



# A Manifesto calling for better understanding, recognition and support of language difficulties - an invisible disadvantage

## Our vision

**Language is the gateway to lifelong wellbeing and educational fulfilment, and this can only happen if the ability to develop language is consistently supported.**

## Facts

- Around 10% of the world's population have language difficulties, either on their own (so-called Developmental Language Disorder) or in combination with other diagnoses, such as autism or learning disabilities.
- About 95% of deaf children are at risk of delayed and atypical language development due to lack of early access to language;
- Children from the most socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to experience language delay.
- An increasingly large number of children and young people face challenges associated with growing up with more than one language, even though multilingualism is positive in itself.
- About 60% of young offenders are found to have a language impairment when assessed. Severe language difficulties are frequently associated with behavioural problems, school drop-out or exclusion, mental health issues, unemployment and even criminality.
- Lack of recognition and support prevents children from fulfilling their educational potential, resulting in staggering costs for health and justice systems (about £1.2 bn for UK pre-school children with vulnerable language skills).

**The manifesto has been endorsed by 55+ organisations so far:**



## We call for:

All types of language needs to be recognised and understood.

Diagnosis of language difficulties that does not miss a single child.

Every child to have access to adequate language support.

The barriers that children and young people with communication difficulties face to be removed.

**Learn more about our Manifesto to change the situation and endorse here:**

[blogs.gre.ac.uk/atlas/manifesto](https://blogs.gre.ac.uk/atlas/manifesto)



## About us

We are the 60+ participants of a multisector international meeting sponsored by the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Study of the Dutch Royal Academy (KNAW) and the Lorentz Centre in Leiden. that took place during the week of 27th September-1st October 2021 (*Language Development, Diagnosis and Assessment in School Ages (6-16): Next Steps in Research and Practice*).

The Manifesto has been written by the ATLAS team (María J. Arche, Angeliek van Hout, Alexandra Perovic, Josep Quer, Jeannette Schaeffer and Petra Schulz) and collaborators (Anne Baker, Karen Bryan, Ellen Gerrits, Jean Gross and Derek Munn).

