

Early warning systems in six European countries

Desk research report on study visit countries in the frame of CROCOOS– Cross-sectoral cooperation focused solutions for the prevention of early school leaving project

Interim report

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CONTENT

Preliminary notes	3
Poland, Germany – Berlin, Lithuania//Judit Juhász.....	4
Poland.....	4
Overall system	4
Distress signals	8
Questions and suggestions for the study visit.....	10
Germany – Berlin.....	12
Overall system.....	12
Distress signals	15
Lithuania.....	18
Overall system.....	18
Distress signal.....	20
Questions and suggestions for the study visit.....	21
References.....	23
Ireland and the United Kingdom of England //Jelena Joksimovic.....	24
Ireland	24
Policy level - overall policy background e.g. strategic documents related to early school leaving and general approach to the problem	24
Distress signals: policy measures and pedagogical methods.....	26
Diagram 1. Scheme of Ireland’s system for ESL	29
United Kingdom of England.....	30
Policy level - overall policy background e.g. strategic documents related to early school leaving and general approach to the problem	30
Distress signals: policy measures and pedagogical methods.....	31
Compensation measures.....	32
Diagram 2. Scheme of UK’s system for ESL.....	33
Recommendations for the pilot by pilot countries	34
References:.....	36
Sweden//Dóra Tomcsik, Krisztina Mihályi	37
The question of equity in the Swedish education system.....	37
Tackling specific problems: absenteeism, deteriorating achievement, school year repetition, low motivation, drastic behavioural changes, bullying and school violence.....	39
Attachment 1 Guideline for the desk research	53

Preliminary notes

This interim report is aiming at delivering a short summary and an overall draft report on the countries chosen for study visit in the frame of Crocoos – Cross-sectoral cooperation focused solutions for preventing early school leaving project (2014-2017). The European Commission supported project is an international cooperation of Hungary, Slovenia and Serbia, with the involvement of experts from two Northern-European countries, Denmark and The Netherlands, as “critical friends”. The 3 year long project focuses on the 1.5 year-long pilot programme which will be conducted in Hungary, Slovenia and Serbia. This report intends to contribute to more focused study visits in each country and to the enrichment of a toolkit what will be used in the piloting schools by the teachers. Beyond a general overview of the countries’ education and early warning systems the reports provides a draft presentation of the countries’ policy responses to beforehand defined so called distress signals.¹ It has to be taken into account that English language sources are limited for non-English speaking countries, so that many questions still remain open after desk research. For this reason the report provides further questions suggested for the study visits to investigate. In addition some recommendations are already collected for the pilot after the UK and Ireland examples.

¹ More details of the previously defined structure can be seen in Attachment 1 Guideline for the desk research.

Poland, Germany – Berlin, Lithuania//Judit Juhász

Poland

Overall system

Poland has a traditionally low level of early school leaving. It is a widely accepted view that this low level derives from cultural reasons such as the historically high value of education in all levels of the society. Besides the good results in ESL, Poland get into the forefront of OECD countries with its literacy, mathematics and science level among 15 year olds. It seems to be useful to analyse their system changes and current policy that might be related to the early warning system of ESL.

Before 1990 a 'Soviet type' education system operated in Poland just like in other Eastern-European countries in the power sphere of the former Soviet Union. At the time of transition a reform has been started although it has not changed the structure of the system. Between 1990 and 1999 the maintenance of schools gradually moved from the government to municipalities. A systematic change with a new educational law has been introduced in 1999 with 16 regions operating pedagogical inspectorates, 379 counties with upper-secondary schools and 2478 localities with general schools and lower secondary education.² The main change was shifting the 8+4 system to become 6+3+3: the former primary school+upper secondary school system changed for a 6 year long primary school+3 year long lower secondary school+2/3 year long upper secondary school structure. Admission to school depends on the address of the student however parents can require an alternative school.

This meant that the selection of students to different types of upper secondary paths have been postponed with a year. In addition to these interventions the weight of vocational education has been decreased. Furthermore output evaluations have been introduced at the end of the three main levels shifting the focus from the process towards the result. Currently Polish education system allows until 22 years of age continuous, uninterrupted studies however compulsory education lasts until the age of 16 (see Figure 1.).³

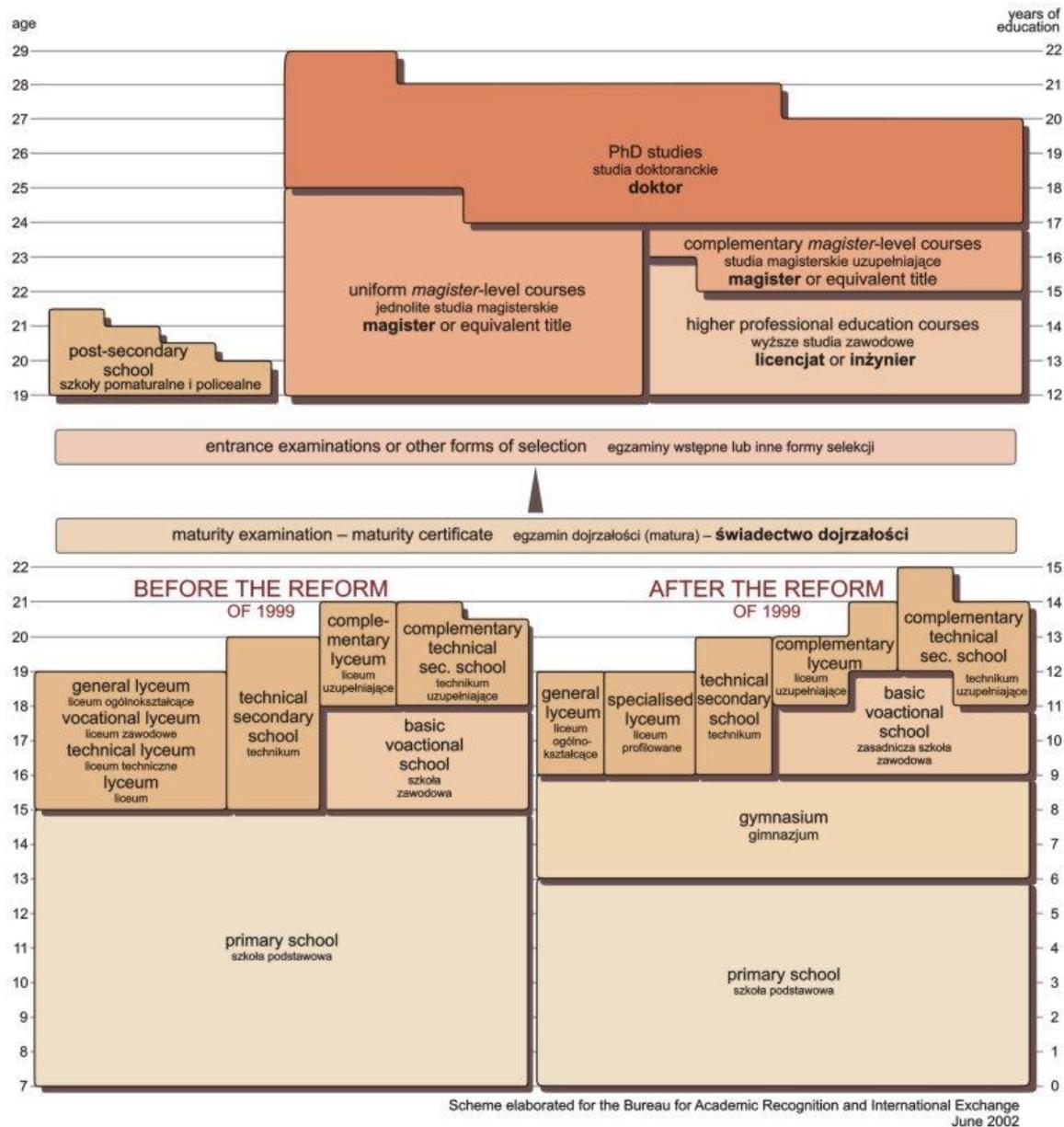
The aim of the systematic reform was the improvement of both equality and efficiency.

² Horn, D. (2008). *A lengyel oktatási szerkezet változásai a rendszerváltás óta*. MTA KTI Kongresszus

³ *The education system in Poland before and after the reform of 1999*. Internet Archive, Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange, 2002. (Retrieved August 13, 2012.)

1. Figure

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN POLAND



Source: EURYDICE, 2008

The main intervention of the reform was implemented on the lower secondary level, the traditionally weakest part of the Eastern-European, Soviet type school systems. In addition, the reform targeted three essential points: a) the mostly below achieving population by keeping them for one more year in lower secondary, heterogeneous, general education instead of VET; b) the worst performing lower secondary level with a specific reform measure concentrating on local curricula forcing schools to prepare their own ones; c) concentrating lower secondary schools to bigger settlements to provide higher quality. Moreover a strict monitoring system has been developed measuring students' results

regularly, with a standardized final exam at the end of upper secondary school. New materials and improved teacher trainings have been introduced as well.

Data shows dubious results according to the main aims (strengthening equity and efficiency). The OECD PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)⁴ results increased significantly from 2000 to 2006: in mathematics from 470.1 to 495.4 points, in literacy from 479 to 508 and in nature sciences from 483 to 498 points in average. Furthermore, a decrease has happened in the rate of the lower achievers. **Poland is the only Eastern-European country that emerged from a much below OECD average position to the forefront in only 6 years.** The variance between schools decreased a lot (see Figure 2.) however the economic, social and cultural index (ESCI) still seems to have a great effect. PISA measures the 15 year old population which was already divided into different schools back in 2000 but were still in the heterogeneous, lower secondary schools in 2003 and 2006, after the reform. It explains the smaller variance of schools and the better results of students on average and seems to verify the positive effect of the one year extension of general, lower secondary school and the “delayed vocationalization.”⁵ In the extended general education their skills improved more than they would in a vocational school – as judged by experts.⁶

This result points out that the Polish system is still not a very equal one as there is strong influence of ESCI and a high variance in the school, but it became a lot more efficient for 15 year old students concluding from PISA results.

According to experts a comprehensive evaluation is still pending.

2. Figure

Variance of students’ performance between schools⁷ on mathematics scale, 2000-2006, %

2000	53.7
2003	12.7
2006	14.9

Source: OECD PISA Databases⁸

⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/>

⁵ Jakubowski, M. et. al. (2010). *The Impact of the 1999 Education Reform in Poland*, The World Bank Human Development Network, Education Team, p1.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ “In principle, there is a free choice of school in the Polish education system. The main exceptions are primary schools, and since 1999/2000 gymnasia, in which “regionalization” (i.e. students going to their nearest school) is the rule, though not always strictly enforced.” Kreft, W, Watts, A.G. (2003). *Public Policies and Career Development: A Framework for the Design of Career Information, Guidance and Counselling Services in Developing and Transition Countries*, Country report on Poland, World Bank, p15

⁸ <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/statistics>

Early warning system

Early school leavers' rate according to Eurostat data is currently 5.6% and it was always rather consistent since 2004 with a lowest rate of 5.0%.

In Poland early warning system is part of the mainstream school monitoring and management system.⁹ Main duties and obligations of schools and educational institutions in the field of early school leaving are defined by The Education Act 1991 and the implementing regulations. According to experts of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving¹⁰ schools are given quite a lot of autonomy and are expected to develop their own specific early warning systems and procedures of intervention compatible with general legal regulations to provide a tailor-made programme for the local needs and capabilities.

Besides schools **Guiding and Counselling Centres** and **Teachers Training Centres** are also involved in tackling early school leaving. They support teachers and specialists in developing individual educational programs and supportive methods for students at risk. Furthermore these institutions provide a selection of appropriate working methods, help teachers to improve their skills in the fields of monitoring and dealing with students with learning difficulties and poor attendance.

Centre for Education Development and regional Teachers Training Centres provide a wide range of trainings for teachers. These trainings help teachers to deal with diversity in the classroom, with pupils from disadvantaged social backgrounds and students with learning or behavioural difficulties.¹¹

In 2010 a new formula of identifying and supporting students with educational difficulties or problematic behaviour has been introduced. In Poland special educational needs (SPE) apply for a wider range of difficulties or special needs of students such as at risk of dropping out, displaying signals like truancy, poor marks, and behavioural problems. At risk students are supported by multi-disciplinary teams so that psychological and educational support would be provided to them in school.

