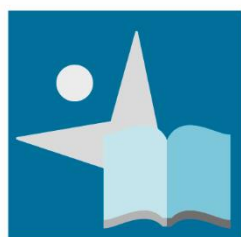




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RESOLVE

READING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING SIGNALS

RESOLVE – prevention and intervention mechanism at school and community based level on early school leaving



Strategic partnership for school education, Erasmus +, project RESOLVE - Reading Early School Leaving
Contract No: project no: 2016-1-RO01-KA201-024523

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RESCUE Project Nr: 2016-I-RO01-KA201-024523



The intellectual products developed in the Rescue project

**The toolkit for prevention and intervention
mechanism at school and community level
on early school leaving**

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The Erasmus program offered the opportunity for cooperation and innovation and the exchange of good practices that are designed to modernize and strengthen education, training and youth systems, by implementing the **RESCUE – Reading Early School Leaving Signals** project, coordinated by, World Vision Romania and developed with its partners: the University of Bergamo and We World Onlus (Italy), AcrossLimits (Malta), National Network of Children (Bulgaria), the Secondary School Cosereni, Ialomita and Secondary School Mihai David, Vaslui, from Romania.

We are particularly indebted to Professor dr. Fabio Dovigo and to the experts from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Bergamo, who have been excellent mentors for the project team and have actively worked with the team to develop academic, qualitative and applicable instruments to be used by teachers and other professionals for reading early school living signals, in order to develop schools that need to promote the learning and participation of all children through cooperation with community stakeholders.

We are also grateful to all those with whom we had the pleasure to work during the RESCUE project: two schools in Afragola and Napole from Italy, two schools in Pavlikeni and Dermantsi from Bulgaria, and to all teachers, school principals, parents, students, professionals from social services and stakeholders at community, regional and central level.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

Community Cooperative Workflow – CCW

Database – DB

Directorate for Curriculum Management – DCM

Early School Leaving – ESL

Early Warning Systems – EWS

European Union – EU

Intellectual Output – IO

Prevention and Intervention Approach – PIA

Reading Early School Leaving Signals – RESCUE

Special Educational Needs – SEN

Virtual Learning Environment – VLE



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RESCUE PROJECT INTRODUCTION

RESCUE – Reading Early School Leaving Signals Project Nr: 2016-1-RO01-KA201-024523 is funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, and is coordinate by World Vision Romania in partnership with University of Bergamo and We World Onlus (Italy), Across Limits (Malta), National Network of Children (Bulgaria), Secondary School Mihai David, Vaslui county and Secondary School Cosereni, Ialomita county from Romania. Project is developed during the period 01.09.2016 -31.08.2019, under Key Action –KA 2 Cooperation for Innovation and the exchange of good practices.

The project starts from the issue of ESL as a long term evolutionary process. Early warning signals given during time such as frequency of truancy, or gradual deterioration of academic performance, physical and psychological condition are several examples. There are ways to turn these signals into preventive actions.

The teachers are the first to notice these early warning signs of ESL. This makes them to be the first persons to get involved in preventing ESL. Unfortunately, in the countries participating in the project (Romania, Italy, Bulgaria and Malta) the schools tend to make a rather little use of this advantage. Teachers are neither trained to cooperate in multidisciplinary teams nor supported to get involved in ESL prevention.

Schools do not have instruments to reach out to the students at risk and their parents, beyond classes, nor they have the practice of an efficient communication and cooperation with other relevant community stakeholders either. In this condition, it is no wonder that the target countries have some of the highest rate of ESL in Europe.

As a matter of fact, there are testimonies of how efficient ESL prevention job is done here: in 2016, Romania has the 3rd highest rate of ESL at the level of the EU, while Italy is on the 5th place, followed by Bulgaria on the 6th place.

Saying that prevention of ESL could effectively be performed in school is only half true. It can successfully start there if teachers are trained for it and if their schools are empowered to cooperate with the other community stakeholder for immediate action, but it cannot be completed in there.

Once signs of ESL were tracked and alarm has been triggered, a well-defined community intervention mechanism should be activated where different stakeholders must get involved along with the school and act together in a coordinated manner.

Most of the countries surveyed operate an 'early warning system' (EWS). However in most of them, such "systems" are actually simple sections of mainstream school monitoring or management systems relying mainly on monitoring truancy/absenteeism in order to trigger a warning signal. Neither the project target countries (Romania, Italy and Bulgaria) have such separate mechanisms per se.

The target countries involved in RESCUE project initiative are not any different from the surveyed countries. Our target countries are facing the same challenges and share the same concerns, but our project is committed to tackle them through a school and community based and owned and self-sustained ESL prevention mechanism.

Developing the capacity of school staff to create and maintain supportive learning environments is crucial to reducing ESL. Teachers may need continuous support to develop and adapt different methodologies and skills to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers should be given more opportunities for teamwork. Such a goal can be reached through a systematic collection of ESL related data, which can be used to develop an effective early warning system tailorable to local contexts. Collecting data at transnational level would allow us not only to identify common patterns and better underlie our conclusions but to come up with solutions which have a better capacity to be adapted to various local contexts.

We are also aware that teachers cannot act alone in their schools and cannot act beyond their schools, whether they are not supported. Therefore, this project aims to support school as an institutional fellowship to take a harsher and harsher role in this effort to prevent ESL in the community and to proactively contact other stakeholders when the risk situation arises .

We are also aware that teachers, school and even school and community partnerships can only act effectively to a certain level of prevention of ESL if they can reach their own strings and levers, but they have to do reference to other risk factors, economic situation or poor infrastructure at higher decision levels. The direct beneficiaries of the project are teachers as principal key

persons in the school and community involved in the ESL prevention mechanism.

RESCUE project intends to address these challenges by implementing a ESL prevention mechanism that is not only a formal part of school management systems, identifiable by non-school stakeholders as a predominantly "schooling and schooling" task within a large number of other tasks, but a mechanism for preventing genuine, well-defined, common and easily accessible and common ESL.

The project objectives are to:

1. Determine the early warning signs and patterns of risk of ESL
2. Develop teachers' skills for ESL prevention
3. Bolster cooperation and communication between school and community
4. Dissemination of intermediary and final project findings, best practices and experience

The results of the project are the intellectual outputs, that are elaborated and tested by the experts and teachers, as follow:

- Analysis of resources related to cooperation on ESL related issues, at the EU level. (IO1)
- School based ESL prevention and intervention mechanism (IO 4)
- Training curricula for improved cooperation and communication among teaching staff (IO 5)
- Training curricula and the associated instruments for identification of ESL warning signs (IO 6)
- Interactive database for recording information about signs of risk of ESL in students (IO 7)
- Community based ESL prevention and intervention mechanism (IO 9)
- Project Case Study (IO11)

The other important project result are the skills that teachers and the other community stakeholders achieve in the field of ESL prevention and the practice of cooperation at community level.

By turning the school based ESL prevention mechanism into a “business as usual” like behaviour, in time, more teachers in the target schools learn how to use it, thus growing the number of teachers active in ESL prevention above the target 25% and the effectiveness of the mechanism.

By turning the reciprocal community based cooperation mechanism into a “business as usual” behaviour as well, the local stakeholders draw an increasingly growing number of inactive stakeholders, into the broader community-lead effort to prevent and combat ESL.

People involved get used to work together in ESL prevention rather than individually, within their own institutions. They start planning common interventions on a subject circumscribed before, merely to the school context, thus increasing the chances for success in ESL prevention. They are able to efficiently structure their intervention, using the instruments created in the project. New and relevant stakeholders bringing new skills and opportunities and visions add to the effort of ESL prevention: the parents, the students, the local volunteers.

The efficiency of the instruments created (ESL prevention mechanisms, curricula, intervention instruments) were improved by the process of testing them with the stakeholders prior to using them in the field and by refining them after of full use. Given the fact that the team that work on the instruments use English as working language, all the instruments were elaborated and available in English on the project website and the other dissemination media, which give access to them to nearly any other interested party.

The ESL prevention mechanisms resulting from the project were produced based on realities in three different country contexts and six different local contexts. This give them enough versatility to be successfully applied in these different contexts and enough flexibility to be adapted to the specific of each context.

This mechanism have an intrinsic ground for being and a purpose. Furger (2008) shows that young students abandon school for a number of reasons, some of which have their own difficulties and abilities, some with their families and contexts, others with the (perceived) relationship with school and teachers, etc.

Therefore, this mechanism is not only be triggered by absenteeism and absenteeism as warning signals for ESL, as they do now. The tools created in the project help teachers to identify and interpret a multitude of other types of signals and introduce them into the mechanism that automatically generate action waves. These waves were generated in school and school but reverberate outside of school through all relevant stakeholders: family, friends, etc. wherever risk factors tend to lead students to drop out of school early.

