CBE) or in a Centre for Adult Education (CVO), depending on their literacy and the duration of their schooling. Non-literate learners and learners with less than ten years' schooling must attend a CBE. Learners with ten years' schooling or more attend a CVO.

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