Since the changes applied in 2010, other legal and organisational changes urge inter-sectoral cooperation like teamwork among teachers and specialists in planning and assessing the support for children with special educational needs. This group of people identify the individual development of the student based on his or her needs and areas needed to be improved with the involvement of parents. Besides guidance and counselling centres, other organizations such as social welfare centres, county family assistance centres and NGOs are also approached to cooperate for the sake of the student. "All activities planned for the students (organization of education, working methods, therapeutic activities, etc.) are described in the student's Individual Support Programme. The programme is implemented on the all classes - compulsory and additional."¹²

⁹ *Early warning systems in Europe: practice, methods and lessons*. Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving (TWG on ESL), European Commission, 2013

¹⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2707>

¹¹ TWG on ESL, Country Questionnaire, Poland, 2013

¹² Ibid

Concerning early distress signals, such as poor attendance, poor overall average and poor behaviour trigger a warning. Different actors have different roles in monitoring these signs. Teachers follow up students' attendance, monitor absenteeism and the performance of the students, whilst identify their needs, develop and implement support programme for them in cooperation with the parents.

School psychologists provide support for teachers in developing support programme for students, conduct individual and group activities for students in school, may provide therapy for students in school environment and counselling for parents.

Career guidance practitioners (in lower secondary school and general upper secondary schools) provide access to information, advice and guidance to prepare students to make decisions on the educational and vocational pathways.

School principals are responsible for organising psychological and educational support for students, initiate legal enforcement procedure in case of student's persistent absence (as described in part **Absenteeism**).

Local authorities control the fulfilment of the compulsory education and carry out enforcement proceedings against parents of non-attending student.

Guidance and Counselling Centres provide diagnosis, specialized therapy for students, support and counselling for school and teachers, while providing guidance for parents too.¹³

Distress signals

Absenteeism

If a student misses more than half of his / her classes in one month (over 50% during a month) without an excuse, a warning letter is sent to their parents by the school principal, which obliges them to send the child back to school by a specified deadline or asks them to attend a meeting at the school (art. 20 of the Act). This may then be followed by withdrawal of social benefit payments or imposing fines on the parents (under the terms of the Regulation on Enforcement Proceedings in Administration) and a design and implementation of an individual support programme for the pupil, involving academic and psychological assistance. Schools and training institutes are also obliged to inform local authorities of young people who they think may have dropped out.¹⁴

Decreasing achievement

A poor general level of achievement may activate a warning, though this typically depends on individual school level policies and practices.

School year repetition

In grades 1-3 repetition is possible by the law however it is exceptional and has to be justified by psychologist and accepted by the parents. The rate of this phenomenon was less than 1% in 2006.¹⁵

¹³ TWG on ESL, Country Questionnaire, Poland, 2013

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ World Data on Education, VII. Ed. 2010/11, Unesco

In 2012 4.2% repeated a year (or more) of all primary school, lower- and upper secondary school students. The rate of year repeaters among disadvantaged students was 8% in 2012 which is considered quite low in the respected population; however the chance of such event to happen is still bigger than for a non-disadvantaged student.¹⁶

Being bored in the classroom (low motivation)

No specific information in the documents.

Drastic behavioural changes (aggression, introversion, rhapsodic behaviour), bullying and school violence¹⁷

School bullying has not been a major issue in Poland until the rapid escalation of crime in general and juvenile crime especially in the middle 1990-s. In 1995 juvenile offenders were responsible for 26 cases of homicide; in 1996 it was 36 cases.¹⁸ Other criminal activities appeared on the front pages of tabloids during 1997, so that public attention was raised for the problem. Furthermore, there were 36 cases of suicide committed due to failure at school in 1996. An expert on bullying, or - as it is referred to in Poland - aggression or violence in school, is Adam Fraczek, a professor of psychology, has started to work scientifically with this phenomenon.¹⁹

Programs tackling bullying

“In Poland there is a governmental programme ‘**Safe and friendly school**’ approved for the years 2008-13. It is targeted at the creation of a friendly atmosphere in schools through the organisation of extracurricular activities (art, sports) for pupils with learning difficulties, those from neglected social groups or those threatened with social exclusion. Some of these activities are designed for talented pupils. The programme includes the continuation of monitoring visits to primary and lower secondary schools aimed at the improvement of the safety of children and youth. The programme, together with a previous initiative of funding school monitoring systems, has significantly increased the level of safety in schools. There is also a social action launched in 2006 under the patronage of the President of Poland called ‘**School without violence**’. This is a national action, with 4 000 schools participating in the school year 2009/10. The programme includes workshops for teachers, publication of examples of good practice, advice and support, ‘day without violence’ celebrations in schools, volunteer week and a photo competition.”²⁰ According to a 2011 report on ‘School without

¹⁶ *Are disadvantaged students more likely to repeat grades?* PISA in Focus – 2014/09 (September), <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/pisainfocus/pisa-in-focus-n43-%28eng%29-final.pdf>

¹⁷ Good practices are available here: <http://www.szkolabezprzemocy.pl/> and here: a Norwegian-Polish project <http://www.robusdproject.wsp.lodz.pl/index.html> and here: another international project: <http://www.bullyingandcyber.net/en/documents/ecip/poland/>

¹⁸ Janowski, A. (1999). *Poland*. In: Smith, P.K., Morita, Y., Junger-Tas, J., Olweus, O., Catalano, R., Slee, P.. *The Nature of School Bullying. A Cross-National Perspective*. 1999. p266 <http://books.google.de/books?id=4kNpAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA264&lpg=PA264&dq=polish+education+bully&source=bl&ots=DprOfalw5c&sig=SNMEKaaVBxnvqCI8iLg8gdgZE88&hl=hu&sa=X&ei=dUpuVPigKsTcPZHcgYAI&ved=0CEAQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=polish%20education%20bully&f=false>

¹⁹ Ibid p264-276

²⁰ *Strategies to counter bullying*. Eurydice, August 2012, p11

violence' programme, the increasing trend of violence has been stopped from 2006 to 2011 however verbal aggression became stronger. Pupils were asked about the most vulnerable groups with the greatest chance to be bullied and they put toadies, mediocre and coward students on the top. Besides being physically weaker, different from others, a swot or 1st grader is also a risk factor in this sense.²¹

Other important policy measure/method

One important policy measure is the above detailed change in the structure and content of the public education system: the one year longer comprehensive and compulsory schooling. Later selection not only contributes to better results on PISA tests but it may help personality to be more mature and the student to make a better decision on further education. Career guidance system²² supports the successful decision making of the students as well.

Considering minorities the National Roma Integration Strategy for the years 2004-2013 has been implemented along with programmes aiming at increasing the rate of Romani children in education and decreasing the discrepancy of the performance of Roma and non-Roma. The initiatives were not widely evaluated and monitored however one element was somewhat followed up: the Roma teaching assistants. According to current results their employment seemed to be beneficial for schools according to them and to Roma NGO-s as well. After the pilot programme this position became an official job in 2005. The direct impact of these professionals on Roma children is still a question as many data did not justify their role e.g. the dropout rate among them has not decreased.²³

A related project based on the involvement of students and the whole community around them has just ended named Forum Theatre project 'FOTEL' in Poland.²⁴

An international project called the Golden 5 was aiming at supporting teacher initial training to improve the whole school environment.²⁵

The effects of these sporadic projects are a matter of question however some of them may influence general practice or might be built into curriculum later on.

Questions and suggestions for the study visit

It would be interesting to know teachers' opinion about the changed lower- and upper secondary system and the changes in the content from a 15 year long perspective. What do they think: **does sorting of students still appear between or within schools?**

http://www.nfer.ac.uk/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uuid=09F2CF13-C29E-AD4D-0855-E0C5DD51968F&siteName=nfer

²¹ Ibid

²² Further information about career guidance: <http://euroguidance.eu/guidance-systems/guidance-system-in-poland-3/>

http://borbelytiborbors.extra.hu/GC/Poland%20country%20report%20_final_.pdf

²³ Kostka, J., (2014). *Roma Rights 2013: National Roma Integration Strategies: What Next? National Roma Integration Strategy: Do Good Intentions Fail?*

²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXs30yFpwSk>

²⁵ <http://www.golden5.org/golden5/?q=en/node/21>

Do VET teachers feel the difference in the skills and knowledge of current students compared to those coming from the old 8 yearlong primary school? What do they think about a relatively low rate of ESL and its connection to the school system? What keeps students in school?

What is the opinion about the Safe and friendly school and the School without violence programmes? Do they still operate? Do professionals consider them as successful actions?

How do they see the role and efficiency of Roma teaching assistants?

And: What measures do they know about targeting low motivation and decreasing achievement of students?

Germany – Berlin

Overall system²⁶

Germany is a federal state which determines the structure of education. Apart from general regulations school education is organized differently in all the 16 federal states (Land). This report is specifically about the Berlin area as the TWG report is about it and the study visit is going to be made there too.

The key stakeholders are schools themselves to tackle ESL in Berlin however the Land provides many support e.g. teacher further trainings and social workers for the school. Besides local and regional educational networks, companies and child welfare centres play a crucial role in the process. Schools have a yearly meeting with employers to discuss the ways of tackling ESL.

Compulsory education starts at age 6 and lasts until the completing of 9th or 10th grade, typically until age 16. Traditionally there are four different types of secondary level school paths depending on the performance and aims of the student (see structure on Figure 3.). In Berlin the Integrierte Sekundarschule - **Integrated Secondary School (ISS)** integrates the Hauptschule, the Gesamtschule and the Realschule – the three forms of secondary education besides the most academic Gymnasium. Students can get the same final exam paper here, called ‘Abitur’ as in a Gymnasium. Furthermore they can take part in the dual learning which means a division in completing their studies, partially with practice. Usually they spend some part of the week at companies, social welfare institutes or public authorities who are actively involved in the training.

The **Gemeinschaftschule** (community school) is a Berliner type secondary school project which involves the whole community to the learning process and to the life of the school. This community school pilot project works since 2008 with approx. 20 schools. This type of school works with individualised curricula and offers all possible upper secondary qualifications for its learners. The pilot project has already shown convincing results in the change of teachers’ attitudes (they started to see heterogeneity as an asset, instead of a problem, etc.), in students’ feelings attending the school and in school climate as a whole.

There are some forms of second chances in the system for drop out students and for adults who did not obtained the final degree. These programs are organized by different providers, some during the day, and some with evening classes.

Currently the rate of early leavers from education is 12.2% in Berlin very close to the EU average rate, while 9.9% in whole Germany. The official educational statistics in Berlin uses a different definition for early leavers: the number of school leavers without the school leaving certificate. This rate has been decreasing since 2010 parallel with the EUROSTAT ESL rate. The decrease is more robust in Berlin than in whole Germany however the capital still has a higher rate.

The German target is to halve the rate of school leavers without a certificate by 2015 to 4% nationwide. They joined the EU 2020 target too to reduce ESL rate below 10% and declared all main conditions in the national strategy to support under-performing students.

²⁶ Peer Review on Early School Leaving Background paper: BERLIN, GERMANY Submitted: March 2013

Some groups are overrepresented in the early school leaver population. About quarter of them is foreigners and nearly half of them have some migrant background.

Early school leavers and deprived social groups' situation are in the focus of German policy in the last few years. In 2013 **Educational alliances** were launched to offer out of school programmes targeting especially disadvantaged young people.

For career orientation and support the transition from school to vocational training **Transfer/Transition system** works on different levels of education: early support on school level with orientation classes and mentoring, preparation for work with preparatory classes and vocational training for disadvantaged students. This program usually organized by NGO-s or charities outside school. According to experiences it is not always reachable for everyone and sometimes there is a lack of proper coordination. The **Job Orientation Programme** gives practice-relevant job orientation for young people before a vocational career.

Education String and the **Job Entry Supervision-Education String** operate for the support of special education needs young people with individualized support from the last year at school until the first year of vocational school.

Jobstarter Program supports local companies to be able to open more possibilities for trainings.²⁷

Many programs are connected to vocational training or career orientation so that this seems to be the strongest and mostly established element of the German dropout prevention system. Since 1990, a proportion of apprenticeship places have been supported by federal and regional funding. Completion rates are good and additional courses provide pathways from apprenticeship to university. Employer commitment and involvement is high and almost all large firms offer apprenticeships.²⁸

A special language support system works as well to support migrant and foreigner students. There is a language test at age 5 for every student. Those having a lag are offered to take part in language courses during pre-school education. Later on during school years many other measures are taken to support language learning partially by the curriculum and also by extra-curricular activities. For instance Förmig-Transfer²⁹ was such a program.