The efficiency of the toolkit instruments created (ESL prevention mechanisms, curricula, intervention instruments) were improved by the process of testing them with the stakeholders prior to using them in the field and by refining them after of full use. Given the fact that the team who work on the instruments use English as working language, all the instruments were elaborated and available in English on the project website and the other dissemination media, which give access to them to nearly any other interested party.





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RESCUE

**Strategic Partnerships for School Education Cooperation for
innovation and the exchange of good practices**
Reading Early School leaving signals - RESCUE

Analysis of resources related to cooperation on ESL related issues, at the EU level

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RESCUE
READING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING SIGNALS

I. Analysis of resources related to cooperation on ESL related issues, at the EU level.

An analysis of existent studies, best practices on cooperation between teachers within schools and between school and community and research works on ESL related issues, at the national and EU level were performed and it served as a reference for the experts who elaborated the ESL prevention tools and mechanisms during the project.

I.1. Early School Leaving: a continuous challenge for Europe – prof. dr. Fabio Dovigo (University of Bergamo)

In the last few years, European Union has making a great effort to maximize the educational attainment of young people, identifying the reduction of early school leaving as a main priority for EU countries. Lower the number of early school leavers is a pivotal aim of both the Education and Training 2020 and the Europe 2020 programme. The commitment to tackling ESL as part of the Europe 2020 agenda is strongly connected to the role lifelong learning education has taken on within the Lisbon strategy. Recognizing the need for Europe's education and training systems “to adapt both to the demands of the knowledge society and to the need for an improved level and quality of employment” the Lisbon Council in 2000 gave high priority to lifelong learning “as a basic component of the European social model, including by encouraging agreements between the social partners on innovation and lifelong learning” (European Parliament, 2000). In a world increasingly characterized by the quick expansion of the “knowledge economy”, the Council meant to guarantee systematic growth and employment by promoting the education of a highly competent and dynamic workforce. However, this way it also ended up by especially advocating for skills required with direct reference to the economic expansion.

This trend has been recently confirmed by the EU Commission document “Rethinking Education”, which on the one hand acknowledges that “the broad mission of education and training encompasses objectives such as active citizenship, personal development and well-being”, on the other stresses the importance of “delivering the right skills for employment, increasing the efficiency and inclusiveness of our education and training institutions and on

working collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders” (Commission Communication, 2012: 2).

In accordance with that, a wide body of research literature emphasizes the benefits of extended participation in education and its role in increasing chances for students to access the labour market and develop better opportunities for a greater quality of life. Investigation shows that a higher degree of education allows young people to achieve a number of positive results with reference to employment and salary level, higher productivity and growth, better health conditions, social cohesion and participation. Contrariwise, poor level of education due to early leaving leads to higher individual, societal, and economic costs in terms of public and social charges (Belfield, Levin, 2008; Psacharopoulos, 2007; Nevala et al., 2011). More specifically, European reports indicates that individuals leaving education and training early are exposed to a higher risk of unemployment, acquire jobs with less employment security, tend to do more part-time work, and receive lower earnings (NESSE, 2010; European Commission, 2011a). Beyond those individual consequences, as we said early leaving from education and training has a deep influence as well on the social and economic dimensions. Young people with poor or limited education do not own a skill level appropriate for more knowledge-intensive economies (Nevala et al., 2011). In turn, higher rates of unemployment not only depress economic growth and tax revenues, but also boost welfare payments, so increasing the costs of health care and social services (Nesse, 2010).

It is not surprising then that large efforts have been made by EU in recent years to tackle early school leaving (ESL). Nevertheless, ESL still remains one of the main issues currently faced by European countries (Education and Training Monitor, 2016; European Commission, 2013). Today, 1 out of every 7 European students leaves the education system without having acquired the essential competences or qualifications that ensure a smooth transition to the labour market and enable effective participation in different societal domains as social status, health, participation in culture, and citizenship. Additionally, next generations will undergo the negative impact of a low qualification level. In fact, a great share of the economic and social poverty caused by the current crisis relapses mainly on less-trained young people, as the crisis amplifies the unemployment gap between well-educated individuals and early school leavers. To emphasise the importance of educational attainment, in 2011 EU countries agreed that by 2020 the share of early school leavers should to be

reduced to maximum 10% (Council of the European Union, 2011). Face to the different social and economic conditions of each Member State, such EU headline targets have been tailored into specific national targets. Moreover, wide disparities emerge across European countries. Concerning this, it should be taken in account that the way ESL is defined and measured differs in many EU countries.

As a consequence, the way early leaving is specified in each country affects the data collection management and, in turn, the development of policies to counter or lower it. So, depending on the Member State ESL may refer to leaving education systems before completing upper secondary education or before the end of compulsory schooling, or even before reaching a minimum qualification. The European description of ESL relies on the first, more comprehensive, definition, indicating youngster beyond compulsory schooling age who have not concluded upper secondary education.

The Eurostat report for 2016 confirms that most of EU Member States have made progress on the targets to reduce the rate of ESL to below this threshold. However, data shows that 11.1% of eighteen to twenty-four year olds still have left education and training without completing an upper secondary programme, down from 13.5% in 2011. In 2015, 17 out of 28 EU countries recorded ESL rates below 10%. This means that more than five million of young people 18 to 24 year olds in Europe had not completed upper secondary education and were no longer in education or training. Belgium and Germany, which were below 10 % in 2014, are now just above (10.1 %). The ESL rate in 2015 was almost twice the headline target in Spain, Malta, and Romania, whereas 5 countries - Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, and Slovenia - had rates below or around 5 %. It is worth to note that countries participating to the RESCUE project (Bulgaria, Italy, Malta, and Romania) are all part of a group that displayed the highest levels of ESL in 2005 (between 38.3 % and 15.7 %, corresponding to the EU average). Ten years after, even though still presenting ESL high rates, those countries show a significant reduction in the ratio of ESL population, with the only exception of Romania, which ESL proportion has remained fairly stable.





The roots of ESL: evidences from research

To find out the reasons behind the phenomenon of students' early school leaving, ESL should be considered not as an accident or an output of the educational path, but as a process of disengagement that arises over time (Lyche, 2010). ESL is a multidimensional issue that arises from a number of intertwined factors related to personal experiences and family situation, as well as social and economic context and school environment. The complexity and multi-faceted dimension of ESL is generally acknowledged, as well as the need for a correspondingly multi-dimensional approach to effectively address its diverse reasons. There are different reasons for young people's disconnection from school, which commonly happens as a cumulative progression prompted by several factors rather than as an abrupt decision to leave. Consequently, even though information about at-risk groups and causes of ESL can support the implementation of targeted measures, it is hard to define a single profile of early school leavers, as depending on the specific area and countries some groups appear to be more at risk than others. ESL roots may be tracked in early years, where the process of gradual disengagement from education begins, leading to further underachievement. However, warning signs of ESL can be often detected starting from primary school. Furthermore, ESL origin cannot be attributed to the sole education system, as it is also connected to broader factors, as a result of a mix of social, economic, personal, family-related, and educational aspects, usually interwoven in producing a cumulative disadvantage effect. Issues triggering ESL can be linked to the course of study or the school, as well as to health or emotional difficulties students deal with. At the same time, a connection can be established to the socio- economic or family environment of children. Research indicates that ESL may refer both to individual features, as attitudes, behaviour, and educational performance, and to external factors connected to the family, school, and community background of students (Rumberger and Lim, 2008).

People living in rural or disadvantaged areas are at risk too, as they may have limited access to quality education or to a desired choice of study. Consequently, developing specific and effective measures to prevent ESL requires working at the same time on interpreting it as a complex process, spotting early signals of disaffection, and identifying students that are more at risk of leaving education early.

Looking more in deepen to individual and family factors, they are commonly attributed to socio- economic status, migrant (or minority) background, and gender. Social disadvantage and a low level of parental education are a well-recognised pattern that leads students to give up education and training in advance (European Commission, 2011b). In addition, other family-related aspects such as poor living conditions, single-parenthood, family instability and lifestyle, physical and mental health, and domestic violence can further hinder young peoples' ability to complete education.

Parent-child relationships and parental involvement in children's education are also considered as family-related conditions that may favour ESL (European Parliament, 2011). On average in Europe, 6 out of 10 children whose parents have a poor level of education are considered at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and consequently exposed to the risk of educational disadvantage.



In many European countries, children from a migrant and minority backgrounds represent a large share of students that leave school early. Ethno-cultural minority groups as Roma and Irish Travellers are considered as especially disadvantaged groups in education, so more at risk of dropping school ahead of time (Luciak, 2006; Jugović and Doolan, 2013). However, student born abroad are not automatically more at risk of early leaving. In fact, research confirms that, spite of the 'migrant' or 'non-migrant' condition, socio-economic and family background together with the provision of adequate learning support plays a key role in successful educational results (European Commission, 2013b).

