

Multilingual education matters: The role of academia in promoting its implementation

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The linguistic landscape has changed in recent years because of constant migration, technological developments, and recognition of multilingualism's cognitive, social, and economic benefits. Many children worldwide speak a home language that differs from the official language used in the school and societal context. Children's right to education has been safeguarded long ago (<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>). In fact, access to quality and inclusive education by respecting students' funds of knowledge is highly recommended, especially in the early years, because it belongs to basic human rights, constitutes the foundation for sustainable development, and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all (European Commission, 2021; UNICEF, 2019; UNESCO, 2025). Additionally, multilingual competence development belongs to one of the eight key competences recommended by the European Union for lifelong learning (European Commission, 2021). However, monolingualism in the official languages is still the norm worldwide (UNESCO, 2025). In Greece, particularly, research indicated that students' multilingualism was not actually promoted in classrooms, as teachers felt rather unprepared (Michala et al., 2024), though new curricula that valued student linguistic and cultural diversity have been recently launched. Universities given that they are key agents not only in knowledge transmission but also in individuals' training, development, and socialization by instilling values, can play a critical role in promoting multilingual education starting from the early years considering the contribution of this period to students' overall development. Countries through the help and multiplier effect of academia on promoting child's rights need to provide more support to pre-service and in-service teachers and trainers to put multilingual education into practice, as multilingual education is not just about language; it is about creating inclusive, equitable learning settings where linguistic and other forms of diversity are valued cultivating, thus, inclusive societies where every individual can thrive in a multilingual world.

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Short CVs

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