The **National Educational Panel Study** (NEPS) provides relevant information on educational trajectories and ESL. It tracks representative cohorts of students across Germany within all education pathways. As such, this approach provides comprehensive insights into the underlying success factors of the school system.³⁰

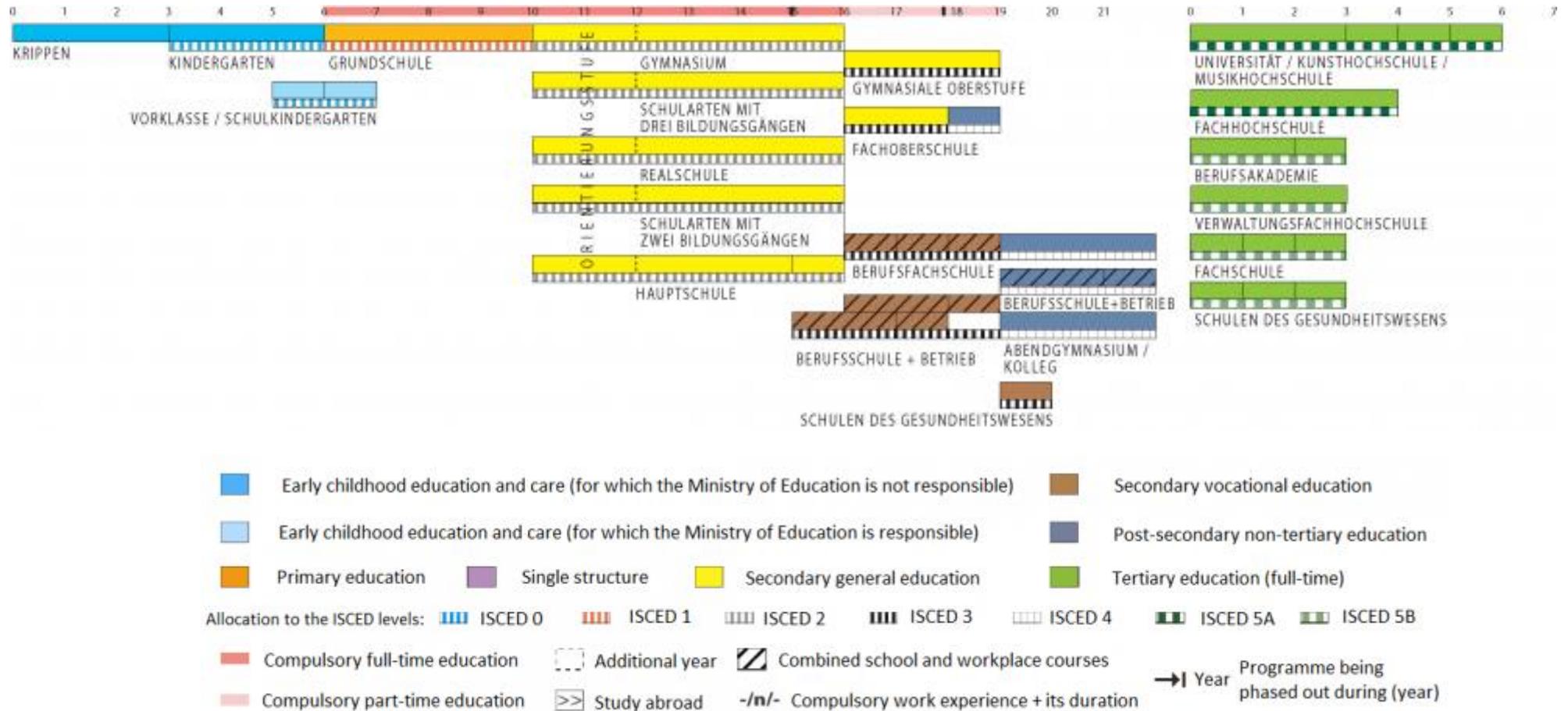
²⁷ Heid, S., Fischer, T. (2012). *Reduction of Early School Leaving of Young People*. Country Analysis and Reports, Germany. RESLEA Project, 2012 www.reslea.eu

²⁸ *Funding our Future. Approaches to youth unemployment and NEETs: International examples*. University and College Union, UK, 2012 <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3001>

²⁹ <http://www.foermig-berlin.de/>

³⁰ Peer Review on Early School Leaving Background paper: BERLIN, GERMANY Submitted: March 2013

3. Figure Structure of German education system



source: Eurydice, 2012

Distress signals

Absenteeism

A specific characteristic within the education system in Berlin that is linked to ESL relates to the systematic follow-up of school absences as an early warning signal. Since February 2011, all Berlin schools have to inform parents about absent pupils on the first day of absence. In this context, electronic class journals are trialled, which inform parents in real time directly from the classroom. In cases of longer unexplained absences, cooperation with physicians, social workers in the welfare department and school social pedagogues is initiated to ensure the well-being of a young person.

The key approach is to offer individual support and differentiated learning. Young people at risk of ESL have an opportunity after Year 8 to participate in special, very practical support measures and vocational orientation measures.³¹

Decreasing achievement

No specific information in the documents.

School year repetition

In 2012 20.3% of 15 year old students have repeated at least one grade during their educational career. This rate considers quite high in the OECD, as the average is 12.4%. Disadvantaged students are about 1.2 times more likely to be year repeaters and 29% of them have already experienced this among 15 year-olds in 2012.³²

No specific information about the policy or measures.

Being bored in the classroom (low motivation)

Specifically targeted measures for students being bored in the classroom did not appear in the reports about German education and early school leaving measures. Nevertheless some forms of education seem to avoid wrong career choices and boredom because of a too static environment.

To increase the motivation and social competences of younger students at grade 9 or 10 so called **Practical Working Group** is available. These youngsters spend 3 days a week on special workshops with the support of social pedagogue, they have an individual learning plan and they can get to know more professions at the beginning. After a certain point they have to choose a profession and a further education accordingly.

In ISS **Productive Learning** is also possible which enables students to spend 3 days a week at a company and their teachers are trained to coop with this schedule and build the education in school on the practical experiences. 80% of students attended this education has finished school with a final

³¹ Peer Review on Early School Leaving Background paper: BERLIN, GERMANY Submitted: March 2013

³² Are disadvantaged students more likely to repeat grades? OECD 2014 PISA in Focus – 2014/09 (September)
<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/pisainfocus.htm>

diploma. This is a proof of the efficiency of an individually targeted approach and of a very practical education with the involvement of all the key stakeholders.³³

Drastic behavioural changes (aggression, introversion, rhapsodic behaviour), bullying and school violence

One in ten secondary school students is involved in bullying, as a bully or as a victim, weekly in Germany.³⁴ An antibullying program called **Fairplayer.Manual**³⁵ have been developed by the Department of Free University in Berlin. The program supports schools to prevent violence and bullying among adolescence students. In a secondary school in Berlin it has become part of the curriculum after the project period.

Another project is aiming at tackling cyberbullying called media heroes³⁶ which is based on research and has already been evaluated since its start in 2010. It targets young people from 7th to 10th grade.

Violence in school get into spotlight after the shooting in Erfurt (Thuringia) in 2002 when 16 people died because of a former, early school leaver young man's aggression. After that a declaration was published by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs laying down 4 important strategic objectives for the future. Two strategic documents were published afterwards in connection with violence in school.³⁷

Other important policy measure/method

A **Cooperation school** exists as well for special needs education aiming at the integration of these vulnerable groups.³⁸

The German system is fundamentally based on the dual vocational education with the significant involvement of future work places for approx. two third of the students and on career orientation supported from many sides. The newly introduced **Skills Development Initiative** aims at the implementation of a career entry support programme to support the transition from school and training to work and to tackle dropout. In addition it provides individual outreach support measures, geared towards young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and young migrants who are not in any form of public education. Furthermore the new initiative supports 36 municipalities to follow a

³³ Peer Review on Early School Leaving Background paper: BERLIN, GERMANY Submitted: March 2013

³⁴ Professor Herbert Scheithauer from Freie Universität Berlin http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/kooperationen/vorgestellt/scheithauer_schulen/

³⁵ <http://www.fairplayer.de/>

³⁶ http://www.ewi-psy.fu-berlin.de/einrichtungen/arbeitsbereiche/entwicklungswissenschaft/Medienhelden__Daphne_III_/

³⁷ Präventionsstrategien zur Gewalt- und Deliktbereitschaft von Kindern und Jugendlichen (Strategy for the Prevention of Violence and Crime among Children and Young People) (2004).

See: <http://www.mbj.s.brandenburg.de/sixcms/media.php/5527/TOP%2010%20-%20Anlage.15475630.pdf> and Gewaltprävention in NRW (Prevention of Violence in North Rhine-Westphalia - abstract) (2007). See: <http://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/BP/Erziehung/Themen/Gewalt/Gewaltpraevention/>

³⁸ Peer Review on Early School Leaving Background paper: BERLIN, GERMANY Submitted: March 2013

strategy to test out new ways to reintegrate young people on the basis of existing services and facilities.³⁹

³⁹ *Funding our Future. Approaches to youth unemployment and NEETs: International examples.* University and College Union, UK, 2012 <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3001>

Lithuania

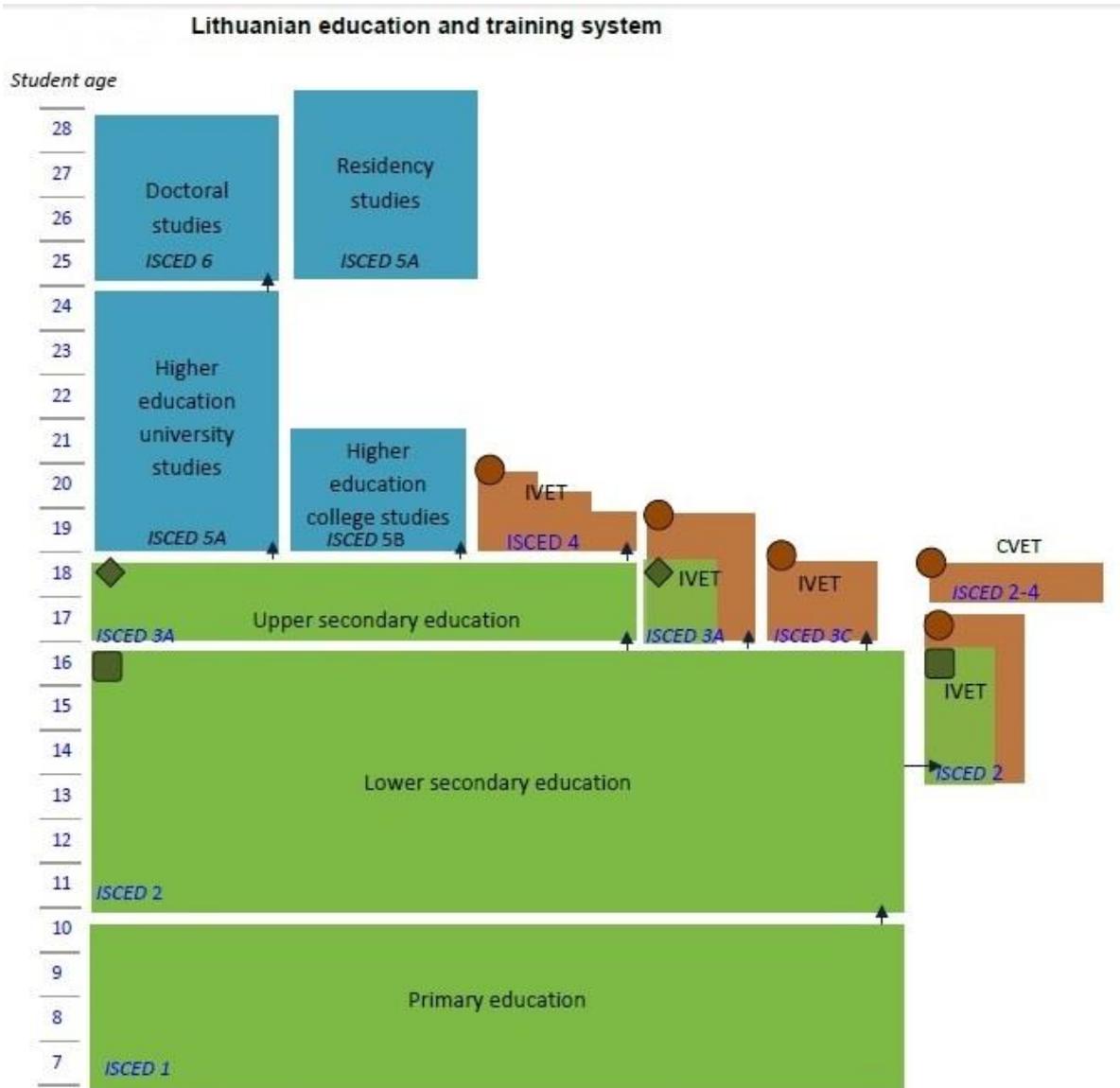
Overall system

As stipulated in the Republic of Lithuania Law on Education, municipal executive authorities are in charge of organizing monitoring and keeping records of the children who live within the municipal territory and of ensuring that all the children participate in compulsory education programmes.⁴⁰

In Lithuania education is compulsory until 16 years of age. Primary school lasts until age 10 and followed by the so called basic education for another 6 years, until 16. It ends with a basic education certificate. Upper secondary education ends with the matura, which is the certificate to enter tertiary education. Vocational and technical education starts at 15, at the fifth year of basic education. From this level students can continue on a vocational upper secondary level for another 2 years, until age 19. This ends as well in a mature, however they have to fulfil another 2 years in post-secondary vocational education to be eligible for tertiary level. As a result with a vocational orientation people can start higher education at age 21 (see Figure 4).