As for gender, it proves to be an important factor for ESL. Boys are almost twice as likely to leave school with low or no qualifications compared to girls (Traag and van der Velden, 2011). On several education indicators (ESL, tertiary educational attainment, and underachievement in basic skills) young women perform on average better than young men.

As we anticipated, education system related factors, such as grade retention, socio-economic segregation and early tracking also play a pivotal role in generating ESL. Investigation shows that, instead of improving academic performance, grade retention produces negative consequences on the ability of students to pursue their studies, so becoming a good predictor of school early leaving (Jimerson, Anderson, and Whipple, 2002). Low achieving students, a category already highly exposed to failure, are especially damaged by grade retention (Jacob and Lefgren, 2009).

Another important dimension in defining ESL is the level of socio-economic segregation of schools. School environments with a high degree of segregation produce worse achievement results in educational terms. Additionally, behavioural problems are more common in such schools, so leading to increase ESL rates (Hugh, 2010; Lyche, 2010; Traag and van der Velden, 2011; Nevala et al., 2011). Conversely, schools with a blend of students coming from different backgrounds are able to promote a positive educational climate that benefits not only disadvantaged children or those whose parents have a low level of education, but all students (ibid.).

Early tracking is also a critical factor in ESL. School systems in which students and their families are required to make obligatory choices between different educational tracks at an early age create a highly negative impact on those placed in tracks that do not match to their potential and/or aspirations

(Hattie, 2009). As a consequence, early tracking tends to increase disparities and inequalities in student achievement (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2006; OECD, 2012). Being usually placed in the least academically oriented tracks at an early phase, before they have had the opportunity to acquire the linguistic, cultural, and social competences to realise their potential, underprivileged learners such as those from migrant or minority backgrounds are especially affected by early tracking (Spinath and Spinath, 2005; OECD, 2010).

Finally, research highlights that early childhood education and care can play a major role in easing successful completion of school pathway (Dumčius et al., 2014; Mullis et al., 2012; OECD, 2011). As the first introduction to the lifelong learning process, attending high quality early childhood services highly increases children opportunity to success in future education, so helping prevent early leaving and low achievement. Children from socially disadvantaged environments especially benefit from attending high quality early childhood services, which represents a fundamental first educational level for developing fair educational systems.

Working through a ‘whole-school approach’

Beyond identifying the reasons behind the ESL phenomenon, starting from 2011 European Union also approved a recommendation on policies addressed to reduce the number of learners who leave education and training early. The recommendation emphasised that measures should be based on targeted and effective evidence-based policies linked to the national settings. It also suggested that EU Member States should develop a comprehensive strategy to tackle the issue. Policies addressed to minimise ESL should promote an inclusive view of education student-centred, that enable access to high quality education for all. In such a vision.

To this aim, schools play a key role guarantee that all learners can achieve their full potential for learning and participation, regardless of individual and family-related dynamics, life experiences, and socio-economic conditions.

Schools must be structured as secure, welcoming, and sensitive environments, able to promote young people growth and development both as individuals and as members of the community. When schools do their utmost for learners'

engagement, students feel their needs are respected and their specific skills valued.

Besides, due to the complex features of ESL, it cannot be tackled by schools alone. Educational systems should develop alliances inside and outside the schools with services and stakeholders in order to combine efforts and cooperate. Accordingly, this 'whole-school approach' recognises schools as the natural promoters of such a community collaboration endeavour (European Commission, 2015). Five intertwined areas can be identified as playing a key role in supporting the 'whole-school approach': school governance, learner support, teachers, parents and families, and stakeholder involvement.

School governance should operate to ensure greater flexibility and autonomy to schools, provide regular selection, support and training for school heads, build distributed leadership, sustain whole-school improvement processes, adopt external monitoring and assessment (quality assurance) mechanisms, and expand networking between schools.

Better support for learners can be acquired by offering students stimulating curricula and effective teaching methods, caring for learners' well-being, putting in place early detection schemes, developing systemic support framework, providing specific support for non-native speakers, ensuring that the learners' voice and participation in school life is listened to, offering career education and guidance, and promoting extra-curricular activities.

As for teachers, a whole-school approach requires to develop a better understanding of ESL, improve teachers' competences and leadership skills, offer additional support to teachers, increase work-experience and peer learning, and embrace diversity.

Parents and community involvement is a pillar too of tackling ESL.



Strategies for overcoming ESL

Over recent years, the EU bodies have issued a number of recommendations addressed to overcome ESL. They include prevention, intervention, and compensation measures. The first are aimed at counteracting the root problems that usually lead to ESL; the second are designed to improve the quality of education and training by offering targeted support in order to help students cope with the difficulties they could face in schools; the latter are meant to devise new opportunities for young people that have prematurely left the educational path.

Below we summarise the main measures that should be adopted on the three areas according to the EU:

Prevention

- Improving access to and quality of early childhood education and care
- Reducing grade policies
- Desegregation policies
- Positive discrimination measures
- Developing extra-curricular activities
- Increasing flexibility and permeability of educational pathways
- Inclusion of early leavers from education and training in initial teacher education and professional training
- Education and career guidance

Intervention

- Providing individual support
- Support for low achievers
- Language support for students with a different mother tongue
- Specialist staff supporting teachers and students
- Identification of groups at risk of early leavers from education and training
- Developing early warning systems for students at risk of early leavers from education and training
- Absenteeism management
- Networking with parents and other actors outside school

Compensation

- Reform of the second chance education system
- Identification of early leavers and measures to help them re-enter education and training
- Accessibility and relevance
- Recognition
- Commitment and governance
- Personalized and logistic approach
- Distinctive learning experience
- Flexibility in curricula
- Teacher involvement and support
- Links to mainstream education

It has to be noted that prevention measures are addressed on initiatives at system level, interventions are focused on the individual school level, while compensation entails the design of second chance schemes of education. However, all measures share some comprehensive principles, namely:

- students should be always put at the centre of the educational projects on the basis of the recognition of their specific strengths and abilities;
- schools should commit to systematically provide welcoming, friendly, safe, and open learning environments, where learners can feel empowered and acquire a sense of ownership towards education and community;
- all school practitioner and stakeholders should pay special attention to the multiple possible causes and signs of ESL. They should contribute as well on developing a shared community of practices addressed to tackling ESL at any school level.



An overview on ESL in Bulgaria, Malta, Romania, and Italia

According to the structure and specific features of their education and training system, any country should devise the most effective mix of measures, at the same time ensuring appropriate coordination among different school levels and location as to favour development and dissemination of good practices achieved.

To this aim, through this report we want to provide a focus on the current situation of ESL in four countries – Bulgaria, Malta, Romania, and Italia – that are especially affected by the phenomenon of ESL. Through this, it will be possible to analyse and compare the ESL situation in each country, so depicting the educational background on which the actions related to the RESCUE project will be developed.



I.2. RESCUE TRANSNATIONAL REPORTS

BULGARIA

Data was collected in Bulgaria from primary (interviews) and secondary (national reports) sources. Our analysis aimed to determine the causes and conditions of early school leaving shows that one third of children that drop out of school lives in families where one or two people are unemployed. This is confirmed by teachers, who underline that sometimes families are too poor to afford school costs. In addition, parents of children out of school are usually with little or no education. Parents who have a school qualification often go abroad to find a job. A double problem often arises from this situation. On the one hand, children who stay in Bulgaria usually live with the grandparents, who sometimes have insufficient ability or authority to support children during their school path. On the other, when parents opt for taking their children abroad with them, problems can arise at school as children can find it difficult to deal with the linguistic and cultural requirements of the new situation. Discontinued studies due to migration of the family outside Bulgaria are also a possible factor of ESL.

The country report and the questionnaires highlight some common points that could be considered predictors and causes of ESL. At the top of the list we find that family reasons are the most common factors: discontinued studies due to premature marriage or childbirth, or discontinued studies due to family or parental problems (divorce, drunkenness, violence, etc.) could become serious problems. Face to this, teachers recommend improving collaboration with families as an important goal. In their opinion, families have to be involved in the educational path of their children, so that school could become an additional support for them. Teachers underlined that there's lack of parental supervision and involvement in students' school life. Teacher stress out the need the importance to work closely with families and create a curriculum that could be managed by these students. The reluctance of parents and of child to go to school could be another problem in terms of ESL. This is also connected to the family cultural capital: in fact, some families show a negative attitude towards education, which make them take children out from school. Another problem is the need for care in the home of relatives, friends, etc. As a teacher noted, discontinued studies can be due to the need to take up employment in the household or elsewhere, or to financial problems of the family (lack of

funds for maintenance of the family and providing the necessary school clothes, shoes, textbooks, etc.).