⁴⁰ TWG on ESL country questionnaire, 2013

4. Figure



Source: Refernet, 2012

In Lithuania early warning system does not operate in a separate form but it is part of the mainstream school monitoring and management system. The EWS and related activities are driven by national policies, practices or programmes however the responsibility for implementation is devolved to municipalities / local authorities.

The system monitors truancy/absenteeism, marks/grades, failure, year repetition and it triggers an action or a warning when a student is absent frequently or for a long time, when he/she failed, receives poor marks or has to repeat a year.

The system allows teachers, youth workers and social workers (and others) to raise a concern about a young person who they think may be at-risk of dropping out.

Schools and training institutes are obliged to inform authorities or youth bodies/workers of young people who they think may have dropped out.

There is a special information system which registers data on Not-learning Children and Non-attending Pupils.⁴¹

The rate of early school leaving is currently 6.3% and their aim is to keep it below 9% until 2020. The biggest challenge is to reduce the wide discrepancy of rural and urban areas and the gender related differences.

Almost every school employs school social pedagogues who offer many different services in case of difficulties of students.⁴²

Distress signal

Absenteeism

„Pursuant to the Provision of **Pedagogical and Psychological Assistance Model**, pedagogical psychological assistance to a non-attending pupil is provided in the environment closest to the child – in the school. Most schools have on staff social pedagogues, who are directly responsible for responding to non-attendance problems.”⁴³

A new register of children and young people not attending education was created in 2010. This register includes details of all children not attending school and information on pupils who miss at least half of the classes during one month. Since 2012, data included in the register has been shared with other agencies, including those dealing with social affairs, internal affairs and health care. The rules here are tight and already one absence can flag up a warning. In case of permanent absence the municipality send out members of its prevention coordination group to visit the family. School social pedagogues offer counselling and visits to families, and implement prevention programmes for students.⁴⁴

Programs

During **Returning drop-outs to school** state project a new record system has been built up along with preventive actions and activity groups for students at risk. Besides schools, other organizations such as pedagogical-psychological centres took part in the preventive actions.

The **Assistance to pupil efficiency and quality development programme** meant trainings about crisis management to all public education institutes as a contribution to prevent drop out as well.

⁴¹ October 22, 2008, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the ‘Description of the procedures for keeping records of children living within the municipal territory’ [„Savivaldybės teritorijoje gyvenančių vaikų apskaitos tvarkos aprašas”] TWG on ESL country questionnaire, 2013

⁴² TWG on ESL 2013

⁴³ TWG on ESL country questionnaire, 2013

⁴⁴ TWG on ESL 2013

Decreasing achievement

Decreasing achievement triggers a warning.

School year repetition

Repetition of year triggers a warning.

Being bored in the classroom (low motivation)

No specific information was found.

Drastic behavioural changes (aggression, introversion, rhapsodic behaviour), bullying and school violence

School social pedagogues organise social skills development groups for pupils having behaviour problems.

Besides, schools have prevention programmes dealing with tobacco, alcohol and drugs, e.g. 'Linus – Helping a Child' [„*Linus – pagalba vaikui*”] or 'Snowball' [„*Sniego gniūžtė*”].

Schools implement and run prevention programmes aimed at reducing manifestations of bullying and violent behaviour, suicides, addictions and other destructive habits. The programmes are meant to contribute to creating a safe learning environment in schools.

- ***Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme*** was implemented by 87 general education establishments, with over 6500 school staff participating;
- ***The Second Step*** programme was implemented by 245 establishments, with 530 pedagogues and 11 200 children (primary school pupils) participating;
- The ***Zippy's Friends*** programme was implemented by 552 educational establishments, with 1331 pedagogues and 22 614 children participating (pre-primary and first grade pupils);
- The ***Lions Quest*** programme was implemented by 56 general education schools.⁴⁵

Other important policy measure/method

'**Provision of options for choosing a pathway for 14-19 year old**' programme was aiming at contributing to dropout prevention by guidelines, methodological improvements, trainings and recommendations for schools. It was meant to be used for the career orientation of 9th and 10th graders.

Questions and suggestions for the study visit

In case of Lithuania a very low ESL rate can be observed while the system's preventive measures and targeted policies are not transparent. It would be useful to see practitioners' view on that issue. What do they think is the key factor of the low rate of ESL in the country? What do they think are the main preventive actions? How do they see intervention and correction in the system? What are the specific policy measures and pedagogical methods tackling early drop out? Besides the low rate on

⁴⁵ TWG on ESL Country questionnaires, 2013

average there is a remarkable discrepancy of rural and urban areas. How do they see this phenomenon? What do they think is the main reason for this and what could be the successful way to tackle this problem?

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Ireland and the United Kingdom of England //Jelena Joksimovic

Ireland

“It is clear from the Irish experience that educational initiatives based in schools can raise the educational level of the adults involved, and result in a general sense of empowerment in the local community. Parental involvement, especially in areas of socio-economic deprivation, does not just benefit the children and the school - it is a crucial aspect of lifelong learning.”

*Parents as Partners in Schooling, OECD, 1997
in HSCL, 2014*

Policy level - overall policy background e.g. strategic documents related to early school leaving and general approach to the problem

Ireland belongs to the most of the EU countries which goal is to warn teachers, schools and/or authorities of students who may be at risk of dropping out. Ireland is one of the countries where the EWSs and related activities are driven by national policies, practices or programmes. In Ireland, one body has been given the responsibility for monitoring and researching school attendance; this is the National Educational Welfare Board, which has held this responsibility since 2002. Even though in Ireland schools are encouraged and to a certain degree also ‘expected’ to develop their own systems or activities through national legislation which stipulates a responsibility for school actors to monitor the performance of their pupils. But there are no intermediate regional or municipal structures with overall responsibility for Early School Leaving arrangements, so that programme service delivery is at school and local level with policy development and overall direction at National level.

So what is the obligation of the schools in this matter? Schools have been obliged by law to submit an Annual Attendance Report to the National Educational Welfare Board on the levels of school attendance each year since 2000. Legislation also requires that schools make a referral to the National Education Welfare Board for all students whose non-attendance or suspension from school reach particular thresholds or where non-attendance is a cause for concern as well as for decisions taken to expel a student. Since its establishment the Board has carried out research aimed at increasing awareness around the underlying causes which impact negatively on attendance in school. To support and advise families the NEWB has issued leaflets to parents, run public awareness

campaigns to raise the profile of school attendance and operates an Education Helpline to provide information on attendance and related matters. Guidelines for Developing School Codes of Behaviour (NEWB, 2008). This guidelines help schools to deal with poor behaviour and other underlying causes of poor attendance.

Under Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, schools are obliged “to prepare and submit to the National Educational Welfare Board a statement of the strategies and measures it proposes to adopt for the purposes of fostering an appreciation of learning among students attending that school and encouraging regular attendance at school on the part of such students”. National Educational Welfare Board is the single national body with responsibility for school attendance. The central statutory responsibilities assigned to the Board are:

- o To ensure that each child receives a minimum education.
- o To assist in the formulation and implementation of Government education policy.

In order to discharge these general duties, the Board is mandated to fulfil a series of functions. These responsibilities require the Board to take action at several levels in order to ensure that every child receives a minimum education. The Board is required to intervene at societal level, at the level of the wider educational system, the school system, and with individual families and children.

The NEWB during passed years have developed Integrated Model of Service Delivery called ‘One Child, One Team, One Plan’ which involves the Education Welfare Service, and the two major programmes of the School Support Programme under DEIS, Home/School/Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL), School Completion Programme (SCP) and schools (NEWB, 2012). This model was developed in participatory manner, and consultations with teachers were held regularly. But the Teachers Union had many remarks to add to the concept, firstly better integration and co-ordination is suggested, then specifying and respecting the roles and expertise of different bodies or services in the process is also emphasized (Judge, 2012). It was a starting point towards the development to full integration of all services, to eventually achieve a ‘single approach’ to delivery of all services. It is expected that, in time, the programmes and schools will significantly benefit from the development of this single approach ultimately achieving:

- Improvements in identifying children at risk of early school leaving or of developing poor attendance profiles
- Improvements in developing local and national responses to tackling attendance and early school leaving
- Resolution of current difficulties with sharing information
- Improvements in the coordination of resources at local, regional and national level.
- Unified in-service
- Development of complementary policy responses
 - o on behaviour,
 - o integration of Travellers,
 - o transfer programmes
 - o engagement with families/parents/guardians.
 - o supporting schools (TWG, 2012).

The National Behaviour Support Service offers three levels of support to second level schools:

Level 1: Whole School Support

Level 2: Targeted Intervention Support

Level 3: Intensive Individualised Support

This three-tiered approach, founded on international best practice, is applied to behavioural interventions and endeavours to address the academic literacy, learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs of students in partner schools (TWG, 2012).

Some schools that have this kind of need receive additional support and resources through participation in project *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools, DEIS*. This requires schools to develop their own three-year action plans focusing on the following areas:

- attendance,
- retention,
- educational progression,
- literacy and numeracy,
- examination attainment (at second level),
- parent and community partnership,
- partnership between schools and links with external agencies.

Schools review the implementation of their action plans and adjust the plans as necessary in light of experience (DEIS, 2005).

There is also a major preventive strategy in Ireland, called: Home School Community Liaison (HSCL). This strategy targets pupils at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system because of background characteristics which tend to affect adversely pupil attainment and school retention. It focuses directly on the salient adults in children's educational lives in order that they may be better able to support the children's attendance, participation and retention in the education system.

Attendance tracking & monitoring is one of the most common supports offered in the *School Completion Programme*. The aim of attendance & monitoring is to track the daily attendance or non-attendance of the target group at risk of early school leaving. The tracking of young people at risk of early school leaving is a cornerstone approach in the work of this programme and often leads to the identification of other difficulties in the class or home which can be helped by offering other supports to those young people who have poor attendance in order to stimulate a heightened interest in school.

Distress signals: policy measures and pedagogical methods

EWSs can be seen as integrated into mainstream programmes in place to support vulnerable students. The School Completion Programme in Ireland for example aims to help students from disadvantaged areas stay in school to finish their upper secondary level studies. Attendance tracking & monitoring is one of the cornerstones behind the Programme and it often leads to the identification of other difficulties in the class or home which can be helped by offering other supports to those young people who have poor attendance in order to stimulate a heightened interest in school (TWG, 2012).

DEIS focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years), through the School Support Programme, which includes a suite of interventions comprising in-school and out-of-school supports. These supports include:

- enhanced teaching resources in schools with the highest levels of disadvantage;
- additional financial resources for all DEIS schools;
- access to literacy and numeracy supports;
- curricular supports;
- planning and professional development supports, transfer programmes from primary to post primary and access programmes to third level (TWG, 2012).

Absenteeism: Where non-attendance reach particular thresholds (20 days or more) or where non-attendance is a cause for concern the National Educational Welfare Board is empowered under the Education Welfare Act to instigate proceedings against parents in the best interest of the child. Court proceedings form a very small percentage of the NEWB's work. The Board's main emphasis is on the welfare of the child in the family and on ensuring that concerns and problems are dealt with before school attendance becomes a crisis issue. A School Attendance Notice (SAN) is the first step in enforcing the law. When a SAN is issued, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) then begins a formal monitoring process of the child's situation, and the parent or guardian is given extensive opportunity to address the underlying issues with the EWO and the school. This may include the offer of family support or other relevant services. In exceptional cases, where there is no significant progress following the issuing of the SAN the Board will consider taking a prosecution. So, prosecution of the parents or caregiver is also possible as a last resort in Ireland, though it is very rare and only applies to exceptional cases (TWG, 2012).

Decreasing achievement: The School Support Programme includes two major interventions, namely, the HSCL Scheme and the School Completion Programme (SCP). Among the key measures implemented under the DEIS Action Plan are: the streamlining of measures for addressing educational disadvantage, targeted measures to address problems of literacy and numeracy, measures to enhance student attendance, educational progression, retention and attainment (HSCL, 2014). Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy, deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school are all recognized as signals for student who is bullied and in possible risk of ESL (Department of education and skills, 2013).

Behavioural issues: Monitoring behaviour is a part of many national and sub-national early warning systems, but the 'standards' which determine what constitutes 'poor behaviour' are often determined at school level. The Schools' Code of Behaviour determines how poor behaviour is 'picked up' by schools as an early warning signal (TWG, 2012).

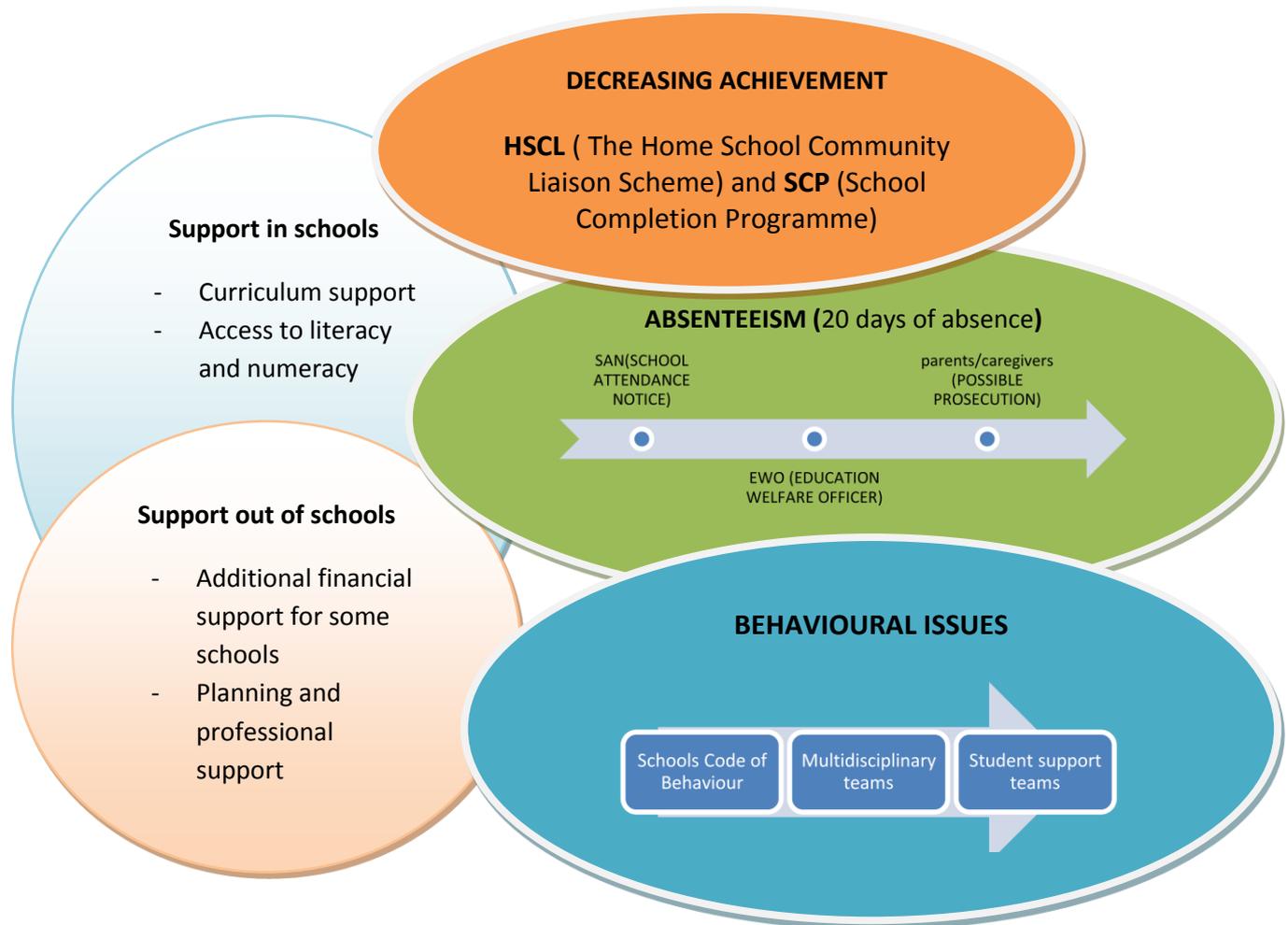
Multi-disciplinary teams are put in place to support at risk students. Depending on the problem or risk factors, schools can resort to either in-school or external resources, including psychologists, child protection specialists, youth workers, social educators and special education teachers. Many post-primary schools have found that establishing support teams serves a preventative or early

intervention function, particularly in relation to students with social, emotional, behavioural, or mental health difficulties, or about whom there may be child protection concerns. The core group might consist of the school principal and/or deputy principal, the guidance counsellor, member of the special needs team, school chaplain, HSCL teacher and other invited staff or outside members, as needed. Students would usually be referred to the Support Team when there are significant concerns and where a disciplinary response is not the central issue (although behavioural difficulties may be a factor, *ibid*). On every behavioural difficulty that might occur, as it was mentioned before, Schools' Code of Behaviour is the frame of reference for future engagement.

Compensation measures: Early school leavers are also a priority client group for FÁS (Training and Employment Authority) and are defined as young people aged 16-21 who left school with no or incomplete qualifications and who face difficulties accessing the labour market. The primary FÁS response to early school leavers is under the national Youthreach programme (<http://www.youthreach.ie/what-is-youthreach/>). Youthreach is a full-time programme that provides two years integrated education, training and work experience for early school leavers between the ages of 15 and 20 years of age without any qualifications or vocational training and who are unemployed. Young people are referred to Youthreach by parents, schools and/or Education Welfare Officers.

In addition some training for early school leavers is provided through Local Training Initiatives. The programmes provided by FÁS Community Services for early leavers aim to enable them to develop their personal, social and vocational skills to assist them achieve nationally recognised qualifications and progress towards further education, training and employment. FÁS also collaborates with the Probation Service of the Department of Justice to support Justice Workshops providing services to early school leavers who have engaged with the Probation Service. Involved in this process are next professionals and others: Teacher referral to Student Support Team, Student Support Team referral to Education Welfare Officers, EWOs work with a range of services to support children and young people. The role of all personnel is to identify and respond at the earliest possible stage to counteract potential for early school leaving (TWG, 2012).

Diagram 1. Scheme of Ireland’s system for ESL



United Kingdom of England

Policy level - overall policy background e.g. strategic documents related to early school leaving and general approach to the problem

UK is one of the countries that have specific systems, projects or programmes in this field. According to TWG report only three countries in Europe are piloting or they have EWSs which have been created as 'separate entities' from other management and monitoring systems linked to the education system (Austria, Croatia and the UK - England). In the UK work in this field is focused on local pilots, sharing of good practices and equipping schools with a greater responsibility to monitor the progression of their pupils. This is done in order to ensure that planned actions are as relevant as possible to the specific context of the school and local authority. During 2012 / 2013, 44 out of 152 local authorities in England were involved in developing 'Risk of NEET indicators' (RoNIs), which are indicators and tools designed to assist secondary schools to identify students at risk of becoming NEET once they leave compulsory education. They tend to use data on those young people who have disengaged from post-16 education or training as an input and then look to apply these characteristics to students in Year 9, 10 or 11 (the final three years of compulsory schooling) in order to predict which young people are most at risk of later disengagement. Some local areas have expanded this approach further, planning to test the effectiveness of the RoNI for use in primary schools to allow support to be targeted at an even earlier age and/or applying the principle to post-16 training provider to try to predict which young people are at risk of dropping out (TWG, 2012). The Education and Skills Act (2008) increased the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning. Since 2013 young people are required to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 and from 2015 they will be required to continue until their 18th birthday, but it does not mean students should by all means stay in school, possibilities are described later in compensation measures part (Day, Sandals, Kettlewell, Easton, Durbin, 2012).

Local authorities have worked with schools to design the tool based on their own data and 'risk factors', which means that the tools are fully tailored to the local client group. Some of the major factors that have emerged in a number of the tools are:

- receipt of free school meals;
- low attainment;
- and persistent absence or exclusion. Some local areas have expanded this approach further, planning to test the effectiveness of the RoNIs in primary schools to allow support to be targeted at an even earlier age and / or applying the principle to post-16 training provider to try to predict which young people are at risk of dropping out. A number of local authorities, for example Medway and Worcestershire, have recognised that they can reduce the number of young people who become NEET by identifying those who are most at risk whilst they are still in school. They used the detailed data available locally to determine which factors are associated with young people who have become NEET in the previous few years, drawing together information from a wide range of local databases to ensure a comprehensive picture of young people. This has helped them to construct detailed

models based on the local factors that were associated with a greater likelihood of disengagement, including patterns of behaviour and attendance, post-code, attainment and parental engagement. Medway have developed a specific 'data mining' approach which helps to pick up information from text included by advisers in young people's records. This has helped to pick up issues that might otherwise have gone unnoticed (e.g. recording homelessness issues as 'sofa surfing' in the free text), making the process of linking characteristics more thorough.

These Risk of NEET Indicators provide a powerful tool for the local authorities and schools to look at which students in Year 9, 10 or 11 are at greatest risk of disengagement and to target resources and support on these young people early, helping them to remain in education and training and make a successful transition to post-16 learning.

Schools have the key role in helping to identify young people who are at risk of later disengagement. Teachers and wider support staff, such as Education Welfare Officers, will typically discuss and share information on pupils to help them to identify those who need extra help. The Risk of NEET Indicator is an extra tool to help formalise and support this process by drawing on a wider range of data.

We have introduced a new duty on schools to secure independent, impartial careers guidance for their pupils, which will also help to ensure that they help them to prepare for their next phase of learning or work with training.

The indicators are seen as an extra tool to help formalise and support for young people, but it is recognised that teachers and wider support staff, such as Education Welfare Officers, continue to play the most important role by discussing and sharing information on pupils to schools and authorities to identify those who need extra help.

Local areas have reported that risk factors do vary significantly between local areas, reinforcing the importance of a local approach.

Distress signals: policy measures and pedagogical methods

Absenteeism: The Department for Education has reduced the threshold at which a pupil is defined as 'persistently absent' from the current 20 per cent, down to 15 per cent (TWG, 2012). Parents have the legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school from age 5 to 16 where they are registered. There are many reasons why parents fail to send a child to school regularly. The best schools work with their parents to improve attendance and they offer a wide range of support to help them get their children to school. Fining parents or taking them to court is a last resort that schools and EWOs use only very reluctantly when all else has failed. However, when they do so the system must be efficient and effective. The process of taking a parent to court is cumbersome and expensive. Schools and education welfare officers frequently express frustration with a system that takes up to six months to get a parent to court (Taylor, 2012).