Other possible signals of ESL could be: poor performance, prolonged truancy, violation of art. 139 of the Education Act (transfer to another school or expulsion from school), voluntary interruption of the training, repeated grades, difficulty to understand and speak Bulgarian, as well as other educational reasons.

Bulgarian teachers emphasise the need for change the school curriculum, pinpointing that the school situation put them under additional stress nowadays. School's costs are generally too high, so parents are unable to purchase appropriate books for their children. This can have a negative effect on students and on their motivation for learning and retention in school. Teachers also advocate for a school change, especially with regards to new technologies and interactive teaching methods able to link school to students' real life. To this aim, some of them have organized extracurricular activities, promoting new didactic experiences and collaborating with other practitioners. Teachers also claim for more pedagogical support to be provided in school, as to help them solve educational problems related to ESL. Moreover, in their opinion the lack of connection between the school and the external environment could be solved by creating connection with NGO's and local stakeholders, who can become partner in the fight against ESL.

ITALY

Italy report highlights some possible factors that can be assumed as contributing to ESL. Evidences were confirmed also by teachers' interviews on this subject. National and international surveys show that ESL is associated to gender, national origin, family's economic and social status. Our analysis confirms these results. Regarding students with a migrant family background, they seem to leave the education system more frequently than the others. The differences among Italian and foreign-born students (but also among second generations students) can be only partly explained by language barriers. One teacher explained that the most challenging situation for her was with Muslim male pupils coming from the Maghreb area, as sometimes they show an ambivalent attitude towards discipline in school. Talking about gender, male students tend to leave the education system earlier than female students:

many teachers confirmed that male children can be especially challenging in this regard. Some boys are required by parents to go work to help family, as girls are press to be married. Consequently, efforts should be taken to prevent early marriages by talking with parents and students in collaboration with social and health services. More generally, teacher underline the need to work with parents and create links with them, as this could promote a deeper involvement in children's school path.

ESL is often associated also with low household income, parental unemployment, and low level of parental education. Living in a family affected by poverty coupled with parental low educational levels has a negative effect on children school performances and outcomes, thus on their risk of drop-out. To this aim, most teachers add that school curriculum and pedagogy should be changed, as they are scarcely suitable with at risk students that need more concrete activities, less lectures, and more interesting proposal. Teachers see linking with local stakeholders as very useful, as they could become partners in school life and help school enrich the educational offer. The risk of social exclusion is higher for Italian children than for their European peers. This is partly due to the economic crisis, which made the families' economic conditions worse, particularly affecting those families which already were the most disadvantaged. Parents with low levels of education are less likely to invest in education, helping children study and do homework, and encouraging their attendance. They earn less money than those with high levels of education and skilled labour, so their children are deprived as they do not have enough resources to study.

As a consequence, family-related factors largely influence the chance of leaving the education system early. For example, living in a large family or in single-parent family affects the disposable income for family members, the availability of parents to support children' education in terms of economic investments, as well as the time to participate in school life. Moreover, the chance to leave school early in Italy is associated to the geographical area where students live. In most regions, particularly in the South of Italy and the islands, the rates of ESL are very high. Low performances, irregular attendance at school, repeated grades influence students' performances, their school career and investments in education.

Teachers interviewed too underlines as possible predictors of ESL learning difficulties, behaviour problems, and problems in socialization. These factors are often intertwined with low socio-economic status, immigrant background, gender, and place of residence, so that the likelihood to leave the educational system becomes higher. Finally, also geographical aspects are concerned: some children live too far from school, which can't be reached by public transport (the only mean they can afford to use).

MALTA

As the country report emphasises, Early School Leaving in Malta depends very much on the socio- economic and sociocultural factors. In fact, the Maltese economy is highly dependent on the tourism sector, where low-skilled workers are easily finding a job, so the request for specialised competences is limited. Moreover, ESL in Malta is related to the structure of the education system, the labour market conditions, family factors, as well as other specific aspects related to gender, spatial distribution, and individual characteristics.

As various researches show, bad relationship between students and teachers could lead to ESL and could be considered a possible cause of it. Early school leaving in Malta could be considered also a problem related to the job requirements, as many industries and factories prove to prefer people with low qualifications. One of the possible reasons could be that entrepreneurs know that they can pay low-skilled workers less than high qualified ones. Also family factors must be considered important where ESL is concerned. Experts on the subject categorize family support, family structure and the relationship between students and their parents as being highly significant in terms of ESL.

Parents' ideas and decisions about school are important, especially because many of them tend to disregard school and its values. This may have a negative influence on children's educational career. Studies show that more guidance from home, such as help and supervision in homework, would encourage the majority of school leavers to continue with their studies. Individual characteristics also emerge as an important contribution towards the decision of leaving school early. However, this aspect is difficult to analyse because it is strictly related to the family environment.

If we want to summarize the main causes of ESL in Malta, we can say that they can be divided into three main factors:

- individual/social factors, such as individual behaviours (deviancy, engagement, social behaviour) or sociocultural background (previous school experiences, family background, health conditions);
- school factors, as educational structures and resources and/or school practices; and systematic factors that are impacting at a macro level.

Preventive measures have been taken to ensure that schooling in Malta responds to student diversity and addresses student needs as from a very young age. For students with a migrant background, who need to acquire a greater sense of belonging, the Cultural Integration Unit within the Ministry for Education and Employment set up induction, cultural orientation and inclusion programmes addressed to them and their families. Talented students are also promoted by the Directorate for Curriculum Management (DCM), which organises regular activities to reward them. To create a more suitable school for everyone, there has also been a huge investment in digital infrastructure, including interactive whiteboards and a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platform. Computer tablets were also distributed to students in various state and non-state primary schools. All these interventions contributed to the effort to create a modern and adequate educational path in Maltese schools.

ROMANIA

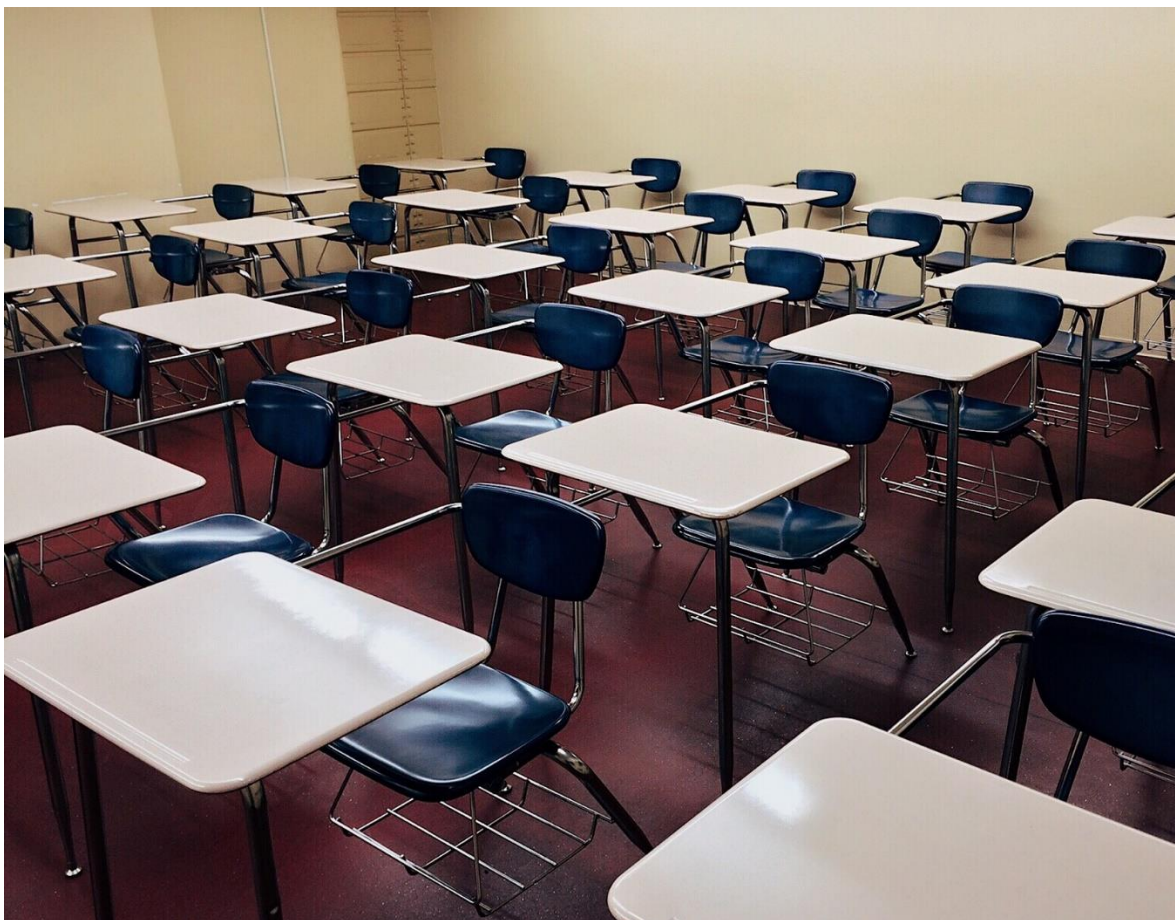
ESL situation in Romania, as it emerges from both national reports and questionnaires, shows some shared points with Bulgaria and Italy as well as some differences. The Romanian report highlights that the availability and access of early childhood education and care services is limited, especially in rural areas and for the Roma community. As a consequence, in rural areas the frequency of children who regularly go to school is low. Sometimes parents take children at home to save money, or because they live in a rural area where by public transport is not available. More generally, a high rate of poverty at household level, especially for children and youth living at risk of poverty or economical marginalization, is a common predictor of ESL.