Decreasing achievement: Low attainment is the most significant risk factor for ESL nationally. English and mathematics are often seen as the most important subjects for later successful engagement. English as an additional language, students in receipt of free school meals. This is a widely-used marker for economic disadvantage (TWG, 2012). Taylor emphasizes that making sure all adults in the

room know how to respond to sensitive pupils with developmental difficulties is very important in this manner (Taylor, 2012). About teachers' role, she gives several suggestions:

- Ensure that all resources are prepared in advance.
- Praise the behaviour you want to see more of.
- Praise children doing the right thing more than criticising those who are doing the wrong thing (parallel praise).
- Differentiate.
- Stay calm.
- Have clear routines for transitions and for stopping the class.
- Teach children the class routines.
- Give feedback to parents about their child's behaviour - let them know about the good days as well as the bad ones (ibid).

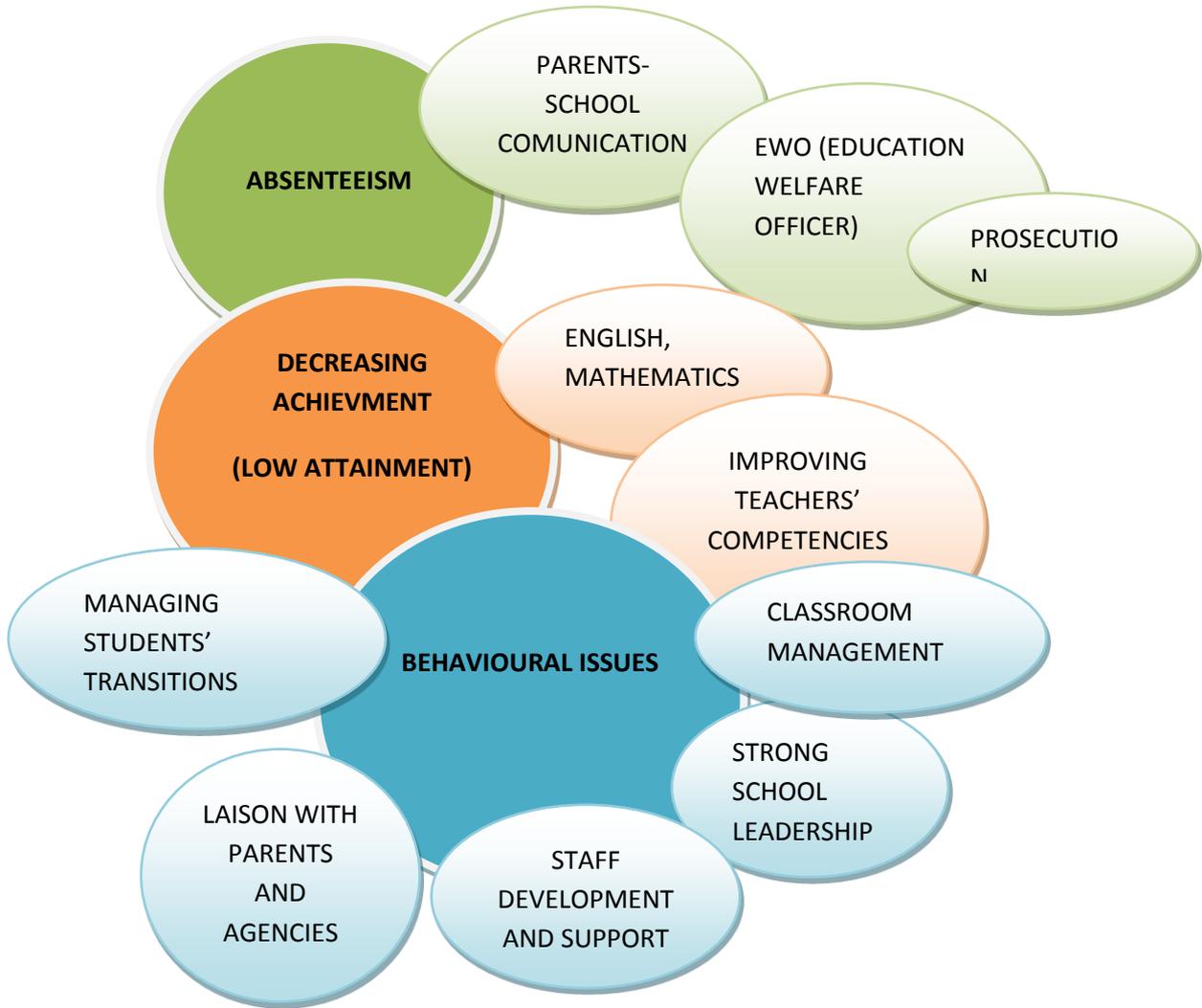
Behavioural issues: Headteachers, proprietors and governing bodies must ensure they have a strong behaviour policy to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions. Governing bodies of maintained schools have a duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requiring them to make arrangements to ensure that their 4 functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The proprietors of Academies have a similar duty under paragraph 7 of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. They must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils (Department for education, 2014). In the same document the key factors for developing behavioural policy is quoted from Learning behaviour - the Report of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline" (2005), and are next:

- 1) A consistent approach to behaviour management;
- 2) Strong school leadership;
- 3) Classroom management;
- 4) Rewards and sanctions;
- 5) Behaviour strategies and the teaching of good behaviour;
- 6) Staff development and support;
- 7) Pupil support systems;
- 8) Liaison with parents and other agencies;
- 9) Managing pupil transition; and
- 10) Organisation and facilities.

Compensation measures Raising the Participation Age (RPA) does not mean young people must stay in school; they are able to choose one of the following options:

- full-time education, such as school, college or home education;
- an Apprenticeship; or
- full-time work with part-time education or training (Day, Sandals, Kettlewell, Easton, Durbin, 2012).

Diagram 2. Scheme of UK's system for ESL



Recommendations for the pilot by pilot countries

From the experience of analysed countries these recommendations should be considered in developing pilot projects in Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia.

- Teachers need to receive more training on how to recognise distress signals and how to respond to them;
- There is a greater awareness of early warning signals and the need to take action is more visible if such signals are detected not only among teachers but also authorities and the wider range of professionals who work with young people;
- Collaboration between schools and other agencies, professionals and authorities working with young people should be increased, with authorities and agencies from outside the field of education / training;
- There is a big importance of individualised support and counselling for students;
- Co-operation between schools and other key actors and professionals involved in the lives of young people is very important;
- It is essential to obtain a buy-in of local actors in indicators and methods related to EWSs;
- More 'meaningful' and regular involvement of parents in the school life of children is an important part of EWSs;
- Lack of training on ESL and risk factors as part of initial teacher training;
- Early warning systems should operate through a three-step process:

The first step should involve an (on-going) assessment and identification of the signals to look for and when to look for them (for example at which stages of the education / training path). This assessment will need a constant revision and adaptation over time.

The next step should involve the development of systems and practices within schools and authorities that enable school staff and other professionals involved in the lives of young people to review such data and identify those students that show distress signals/ are at risk of dropping out.

The third step should involve an assessment of problems / support needs of those individual young people and then responding to those needs before the young person makes the 'cumulative decision' to drop out.

- When schools or local authorities have the responsibility to report absences to a national or regional authority or a database, what is the outcome of this activity? Is this just a reporting arrangement or is the data used for policy making? Is relevant data made easily accessible, in a useful format for teachers and other staff working 'on the ground'?
- Benefits for other students should be explored and promoted among teachers, school staff and decision makers. Because even if they are not in risk they can benefit from the EWS;

- Explore the possible role of schools' codes of behaviour;
- For each teachers team to have students support team following, student support teams are very important for many reasons;
- Integrated Model of Service Delivery like 'One Child, One Team, One Plan' gives good results;
- That the language about distress signals should be more focused on improving attendance and there should be less use of the word 'truancy' and 'absenteeism' instead attendance should be observed and measured.
- The textual data in local tracking systems (e.g. case notes) can be just as important as the specific characteristics or tick-boxes when assessing if young people are at risk.

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Sweden//Dóra Tomcsik, Krisztina Mihályi

Edited by Krisztina Mihályi and Dóra Tomcsik – Tempus Public Foundation

The Swedish education system: main characteristics with special focus on the aspects influencing the prevention of ELET

In the case of education in Sweden, equity can be considered as the most important principle. Education is free for everyone, including school books and other learning tools, as well as school meals. The core messages - “no one can be lost” and “there is always a way back” – are based on a child and family-centered society.

Sweden has got one of the most decentralized educational systems, which is in correlation with the European principle of subsidiarity stating that individual issues should be dealt with at the most immediate (or local) level consistent with their solution. This means, that the main governmental competencies are the issuing of those legislative documents which establish the frameworks of educational policy, as well as the supervision of the realization of these principles in practice.

As these principles are considered as frameworks, so that municipalities are in charge of education and develop their own policies, there is a great variety of measures developed at local level.

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) does not use the common EU definition of ELET. However, in the 2014 National Reform Program, early leaving is defined as 'the proportion of 18–24 year-olds who neither have completed upper secondary education nor are participating in any form of study'. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges kommuner och landsting – SKL) also uses another definition: young people at the age of 20 not having completed upper secondary school (i.e. not having achieved a final grade and/or a school diploma at that level).

The question of equity in the Swedish education system

The question of educational equity between different student groups related to social background, among other factors, has been a central issue in Swedish education policy for a long time. In recent years, however, interest in equity issues has increased further, partly as a result of the extensive reforms that took place in the beginning of the 1990s, and partly because the emergence of international studies has provided better opportunities for making comparisons of equity aspects between different countries' school systems.

At the beginning of the 1990s, extensive educational reforms were carried out in Sweden. The reforms followed the pattern of decentralisation and marketisation that swept over large parts of the

world (Musset 2012). Municipalities were given greater responsibility (municipalisation), students and parents were able to choose which school students would attend to a greater extent (freedom of choice reform) and independent schools were entitled, in principle, to the same public funding per student as municipal schools (school voucher system). In addition, the state took a step back in terms of teaching and allowed teachers and principals to decide on the content and form of teaching to a larger extent (curriculum reform). There were several aims behind the reforms: greater freedom of choice, better adaptation of resources to local needs and to parents' and students' preferences, and more efficient resource management through increased competition.

The reforms also aimed at improving equity by providing opportunities for better needs-controlled resource allocation through decentralisation to the responsible officials that worked more closely with schools. Right from the very start there were those who believed that the reforms could potentially reduce equity in different ways. It is not surprising, therefore, that the interest in equity issues increased markedly from the mid-1990s – both in Sweden and internationally.

The first PISA study (published in 2000) showed that the Swedish school system had a high degree of equity in comparison with other countries in the OECD. In particular, the spread of results between schools was very low in Sweden. Subsequent PISA studies (PISA 2003 and 2006) showed that although equity in Swedish schools was still good, there was a slight decline compared with the first PISA report due to increased differences in results between schools.

In 2006 the Swedish National Agency for Education published a report (*What is happening to equity in Swedish schools? A quantitative analysis of variation and equity over time*), which contained a more comprehensive picture of equity and its development over time. The report concluded that equity had deteriorated in Swedish schools and that the freedom of choice reforms at the beginning of the 1990s were likely to have contributed to this development.

Equity in education is interpreted by three aspects all of them layed down in the Education Act (*Skollag*): *equal access to education*, *equal quality of education* and the *compensatory nature of education*.

- Equal access to education:
“Everyone, irrespective of their geographical location and social and economic circumstances, shall have equal access to education in schools unless otherwise stated in specific provisions of this Act.” (Chapter 1 Section 8 Education Act).
- Equal quality of education:
“Education in schools shall be equal within each form of school and within leisure-time centres, regardless of where in the country it is arranged.” (Chapter 1 Section 9 Education Act).

- The government also takes into account different students' needs and compensates for unfavourable home circumstances and other differentiation of circumstances. This is one aspect that has become clearer in the new Education Act:

"In education, account must be taken to children's and students' different needs. Children and students shall be given support and stimulation so that they develop as much as possible. One ambition must be to compensate for differences in children's and students' ability to assimilate education." (Chapter 1 Section 4 Education Act).

Tackling specific problems: absenteeism, deteriorating achievement, school year repetition, low motivation, drastic behavioural changes, bullying and school violence

It is a general attitude in the Swedish schools that it is important that "someone sees" a young person displaying risk symptoms at an early stage and provides them with early, adequate assistance and follow-up. It is also important to establish contact and mutual, permanent confidence between young people, schools, public service providers and families. One should also listen to the dreams and desires of young people – and provide them with suitable guidance about relevant vocational choices and the realities of working life.