To send children to the school, parents have to spend a sum that is one and a half higher than the one allocated by the State. In short, parents have to pay for supplementary tuition, school supplies, transportation to school, sport and school equipment, and occasionally for refurbishment and maintenance of the school buildings, as well as the payment of private security staff when local budget cannot cover these costs. These “hidden costs” of education create major disadvantages for children coming from poorer families who cannot afford such investment, so contributing to the non-enrolment rate as well as school dropout and ESL. As a consequence, families from an economically disadvantaged background often decide not to send their children at school, pressuring boys to go to work at an early age to help increase family income. Similarly, girls are betrothed at an early age and push to be married before completing the school attendance. Moreover, due to the lack of resources and opportunities, parents often leave the country looking for working abroad. This could be a problem because sometimes children remain in Romania with grandparents or other carers, who are not in the position to support the educational path of children; otherwise they follow the parents, but can find it especially difficult to integrate in school because of linguistic and cultural reasons.

Summarising, the low level of income per family is a very strong predictor of ESL in Romania, as it implies a financial burden to support the collateral costs of education, especially among poor families and disadvantaged one. This could cause low accessibility to education services in remote rural areas, involving children in seasonal employment activities and care for younger siblings. Another important predictor underlined by teacher during interviews is family culture. The educational level of parents (particularly the mother's education) and how the benefits of schooling are perceived by the family are pivotal. Parents from rural areas tend to underrate the school value, as the early employment of siblings is seen as crucial to sustain the family budget. As a teacher commented, a family with a low level of education will not have the necessary capacity to explain the child why school is important. Another important point stressed out by teachers is the lack of public investment in education, which undermine also the opportunity to develop continuous professional training. In their opinion Romanian school needs a shift, both from a conceptual and practical point of view. Teachers emphasise that resources are needed to change the way teaching is currently done, as more concrete activities and extracurricular opportunities are required. Regarding to this question, poor coordination among key stakeholders at national and

local level is a problem, as the educational system lacks multidisciplinary coordination on ESL, both at local and regional/ national level. There is a lack of cooperation and knowledge sharing between the specialists from the social and the educational field for early identification of ESL. Practitioners from education and child protection should work together to design an action plan for the children at risk of ESL. As one teacher said, accomplish a good cooperation implies to have public policies to ensure coherence between the educational and social protection systems, so that every child has his rights protected.

Other connected problems are the lack of social workers specialized to work as case managers (especially in rural areas); insufficient human resources in the social field; and scarce functionality of the community advisory councils (they activated only on paper, but there is no coordination and a system for reporting or accountability of members who are working voluntarily).



II. RESCUE - School and Community based ESL prevention and intervention mechanism

School Interviews Analysis

Some evidence from country reports

The analysis of country reports shows us some possible reasons related to early school leaving. As expected, they are linked to the specific environmental and economic situation of the family and to the political situation, culture and ideas of each country. However, the Country Report also underlines some common threads, like family environment, ethno- cultural characteristics, social and economic situation of families and community. These variables have a serious impact on the ability, motivation and strength of children in relation to school attendance.

Family situation

As country reports highlights, children who dropped out of school might have a family background characterised by low incomes. In Bulgaria, for example, one third of children who dropped out of school lives in families with one or two unemployed people. In all countries analysed, most children do not go to school because of family's economic difficulties. As a result, children do not have the money needed to pay school, transports, books and all the materials they should have. On the one hand boys are urged to find a job before they complete compulsory school attendance, as to contribute to the family income. On the other, girls are often pressed to marry and have children prematurely.

Another problem is that this specific situation is often associated with lack of parents' education. In Bulgaria again, for example, more than 50% of parents of children out of school are usually with little or no education. Also In Italy and Romania cultural capital of the families proves to be a pivotal factor: parents with low levels of education are less likely to support children in studying and doing homework, as well as encourage children's attendance and investments in education, and help them develop their own cultural capital.

This is partly connected with parents' ideas of education: some of them does not think school is important for their children's future, as they consider

education like a residual option that could be ignored without worries. Italian report confirm that household income, parental unemployment, and low level of parental education are possible markers of ESL. Especially in the South, living in a family affected by poverty coupled with parental low educational levels has a negative effect on children school performances and outcomes, thus worsening the risk of drop-out. In Italy 6 out of 10 children (0-17 years old) whose parental level of education is low are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Another point to be underlined is that family's social problems have a relevant impact on children; a family environment connoted by drug addiction, drunkenness or violence easily lead children to leave school. Our analysis shows that living in an unstable situation due to social problems has a strong influence on children, who cannot find support and guidance that could allow them to persist and success on attending school.

Especially in Bulgaria and Romania, many parents leave the country to work abroad. Consequently, children are asked to stay and live with other relatives, who cannot ensure the same level of emotional caring, as well as exercise the same authority on children. Lack of parental supervision is another cause of ESL: it seems that if parents are not involved in the educational system of school, they don't invest in their children's school path and don't care about it.

In Italy, analysis shows that family-related factors influence the chance of leaving the education system early. For example, living in a large family or in single-parent family affects the available income for family members, as well as the availability of parents supporting children's education in terms of economic investments and time to participate in their school life.

Romanian report too underlines socio-economic status of family as a possible risk of ESL – including a high rate of poverty at household level, especially for children and youth living at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Parents have to pay for supplementary tuition, school supplies, transportation to school, sport and school equipment, and sometimes for refurbishment and maintenance of the school buildings, payment of private security staff when local budget cannot cover these costs. Poorer families who cannot afford such contributions, often decide not to send their children to school, so increasing the non- enrolment rate.

Individual motivation and school practices

In addition to these themes, our analysis show that sometimes children opt not to attend school anymore because of their own personal decision. In this case, they make lots of unexcused absences, or they choose to exhibit aggressive and challenging behaviour in order to be expelled from school. Rarely school are able to use methods or techniques to keep them enrolled: as a result, some students have to repeat 3-4 times the school year and for this reason decide to give up.

As Romanian report clarifies, the lack of public investment and expenditure in education is a major issue to be disentangled: one specific issue relates to the lack of continuous professional training of teachers, as it would represent a necessary condition for improving teachers' skills and making school more inclusive than now.

The Italian analysis shows that gender as well as cultural background of students contribute to enlarge the educational gap that leads to ESL. In Italy, male students tend to leave the education system earlier than female students. As regard to cultural background, students who were born abroad tend to leave the education system more frequently than Italian students do. This is especially related to language barriers, who make school path difficult for all of those students who don't have Italian as mother tongue. Moreover, factors as low performances, irregular attendance at school, repeated grades influence students' performances, their school career and their investment in education. It must be underlined that also students' personal characteristics may have an impact on ESL risk: learning difficulties, behaviour problems and problems in socialization could increase the sense of disengagement and demotivation among children, which can make school life harder, and let them give up school to preserve their identity. Bulgarian report too stresses out that it is not rare that children, especially teenagers, leave school for lack of motivation and involvement.

Geographic area

As our analysis shows, some geographic areas seem more exposed to ESL phenomenon. For example, Italian report underlines that the Southern regions and Islands are the most deprived areas in Italy. Male students, students of foreign origins (and particularly those who were born abroad), young people

who live in the southern regions, socio-economically disadvantaged students, obtain lower performances, and they risk to leave school early.

Romania report too shows that early school leaving rate in Romania remains well above the EU average; the availability and access of early childhood education and care services is limited, especially in rural areas and for the Roma community. In turn, this lead to economic problem, social protection, serious consequences such as unemployment, social exclusion and poverty.