The *Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)* has conducted interviews at nine municipal upper secondary schools that perform well in helping students complete their education, in order to investigate how they work to avoid students leaving early. On the basis of the interviews the success factors can be summarized as follows:

1. A *positive approach* is crucial in making students feel comfortable and able to benefit from their education. This factor is emphasised very strongly by the schools. A positive approach means, among other things, believing in students' abilities and treating them as unique, equal individuals.
2. *Clear targets and an emphasis on results* make a difference in terms of how schools succeed in educating their students. It is very important that schools measure and analyse early school leavers and take action to ensure that as many students as possible complete their education.
3. *Following the right educational path* is a significant reason for students to feel motivated in their upper secondary school studies. A flexible range of subjects, a good induction process and access to qualified study and careers guidance help students to find the right study path.
4. *Quality through cooperation and participation* is one consistent success factor regardless of in which context it is present at schools. In the interviews, staff describe how they learn from one another, how they involve students in development work and provide examples of well-developed collaboration with the labour market.
5. The *ability to identify and meet students' needs* is key in systematic work on quality carried out by successful schools. Procedures guarantee close follow-up on students' results, while at the same time effective use is made of the skills of staff in the student health service.

Summarizing the essence of these findings we can see that the Swedish system very much focuses on the individual and attempts to provide support to meet the individual needs of the students should it be the provision of opportunity for changing path, having access to health support and/or setting individual learning programme.

Absenteeism

High levels of absenteeism are identified as an increasing problem in Swedish secondary and upper secondary schools. Official Skolverket statistics indicate that 10% of all students in Swedish secondary schools are absent at least once a month. A high level of unexcused absenteeism is defined as being absent without permission from 30% or more of all school hours in one school year. An increasing number of Swedish municipalities use digital software to manage the registration of students' school absences. The software is regarded as a problem-solving tool to make registration more efficient, but its effects on the educational setting have been largely neglected.

According to the study by Anne-Sofie M. Strand and Mats Granlund, there is no clear pattern in the school documentation concerning interventions aimed at vulnerable students with high levels of absenteeism or truancy. The analyses indicate that the students' individual problems are often documented, but are not always followed up with support or interventions. In the schools, the documentation seems to define learning difficulties in core subjects as individual problems needing short-term solutions. In contrast, documented psychosocial difficulties seem to elicit long-term solutions and broader interventions, with less focus on specific subject matters. Consistency or sustainability over time seems to be lacking in the educational intervention implemented.

Deteriorating achievement

In order to measure trends in student performance in Sweden, grades and results from international studies are used (PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS).

The 2012 Pisa results showed Sweden's exam results falling abruptly across all three measures of reading, maths and science, which fact caused a huge debate in the country about the possible reasons, not from the aspect of equity basically.

In the study of Wondratschek et.al., the average effects of choice and competition was analysed, caused by the introduction of the Swedish school choice reform in 1992. It was found that more school choice, measured by having more schools nearby right before the reform, has small positive effects on marks at the end of compulsory schooling, and, depending on the choice measure used, very small effects on cognitive skills at age 18.

In this sense, there is the question what might cause the decreasing performance results if free school choice didn't.

In 2012, an OECD report came up with several reasons why Sweden has seen the steepest decline in student performance of all the countries ranked, which can be summarized as follows:

- the “disciplinary climate” in classrooms is poor; teachers seem to have little control over unruly students.
- Sweden has the highest proportion of students who are late for school among all OECD member states.
- students study less and report lower levels of perseverance than peers from other countries.
- a typical 15-year-old in Sweden receives 741 hours of instruction time in school per year whereas the average OECD student receives 942 hours.

Despite the weaknesses the abovementioned OECD report mentioned, there is reason to believe that grades do not fully represent students' knowledge. The Swedish National Agency for Education, for example, annually reports statistics that show significant systematic differences in the correlation between schools' average results in the national tests and schools' average final grades. Differences in setting grades of the nature described above tend to underestimate the issue of equity. In this sense, it is important not just to rely on the results from a single study or data source, but rather to make an overall assessment of how equity has changed over time on the basis of a number of different indicators and studies (e.g. by considering the education of each students' parents).

School year (grade) repetition

According to OECD studies, school systems that use grade repetition more tend to have a less equitable distribution of learning outcomes. In these systems, the impact of students' socio-economic status on their performance is stronger than in systems where grade repetition is used less often.

Grade repetition is used less in Sweden than on average across OECD countries. Some 4% of Swedish students had repeated at least one grade during primary or lower secondary school, compared with the OECD average of 12%. The use of grade repetition in Sweden has remained at the same level between 2003 and 2012, while OECD countries have seen a small reduction, on average, during the same period.

Being bored in the classroom (low motivation) and drastic behavioural changes (aggression, introversion, rhapsodic behaviour)

Being bored in the classes and/or drastic behavioural changes are usually a symptom of the students having some kind of personal (mental, health), family-related or learning problem. In order to get rid of these undesired symptoms it is necessary to explore the reasons behind the problems.

As we mentioned above paying attention to the needs of each individual student and providing them tailor-made support is a basic attitude in the Swedish system. To recognize the problem of the students and to explore the reasons behind those is an obligation of all teachers and the cooperation with other support staff (ie. psychologist, school nurse, doctor, and guidance councillor) is an everyday and strengthening practice in the schools' life. Also the involvement of the parents is an important step in finding the reasons behind being bored in the classes or showing drastic behaviour changes.

As a result of the reformed Education Act of 2010 (applied from 1 July 2011), the rights of pupils to receive support in tackling low achievement have been significantly strengthened as well the pupils' health services. According to the Education Act those pupils who run the risk of not reaching the goals set shall receive special support. School health and welfare services, apart from a school doctor and nurse, should also include access to a psychologist and school welfare officer as well as staff with competence to meet the requisites of pupils with special needs. The role of the health services in supporting the pupils' development towards achieving the educational goals is also stressed.

Bullying and school violence⁴⁶

According to a research carried out by Theme Group Youth in 2012 the foremost reason for dropping-out from school is bullying.

According to the research results every twentieth student is bullied in the Swedish schools. In the National Agency for Education's survey, Attitudes towards school (2009), 6 percent of the students in grades 4–6 of compulsory school (approximately 17,000 individuals) answered that they were bullied by other students at least once a month. Of these, half were bullied every week.

Bullying is more common in grades 7–9 where 6 percent of the students feel bullied or harassed by other students compared with 2 percent in upper secondary school. Together, this corresponds to approximately 28,000 students in Sweden. In total, 4 percent of the older students replied that they

⁴⁶ This section is an extract of the following two documents:

10 reasons for dropping-out, Theme Group Youth, 2013

Evaluation of anti-bullying methods, Skolverket, 2011

were bullied by other students. The percentage has varied between 2-4 percent since 1993. In the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs' young people survey from 2012, young people (aged 16–25) were questioned if they had been offended or unjustly treated during the most recent half year. In total, 2,254 young people responded to the survey and 20 percent have at some time been offended or unjustly treated and 4 percent have had this occur several times during the most recent half year. It is shown that 6 percent have been offended by school personnel and 5 percent by other students.

Combating bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination is a key task for schools in Sweden. A positive social environment is not just a goal in itself but a prerequisite for learning and for preventing leaving school early. The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) published a report in 2011 entitled Evaluation anti-bullying methods. The evaluation provides information on measures that effectively prevent and remedy bullying. Here we highlight the findings of the named report.

Successful approaches

The evaluation report contains a discussion on successful approaches to combating bullying and degrading treatment based on the way schools with low or reduced levels of bullying work. The requirements for anti-bullying measures to be successful include actively committed individuals and various kinds of resources, such as competent staff, organisational stability and staff who work together.

Systematic implementation

Successful schools are distinguished by their systematic and well-thought through implementation of different anti-bullying measures used in combination and a clear allocation of roles and division of responsibilities. The combinations of measures used by successful schools have often been developed in relation to the school's own local conditions and experiences of different approaches.

The whole school approach

Several of the schools in the study have a well-developed *whole school approach* to combat bullying and degrading treatment. This means that all the staff and pupils know how to act when bullying and degrading treatment occurs: everyone is involved and the approach adopted is supported by pupils and staff. Although, according to the staff, some schools face a tough climate, they have nevertheless managed to reduce the proportion of pupils who are bullied. This can be partly explained by the fact that all the staff takes an active role in the work. Another important feature is that there is consensus among the staff on how the process should be implemented. The work is well supported by all the staff, not just the teachers and people in the school's safety team but also the cleaning staff and caretakers. This shared and deliberate strategy to combat bullying and degrading treatment is also

well supported by all the pupils in the school. A shared approach seems to be a prerequisite of success.

School climate

A positive school climate is another important prerequisite of successful prevention. Successful prevention can also contribute to a positive school climate. The school climate is influenced by several factors related to the situation inside and outside the school. For example, it may be a question of organisational conditions, social relationships, involvement, attitudes, norms and values. Staff at one school in the evaluation said that the school was characterised by a culture of equality. They emphasised that there was a culture with a sense of community and respect for the equal value of every person. During the interviews, the pupils also showed that they had been socialised into this culture of equality. If a positive school climate and spirit are to be maintained, however, it must work organisationally. A possible explanation for a positive perception of the climate at the most successful schools may be that activities promoting social relationships are always taking place there. A positive school climate is characterised by creativity, stimulation, learning, competence, security, helpfulness, participation, influence and responsibility.

Pupil participation

The majority of successful schools have well-developed relationship-enhancing measures in which the pupils participate. Other studies also show that when pupils are allowed to participate in school activities and can determine their own scope for action, it has a positive impact on their views of the school, thereby improving the school climate.

Effective measures – different for girls and boys

The evaluation shows that there is a difference between anti-bullying measures that help girls and those that help boys. The gender aspect of anti-bullying measures has not been demonstrated as clearly before. This brings in a new dimension to the entire problem area and broadens understanding of the use of different anti-bullying measures. It is also interesting to note that there are clear traces of traditional gender roles as regards the factors affecting bullying of girls in relation to boys.

The evaluation also shows that there is a difference between measures that are effective against physical bullying expressed in blows and pushing and those that are effective against social bullying, such as spreading rumours and excluding others. It also shows that there is a difference between factors that remedy individual cases of bullying and those that reduce the overall level of bullying in the school, i.e. factors that prevent bullying. This also deepens understanding of the complexity of the issue in terms of what should be done to reduce bullying in schools.

Differences between the effects of the measures show that they do not work as well in all cases. This further underlines the importance of schools identifying and analysing their own conditions when planning measures. The differences in the effects of bullying by boys and girls apply at a general level but, naturally, do not apply to all groups of children or pupils. All people and groups are not gender typical. Deeper knowledge is required of how gender-differentiated effects are linked to other factors.

Descriptions of measures identified as effective

As mentioned earlier, individual measures have gender-differentiated effects. There are two measures, however, that can remedy bullying for both girls and boys. A successful strategy for reducing the bullying of girls and boys is to encourage *pupils to actively participate in the work of preventing bullying*, not just on isolated occasions but also in activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere, with support and cooperation of adults at the school. Examples of this include pupils working in the school cafeteria and relationship-enhancing measures within the framework of the class (however, this measure does not cover pupils providing peer support). Regular *follow-up and evaluation* of the frequency of bullying and the use of these results as a basis for the way the school's anti-bullying measures are designed also has an effect on the bullying of both sexes.

Bullying of both girls and boys will generally decrease if there are cooperative teams in the form of anti-bullying teams, safety groups or similar with a broad mix of teachers and staff with specialist skills, such as school nurses, counsellors or teachers for children with special needs.

Focus on girls

The most important individual measure for girls, especially in terms of remedying individual cases and for prevention, is the *follow-up and evaluation* of the pupils' situation as regards bullying and degrading treatment. To be relevant, follow-ups and evaluation must be carried out regularly and used as a basis for designing anti-bullying measures.

A well-developed system for *monitoring school breaks* that is timetabled and based on identifying areas perceived as dangerous, with specific staff responsible for supervising pupils and organising special activities, will also work as a preventive measure for girls.

To prevent bullying of girls, especially of a social nature, *measures for dealing with the perpetrators and victims of bullying* are also effective. This means that there must be procedures in place for addressing and following up occurrences of bullying for the victims as well as the perpetrators. For this to be effective in reducing bullying of girls, there must also be procedures for dealing with experiences of bullying and providing support for those involved.