Another issue related to this point is poor coordination among key stakeholders at national and local level. Report underlines that the more a school, an area, an educational service is isolated, the less it could create network with the surrounding area and other services that can help improve possible educational projects.

Regarding Bulgaria, the analysis shows that the “gone abroad” family phenomenon is a source of concern: children leave school to follow their parents abroad and not always they carry on with their school path. Consequently, it is important that the majority of students continue their education in countries where their family is settling.

All the reports point out the lack of a socio-educational and holistic approach of child and youth participation in school, as well as the lack of social workers specialized to work as case managers (especially in rural areas), the lack of social protection payments, insufficient human resources in the social field, not functional community advisory councils. The latter are activated only on paper, so there is no coordination and a system for reporting or accountability of members who are working on voluntarily basis.

Interviews Analysis

The analysis of the interviews made in Italy, Bulgaria and Romania confirm the results highlighted by the reports previously examined. Italian team made 6 interviews to school teachers. Romanian team distributed a questionnaire to more than 100 teachers of two primary schools and interviewed 17 teachers. Bulgarian team distributed the questionnaire to 60 teachers and interviewed 12 teachers. The analysis of the data collected can be divided into two parts: quantitative analysis of the questionnaires; qualitative analysis of the interviews.

➤ Quantitative Analysis

The questionnaires were distributed to 160 teachers approximately. They were mainly female teachers, with more than 10 years' experience on teaching. They questionnaires emphasised as possible factors contributing to young people early school leaving the following dimensions:

- Socio-economic disadvantage;
- Family problems (drug or alcohol-related problems etc.);
- Family history of early school leaving;
- Low academic ability or special educational need;
- Lack of individual motivation and/or goals;
- Behaviour difficulties and/or emotional problems.

In the opinion of teachers, these characteristics may assist students in doing well at school and avoiding ESL despite they suffer from one or more of the previously cited conditions:

- To be a “hard worker” student;
- To like or have an interest in school;
- To be respectful of teachers' authority.

➤ Qualitative Analysis

The analysis of interviews' data could be summarized in three categories, which reflects what the quantitative analysis and the country reports told us:

- A. need to create networks with families and other professional roles;
- B. need for change aimed at developing a new kind of school, and
- C. critical issues.



A. Creating networks

➤ With family

The analysis shows us that teachers consider a pivotal goal for the school to create a solid partnership with children's parents or caregivers. As a teacher comments: "School-family- association network work has allowed parents to understand the importance of the school as a resource and investment for the future, and not just as a formality and guarantee of a place in the authorized field". Almost all the teachers agree that families have an essential role in their pupils' future. However, in practical terms they do not always feel at ease about intervening in confrontational situations, especially discussing about the role of education in ensuring the future of children, or when parents come from a different cultural background. As an Italian teacher said, "School cannot replace families, it can only reinforce and support their intervention".

Family culture. Family has the essential function of providing security to its members and educating children, as they acquire language and cultural skills through the socialisation process. By imitation and identification with their parents, children achieve fundamental role-models that influence their perspective about the meaning and practice of schooling. Parents' positive attitude toward school can induce the child a powerful motivation to learning. For this reason, the family needs also to express an adequate interest in the child's school performance. Teachers maintain that the main reason for ESL depends on family positioning and attitudes towards school: sometimes the family chooses a school unsuitable for the characteristics of the child or does not support it sufficiently. As a result, school failure is unavoidable.

Many teachers add that one of the biggest challenges for schools is parents' poor education. This in turn produce an inability from the parents to understand that without school their children will be condemned to a difficult future. From the teachers' point of view, family's culture is important to create a comfortable setting for children to grow peacefully and sufficiently supported. The cultural level of the family plays a pivotal role for the family members. As a Bulgarian teacher states: "The cultural level is important for a normal development of the child up to the entry to school, and then for supporting the child throughout the school path". This way a level of comfort and confidence in teachers and in school can be ensured: "A family with a low level of education will not have the necessary capacity to explain the child why school is important. However, there are also families with a higher level of

education, even if this condition is not certified by formal diplomas”, a Romanian teacher suggested.

Family’s cultural capital (not always tightly coupled with the actual economical capital) plays a crucial role on assessing what is truly valuable in pursuing school education. If the cultural level of the family is medium or high, the family can better support their children and their choices, as well as help them in the event of failure and reorientation. Conversely, if the cultural level of the family is low, parents often push children to give up on school both directly (asking children not to go to school) or indirectly (simply taking them at home). Several demanding situations can then surface, especially where in the family teenager children are asked to look upon other children or start doing odd (often illegal) jobs. As we mentioned, many children have to go to work as soon as possible to contribute to the family poor budget.

All teachers underline that families living in socio-economic disadvantaged conditions regularly represent at risk situations for children. In this environment, boys would rather day work to earn money, as girls are “betrothed” at an early age. Situations of child abuse are not uncommon in this environment. Consequently, efforts should be taken to prevent early marriages by talking with parents and students, as well as by working in collaboration with social services to promote family planning and sexual education.

Some parents express their beliefs that “you won’t get too far with education”, “If you learn more, you win little money” or “In Italy I won’t be asked for a diploma”. In teachers’ opinion, parents think that finding a job is more important than getting a diploma: it seems that the less children stay at school, the more they could work. In plain words, “Less is enough”. Poor economic condition and lack of culture show consequently strong interrelation. Moreover, this is linked to the lack of support families could give to the children. More generally, teachers’ interviews support the idea that the chances a student to leave school before graduating are greater if parents also dropped out prematurely from school.

Collaboration with family. “It’s important to try to work with family, not only for them”, said an Italian teacher. Teachers emphasise that school must collaborate with family and create networks with it, working both with students and with their parents. In teachers’ opinion, parents are not enough involved to keep their children in school. School-family network plays an important role, as it enables parents to understand the importance of the

school as a resource and investment for the future, and not as a chore or a waste of time.

“It would be important to organize various programs for both students and parents” a Romanian teacher said.

Parents' attention, its environment and interest in the child's school activities are essential to make school suitable for children. School has to try as much as possible to build a climate of collaboration with the families, sharing with them the projects, ideas, values and progresses of school life. As a Bulgarian teacher comments “I think we need more parent-teacher activities”. Poor or lack of communication with parents, low education level of parents and the impossibility for them to acknowledge the role of education for their children are assumed as possible ESL causes.

Disadvantaged conditions. Disadvantaged conditions in family could create a state of restlessness, moods, little attention in children. As an Italian teacher said “There are families that, due to the economic conditions or the difficult environment, didn't have the chance to develop from a cultural point of view. The primary effort I am making as a teacher is to introduce the students to a system of values”. Social and familiar discomfort and lack of parents' involvement in school matters are presented as one of the possible causes of ESL. As a Romanian teacher says: “Financial problems, dysfunctional families, poor academic performance, learning difficulties” are at the basis of students' disaffection from school. Some teachers told that in the past they visited the families of those students who dropped-out from school and found out that unwillingness of students and parents' attitudes towards education are the main factors that lead to school dropout. Other factors are financial problems, dysfunctional families, poor academic performance, learning difficulties, and both family's and child's lack of interest in school. From the teachers' perspective, socio-economic conditions of the family are very important, as they provide the psychological comfort every individual needs to carry on with the school path. However, some teachers highlight that schools can play a pivotal role in preventing ESL through educational interventions. As a Bulgarian teacher suggested: “Our needs are simple: improving the physical environment - more places for sports, recreation and communication. Library. Changing the classroom- learning system with a project-based learning model. New methodologies and technologies for developing learning techniques for pupils and teachers”.

➤ **With other schools**

The analysis of the interviews shows that teachers need to set up effective networks with associations that works on the surrounding area and with practitioners who can help them. Above all, teachers need to create networks with other resources in the school, especially with other teachers, who can offer support and reciprocal consultancy in their fight against ESL. As an Italian teacher said, “The problem is to find a shared intervention strategy with other colleagues”. “Cooperation and collaboration between all teachers to create a relaxing atmosphere is important” recommended a Romanian teacher, expressing the wish to define common educational strategies with other colleagues. Analysis shows that it is important for the school to have a shared vision to provide equal educational opportunities to all children. Teachers also propose to implement additional actions, as after-school activities, supporting peer groups, and internships organised by the school. On this line of thought, they also propose to open the school in the afternoon to provide additional educational activities, including specialisation courses that students can attend in agreement with the families. Supporting students’ attendance and success is seen as a daily practice that should involve all the school practitioners. This challenge requires to achieve a certain level of harmonization between the various school components, as an outcome of cooperation and collaboration developed between all teachers to create an atmosphere of reciprocal care and encouragement.

➤ **With other practitioners**

Many teachers commented during the interviews that some schools should have psychological and educational support and re-orienting service for students and families. A Bulgarian teacher also commented that “there is already a pedagogical advisor who consults students, teachers and parents. Individual support programs have been developed”. However, more systematic support is needed. Teachers suggest that it would be important that every school could collaborate with support teachers, as well as school cultural mediators, social workers, school psychologists, and speech therapists. As a Romanian teacher said, “This reflects the concern of the teachers for better communication within the educational community”. Many teachers point out that a counselling service in school could make easier communication between teachers, children, families, and administration. Other teachers advocated for a service which could promote individual counselling, as well as for promoting

focus groups organized on the initiative of the head-teacher (with the participation of pupils, teachers and parents) to prevent the drop out. Teachers also emphasize the role of social workers in order to offer support and orientation to the families. “

➤ **With the local institutions**

Teachers think it would be necessary to enhance network with local stakeholders, institutions, as well as with the working world. In addition, they say that involvement of all local institutions (the municipality, the police, the voluntary associations, and so on) should be encouraged in order to support the achievement of both students' education and parents' counselling activities (parents' school). This support would be especially valuable for children who are at risk of dropping out. As an Italian teacher said: “Through this we would create some collaboration with local authorities”. “I would find partners in the community to contribute to social small farms where the parents with no income could work” a Romanian teacher recommended.

➤ **With the associations**

Teachers point out the importance of NGO's work in and with schools. They would promote extracurricular activities and projects inside and outside school, for example manual workshops, for the production of artefacts that can also be exhibited or sold to find additional resources. This would compensate for the chronic lack of financial contribution from the state. Poor communication with local associations is also indicated as a possible cause of the lack of good practices in the school area. From this perspective, creating a sense of community through educational activities could be a possible solution to spread and share values and good practices, as well as create a sense of belonging and change that would enhance engagement in school and public sphere involvement. Teachers underline that school must work with the local communities, using support and resources that can be found in the surrounding area. In addition, a Bulgarian teacher pinpoints that “coordination of our work with local services could be introduced to improve school access” to the school. A disciplined and controlled collaboration between governmental and nongovernmental actors would help implement optimal strategies to improve access and retention of students in school, involving private bodies (NGOs, sponsors, etc.) in the community. Moreover, teachers add that sometimes NGOs have promptly offered material and support

whenever necessary: We have worked yet with NGO's as WeWorld"; "NGOs helped us working with some Roma students".

B. Need for change

One teachers' common claim is about the need to change the educational system As an Italian teacher stated: "School ethics and culture must be transformed". "A school adapted to the requirements of society, a school for the soul of each student" a Romanian teacher said. According to teachers, change should especially involve the curriculum and pedagogy of school. They see students as entrapped in a system that requires them to study to abstract or inadequate subjects: not the 21st century skills and the development of personality and society, the different ways of thinking and creating, but the undoing of unnecessary facts in an unnatural environment. Teachers say that, as a consequence, children lose their motivation to learn at school, as there is not a caring attitude towards them and they are being judged if they do not fit into the "class mould".

Teachers express a need to develop active teaching that could support them in doing classes with at risk students. Some teachers told that it is really important to encourage students, especially those at risk highlighting the little progresses, rewarding goodwill and desire to participate and collaborate, trying to support them by making examples that come from the experiences of everyday life.

In their opinion, school in general is undermined by an excess of theory and far from matching with the current demands of society. Some teachers stress out the role of creating an enjoyable environment while working in the classroom. They suggest that tasks for students should be "very simple and comfortable", such as "listen to the TG that speaks of this event". In addition, they recommend to focus on creating a fun and relaxing learning environment prevalently based on group practice. In this sense, practical activities must be strengthened to help school link to real life and make it closer with the new global communication environment. As a Bulgarian teacher said: "Systemic change is needed, as teachers and students are currently locked in a system that requires them to study wrong things".

In addition to this, teachers highlight the importance to change the school curriculum. In their opinion, the traditional curriculum is too complicated, and the amount of information that children need to achieve in school is

unrealistically high. The school curriculum is often inconsistent with pupils' needs and real interests, as theoretical knowledge prevails and there is a lack of connections with real life. The delay or even lack of practical application of knowledge ends up to demotivate students. Teachers also offer some possible solutions to the problem: building different curricula for the different children; calibrating educational and didactic proposals based on the needs of each pupil; setting up spaces, activities and ways of working that not only promote learning processes but also children participation; planning a School Development Plan that helps design the development of partnership with families and the community; and organizing a more efficient educational environment.

In their opinion, teachers also need an ongoing and more qualified training. It should be focused on children's new needs and use technologies as a way to make teaching more interesting, suitable, and enjoying. E-learning, interactive whiteboards, and new learning and cooperating approaches are only a few examples mentioned by the teachers. Many teachers emphasise that school has to develop citizen's skills, as school culture and ethos are very important for the students who spend large time of the daily life in school. Teachers advocate for a school able to match with the requirements of society, a school for the soul of each student, a school that implements truly civic and moral values. To change schools, flexibility is seen as a fundamental value. In addition, teachers support the use of new textbooks (updated with new evidences and information), as well as new technologies, to support school learning and the development of educational projects. The latter would enable to creation of collaboration and cooperation not only among students in the classrooms, but also among different stakeholders in the community.

In sum, teachers suggest a new kind of school, less dominated by bureaucracy and more practical and suitable to children's needs: "less words, more actions". They propose to promote during school hours more concrete activities based on children interests, connecting the learning process to real life, as well as new extracurricular laboratories and activities to try to motivate students and keep them engaged in the school path.

Teachers also recommend the involvement of the stakeholders into the development of vocational workshops aimed to show the "working world" to children. In fact, this should be part of the linking activities of the school with the local bodies, which should be considered as partners of school. They see

cooperation and collaboration between teachers and public or private associations and with families as pivotal to create a positive and inclusive environment.

More generally, teachers speak about inclusive education as a way to promote a new kind of didactic, teaching, and living school that support what every single student can do with suitable and enjoying activities, designed to make the school environment fruitful for everyone.

C. Critical issues

From the interviews' analysis, some critical issues have emerged that seems valuable, even though they don't fit under the previous categories: economic problems, environmental aspects and peer pressure.

➤ Economic problems

Most of teachers agree that the lack of money is one serious and important issue for the school: As an Italian teacher stated "poor economic conditions have an important impact on the students' life". It is worth to be noted that economic issues affect both families and schools. As for the families, we previously commented that sometimes children are forced to leave school and go to work to support the family. "In order to change this situation more money is needed" as a Romanian teacher explained. This lack of money from the family is usually connected with a lack of school materials, as it is difficult to "purchase additional materials for pupils from the school budget (pens, notepads, notebooks, etc.) and cover students' transport costs for visits to various educational events and/or career days" as a Bulgarian teacher commented. Students who do not attend school or leave school early often come from especially destitute families. Providing a richer environment with resources and additional support would be a solution for ESL. But this requires available funds that school rarely have. As a consequence, new or extracurricular activities cannot be implemented as there is no money to invest in it. Related to this point, one teacher told that investing in education today actually means to invest in the country's future. Hence, changing the paradigm, the curricula, the structure, the mentality, all these should be done as soon as possible by providing adequate financial support. Some schools assume and do what they are supposed to do. But those schools have their own financial power.

Other cannot afford this challenge, because state loans are not used for school actions: “the socio-economic conditions of the family are important, even though disadvantage is related not only to the family economic conditions, but also to other factors such as the level of parental education, the area and the conditions of residence, etc”.

Some teachers underline that improving teachers' salaries would be mandatory: in their opinion, paying teachers what they're worth could transform teaching into the prestigious, desirable, financially viable, and professionally exciting job it should be. Some teachers also suggest that the solution would be to provide school financial autonomy, this way making it the first sponsor of itself. In their opinion, school could provide textbooks, computers, and also snacks and meals for students.

➤ **Environmental aspects**

Another big problem highlighted by teachers are school and geographical environment. Regarding the first aspect, teachers say that many schools are old, dirty, without technologies, materials, and instruments to teach properly. This kind of problem is related to money question, which we have discussed above. As for the geographical environment, teachers comment that many children cannot come to school just because there is no public transport service available. Especially in the rural areas from where many children come, public transport often does not exist and, knowing the poor financial condition of many families, parents could not afford to bring children to school by car. According to the teachers, creating school buses lines in these areas would be a crucial step in ensuring the right of children to attend school.

➤ **Peer pressure**

Not all the teachers speak about peer pressure, but all of them recognized that it is very important to create a fair, exciting and non-violent environment at school. This is seen as a good practice that could help to keep students in school. All teachers recognise that school climate is important, acknowledging that helping students to get along with the other students is pivotal to ensure school attendance. “School mates and entourage have a great influence on the student's behaviour” said a Romanian teacher. The acceptance or rejection of a child may have positive or negative influence on him/her: a child who is accepted by the others is more cooperative and active, while the rejected one is more at risk of ESL.