Physical bullying of girls can also be prevented by *active participation of pupils in prevention*, which means that pupils are given responsibility for running regular activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere with support and cooperation of adults at the school. *Staff training*, with the majority of the staff receiving training to enhance their understanding of bullying and degrading treatment, can also prevent physical bullying of girls. Social bullying of girls is prevented by informing pupils about bullying and degrading treatment at regular *school assemblies*. This measure is almost counterproductive for boys however.

Two individual measures have been shown to increase bullying of girls. These are special lessons timetabled for all classes and aimed at developing pupils' social skills, and mediation if this is used as a procedure when conflicts between pupils occur.

Special lessons aimed at developing pupils' social skills and empathy, and reinforcing the school's work on foundation values in the form of, for example, life skills, foundation values, and Olweus or 'Togetherness' lessons timetabled for all classes are perceived as tedious and dull by teachers and pupils. The pupils may see the manual-based exercises as silly and contrived, and when they recur frequently they can have the opposite effect to that intended. Some exercises can make pupils feel vulnerable, and lessons then run the risk of becoming unruly. Some teachers feel they have insufficient competence to carry out the difficult talks prescribed.

When it comes to mediation, this can place too much responsibility on pupils who are to function as mediators.

Focus on boys

The pattern of individual measures that is effective when addressing bullying of boys differs somewhat from the pattern of such measures for girls. The evaluation found that more measures are effective against bullying of boys than bullying of girls.

An effective measure for tackling bullying of which boys are victims involves the use of *cooperative teams*, in other words, anti-bullying teams, safety groups or similar, with a broad cross-section of teachers and staff with special skills, such as school nurses, counsellors or teachers for children with special needs. *Measures for dealing with bullies and victims* that involve procedures for addressing and following up occurrences of bullying for both victims and bullies can also be effective in individual cases.

Case documentation is an effective measure against physical bullying of which boys are the victims, i.e. documentation of the investigation, planning of remedial measures and follow-up carried out in accordance with established procedures for dealing with degrading treatment of pupils. Relationship-enhancing measures between pupils, a deliberate strategy implemented in activities aimed at creating a sense of closeness and community, are effective in reducing physical bullying in general of boys and in improving the situation of individual boys who are bullied.

Boys subjected to social bullying will also be helped if the school organises staff training in which the majority of the staff receive training to enhance their understanding of bullying and degrading treatment. If the school has *disciplinary strategies* that teachers find supportive and act in accordance with, such as sanctions or consequences applied to unacceptable behaviour, this will also have a preventive effect on social bullying of boys.

Rules on behaviour to prevent physical bullying of boys³ developed in cooperation between teachers and pupils also work.

Bullying of boys increases with the measure *pupils as players*, i.e. specially designated pupils who have received training and who function as observers or rapporteurs, such as peer supports. These pupils have a role to play in preventive work as the staff's eyes and ears. The process of appointing peer supports is complicated. Sometimes pupils are chosen who are not up to the task or who themselves have subjected others to degrading treatment. Pupils may also be subjected to degrading treatment when peer supports are chosen. Just like pupils who act as mediators, peer supports say they feel that the task is difficult, that they have a burden of responsibility, and that sometimes they are victimised by other pupils because of their role.

For young boys, *special lessons* that are timetabled for all classes can lead to increased bullying (see previous page about girls).

Comments

The evaluation shows that there is a difference between measures that reduce bullying of girls and those that reduce bullying of boys. There is also a difference between measures that reduce social and physical bullying, and between general prevention and measures for remedying individual cases. These findings show that the measures do not work as well for everyone. They show that the problem of bullying is complex and that there are no methods that function in all situations. The findings cannot be used as a manual for what works for the different sexes and kinds of bullying. Girls and boys do not all conform to gender stereotypes and not all groups work in the same way. It may appear contradictory that the measure *pupils' active participation in prevention* reduces bullying whilst the measure *pupils as players* (peer supports or mediators) can have the opposite effect and increase bullying. The difference is that in the first case, pupils are allowed to participate and influence planning, and they have responsibility, under supervision, for preventive measures. In the second case, as peer supports and mediators, pupils have responsibility for remedial measures that may prove too difficult for them and they run the risk of being victimised themselves.

The most effective anti-bullying measures

The following measures can generally be regarded as most effective:

- *Pupils participate actively in preventing bullying* – not just occasionally but are entrusted, to a great extent, with responsibility for running activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere (peer supports are not included in this measure), with the support and cooperation of adults at the school.
- *Follow-up/evaluation* – carried out regularly of the pupils' situation with regard to bullying, and the outcomes are used to develop and modify anti-bullying measures.
- *Cooperative teams* – i.e. anti-bullying teams, safety groups or similar with a broad mix of teachers and staff with special skills, such as school nurses, counsellors or teachers for children with special needs.
- *Measures for dealing with bullies and victims* – procedures for addressing and following up bullying of the victim and the bully. If the measure is also to be effective for girls, there must be procedures for processing bullying experiences and providing support for those involved.
- *Staff training* – the majority of the staff receive training to enhance their understanding of bullying and degrading treatment.

Measures that are mostly effective for girls:

- *A system for monitoring school breaks* – well-developed, timetabled and based on identifying areas that are perceived as dangerous in which there are special staff responsible for being with the pupils and organising special activities for them.

Measures that are mostly effective for boys:

- *Relationship-enhancing measures between pupils* – a deliberate strategy implemented through activities to create a sense of closeness and community.
- *Case documentation* – based on established procedures.
- *Rules on behaviour* – developed in cooperation between staff and pupils.
- *Disciplinary strategies* – strategies that teachers find supportive and follow, e.g. sanctions or consequences applied to unacceptable behaviour.

It is important to bear in mind that different measures may have different effects under different conditions. According to the evaluation, the most basic prerequisites for successfully combating bullying are that measures are implemented systematically and enjoy the support of the whole school, and that cooperation and a sense of commitment permeate the school climate and culture.

Measures that reduce degrading treatment The majority of measures that proved effective against bullying also proved effective against degrading treatment. It should be noted, however, that the effects are slightly less in the case of degrading treatment than for other forms of bullying.

Measures that reduce degrading treatment:

- *Relationship-enhancing measures between pupils* – a deliberate strategy implemented through activities to create a sense of closeness and community.
- *Pupils participating actively in preventing bullying* – not just occasionally but are entrusted, to a great extent, with running activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere with the support and cooperation of adults at the school.

(This measure does not include pupils functioning as peer supports.)

- *Disciplinary strategies* – strategies that teachers find supportive and act upon, e.g. sanctions or consequences applied to unacceptable behaviour.
- *A system for monitoring school breaks* – well-developed, timetabled and based on identifying areas that are perceived as dangerous where special staff is responsible for being with the pupils and organising special activities for them.

- *Cooperative teams* – i.e. anti-bullying teams, safety groups or similar with a broad mix of teachers and staff with special skills, such as school nurses, counsellors or teachers for children with special needs.
- *Measures for bullies and measures for victims* – procedures for addressing and following up incidents of bullying for the victim and the bully, and procedures for processing bullying experiences and providing support for those involved.
- *School rules* – developed in cooperation between staff and pupils. Measures that reduce the proportion of bullies

A few measures have been shown to have an effect on the proportion of perpetrators.

The proportion of bullies has fallen when the following measures have been implemented:

- *Follow-up/evaluation* – carried out regularly of the pupils' situation with regard to bullying, and the results are used to develop and modify anti-bullying measures.
- *Pupils participate actively in preventing bullying* – not just occasionally but are entrusted, to a great extent, with the responsibility of running activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere, with the support and cooperation of adults at the school. (This measure does not include pupils functioning as peer supports.)
- *Staff training* – the majority of staff receive training to enhance their understanding of bullying and degrading treatment.

Combinations of measures

The researchers have also examined how individual measures function in combination. The positive effects of an individual measure are also achieved when combined with other measures. Schools often combine similar measures. No ideal combination can be inferred, however, on the basis of the current empirical data.

Measures that cannot be recommended for combating bullying

Some measures in the evaluation proved ineffective or even increased the frequency of bullying. No effect was demonstrated for the following measures:

- *Relationship-enhancing measures between teachers and pupils*
- *Training material* about bullying and degrading treatment
- *Parent training* about bullying and degrading treatment

The following measures have shown that they may increase bullying and cannot be recommended. Note, however, that it is when they are implemented fully as described below that the negative effect becomes evident.

- *Special lessons* – timetabled and for all classes
- *Pupils as players* – pupils trained to function as observers or rapporteurs, e.g. as peer supports
- *Mediation* – used as a procedure when conflicts between pupils occur

Presenting a good practice – Pluginnovation (Plug In project)

Pluginnovation has the ambition of becoming a national, resource cluster (digital platform) for dropout-prevention. The cluster consists of a digital platform located at the website <http://pluginnovation.se>. Pluginnovation gathers relevant knowledge on dropout-prevention from different perspectives. The aim is to systemize, cluster, construct and disseminate knowledge on dropout-prevention.

The area of Methods/Interventions aims to answer the questions "What works?" and "What could work?". It was decided early on in the Plug In-project that a central part of the project is evaluation, and an impact assessment is performed to compare the measures used within the sub-projects. A basic condition for undertaking a productive evaluation of the effect of the interventions, is that the interventions are described in a systemized manner. At Pluginnovation.se, individual users with a specific thematic interest are able to read all the sub-projects' method descriptions, and navigate among the sub-projects and methods. The methods are labelled and categorized according to different categories, such as context, target group and type of intervention. Once the evaluation is completed, it will also be possible to take part of the results at the website. Thus, the section of Pluginnovation.se that contains methods/interventions will make a contribution in answering the question "What works?".

The purpose of Pluginnovation is however not only to describe what is effective in preventing dropout, but also to gather information about WHY certain measures seem to work, and HOW they work. Within the Plug In-project, Pluginnovation performs ten in-depth analyses (case studies) to find and summarize success factors from the interventions used in the different sub-projects. The initial analysis has, so far identified that some important beneficial factors when working with at-risk students includes: a holistic, comprehensive focus (academic, cognitive, psychological and affective), strengthened school connectedness by increasing engagement across multiple dimensions, and flexibility concerning the organization as well as the curriculum, instruction and assessment. For those young people who have dropped out of school, (remedial interventions) the initial findings

show that routines for follow-up and intense individualized measures to bring students back to education are successful. PlugInnovation will continue to develop the findings throughout the course of the project.

Summary

According to our desk research as well as the report of the Thematic Working Group of Early School Leaving it can be stated that although Sweden does not have a specific, centralized early warning system in education, the approach is part of the mainstream school monitoring and management systems.

The new Education Act and the new syllabuses/curricula make it more evident than before that schools are obliged to have EWSs in order to give each student the support needed to complete his or her education. Schools however are free to choose the method in which they are designed and implemented.

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Attachment 1 Guideline for the desk research

According to the Thematic Working Group Report on EWS countries can be categorised by the distress signals they recognise and by the relevant methods they employ when these signs occur. A survey has been used for the report to identify how different countries use the distress signals in their early warning systems.

However many questions still remained unanswered. The report in Crocoos project's research tries to find answers for some of these. In addition it is aiming at undertaking an analysis about the good performing countries⁴⁷ by using the below mentioned distress signals as a guideline:

The most relevant distress signals concerning early warning systems to prevent early school leaving are. These signals help the research to stay focused and support the formation of a resource pool which shows solutions for the most relevant, most common signs of a risk of a later drop out. The aim was also to distinguish between signs and reasons behind. Our focus is primarily on the signs and on the possible efficient solutions. However solutions will necessarily involve the fact that decision makers and practitioners have to deal with the reasons behind a certain sign. Naturally the description of each country's practice will be much more elaborated according to its real practice e.g. the observation of decreasing achievement can mean very different things: on which level? which subject? how big decrease? how much time after the decrease? etc. This guideline tries to identify the main categories in which many different subgroups and solutions can be presented. The recommendations chapter will focus on what can be the most useful for the future pilot schools' teachers.

- I. signals connected to official standards
 1. Absenteeism
 2. Decreasing achievement
 3. School year repetition (*note: depends on the system of each country*)

- II. signals connected to behaviour
 4. Being bored in the classroom (low motivation)
 5. Drastic behavioural changes (aggression, introversion, rhapsodic behaviour)
 6. Bullying (both sides)

⁴⁷ Good performing means a low rate of early school leaving or a dramatic decrease during the last decade.