Some teachers would like to create a kind of school more focused on building companionship and developing activities aimed at increasing participation and socialization. They note that stimulating co-operative work in the classroom can support and facilitate some relationships that would not spontaneously arise and limit other ones. But “the peer relationship has to be controlled also by families. Where there is a solid family behind, it is easier to limit and manage dangerous relationships”, as an Italian teacher said.

Many teachers suggest that creating a sense of belonging to the group, developing communication skills, promoting teamwork, using inclusive educational approaches are ways by which each student might find his place in school, to feel appreciated and valued. Some teachers note that peer pressure can be useful as an important incentive for students to perform well in school. However, on the negative side, peer influence can lead as well to discipline problems and deviant behaviour both inside and outside school.

Not with standing, most teachers confirm that let children grow with others in school is still the best way to let them become responsible citizens.





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RESCUE

**Strategic Partnerships for School Education Cooperation for
innovation and the exchange of good practices**
Reading Early School leaving signals - RESCUE

Developing access, learning and participation in schools through the Index for Inclusion

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RESCUE
READING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING SIGNALS

II.2. Developing access, learning and participation in schools through the Index for inclusion



Elements of the Index

The Index has 5 main elements:

KC

1. *Key concepts*: to support thinking and discussion about tackling ESL through inclusive development.

DN

2. *Planning framework*: to structure the approach to review and development.

IP

3. *Collecting evidences*: to enable a detailed review of all aspects of a setting and help to identify and implement priorities for change.

CE

4. *An inclusive process*: to ensure that the processes of review, planning and implementing change are themselves inclusive.

PF

5. *Documenting and networking*: to consolidate, communicate and review the process by expanding the inclusive network.

Inclusion in education involves...

- Putting inclusive values into action.
- Increasing the participation of children and young people in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, activities and communities of local settings.
- Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in settings so that they are responsive to the diversity of children/young people in the locality.
- Valuing equally, all children, young people, parents/carers and practitioners. • Viewing the differences between children as resources to support learning and participation rather than as problems to be overcome.
- Acknowledging the right of children to good quality education and school in their locality.
- Making improvements for practitioners as well as for children.
- Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all children not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as 'having special educational needs'.
- Learning from attempts to overcome barriers for children whose learning and/or participation is a focus of concern, to make changes that benefit children more widely.
- Emphasising the development of community and values, as well as achievements.
- Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between settings and communities.
- Recognising that inclusion in early education and school are aspects of inclusion in society.

Questions:

- To what extent is inclusion seen to be associated with children seen as 'having special educational needs'?
- To what extent is inclusion identified with children whose behaviour is viewed as problematic?

Questions to address barriers and resources

1. What are the barriers to school attendance, learning, and participation?

2. Who experiences barriers to attendance, learning, and participation?

3. How can barriers to attendance, learning, and participation be minimised?

4. What resources are used to support attendance, learning, and participation?

5. What additional resources can be brought into action to support attendance, learning, and participation?

What is support?

- What activities count as support for access, participation, and learning?

- What are the implications of the definition of support for the work of practitioners?

- What are the implications of this view for professional development?

- What are the implications of this definition of support for how support is coordinated?

Change

Schools are always changing, in all sorts of ways for all sorts of reasons. Only some of these changes happen as a result of a school development plan.

Changes may not be consistent with each other or with the development of inclusion.

Do all the changes you make to the school pull in the same direction?

Do all changes support inclusion?

Does our school develop shared inclusive values?

- a) Do staff, governors, parents/carers and children give time to talking about values, their implications for action, the nature of their own values and how they differ between people?
- b) Are values understood as revealed through actions rather than words?
- c) Is everyone in the school committed to the equality of value of all people and to the participation of all?
- d) Do adults and children explore the values behind their ways of working and acting in the school?
- e) Do adults and children avoid assuming that everyone in a community shares the same values?
- f) Is it understood that it involves practice and trust to honestly express the values that inform one's
- g) Is it understood that agreement about values is usually partial, since differences of view, for example about participation and equality, may be revealed as conversations deepen?
- h) Do staff, children, parents/carers and governors broadly agree upon a framework of values that can be drawn on in shaping actions within the school?
- i) Is an agreed framework of values used to resist pressures from outside the school to act according to different values?
- j) Do staff review their practices in the light of their agreed values and propose changes where practices are informed by values that they reject?
- k) Is it understood that applying shared values may involve steering between competing interests, for example, when one child's participation interferes with that of another?
- l) Do adults and children draw attention to actions inside and outside the school that are inconsistent with an agreed framework of values?
- m) Are changes in the school made in accordance with an agreed framework of values?

n) Do discussions go beyond headings for values to the complexity of their meanings?

o) Do staff and children link any summary statement of school values to more detailed understandings?

p) Are the limitations of ideas of national, global or Western values explored?

q) Does the school publicise its values and encourage others to engage with staff and children on the basis of the values agreed within the school?

r) Does an agreed framework of values apply equally to adults and children?

s) Is it recognised that we all have to work hard to act in accordance with our values?

t) Is it understood that a strong framework of values may be held by people with no religion as well as a variety of religions?

u) Is it understood that having a religion or a particular political position does not ensure inclusive values?

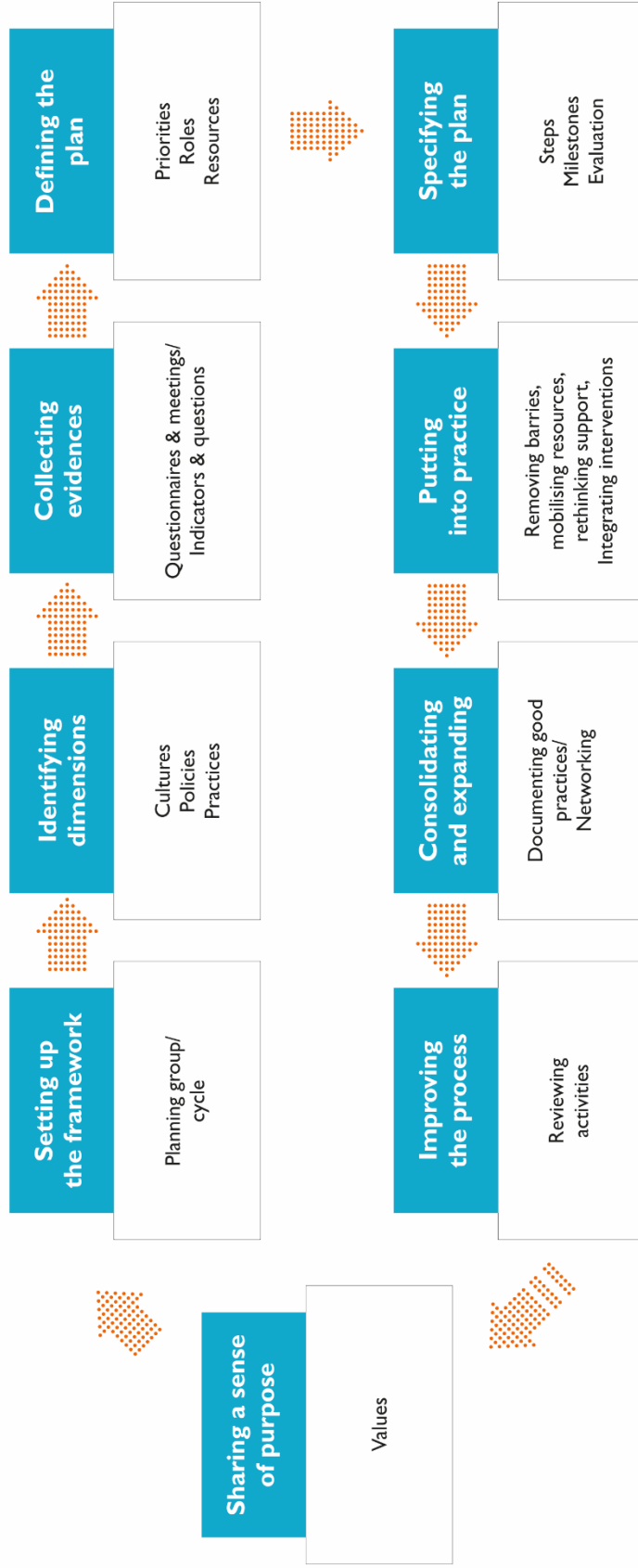
v) Do people connect the ways they act outside school with the way they act inside it?

w) Is it understood that the implications of some values, such as caring equally for all and encouraging hope in the future, are aspects of the professional duties of staff?

y)

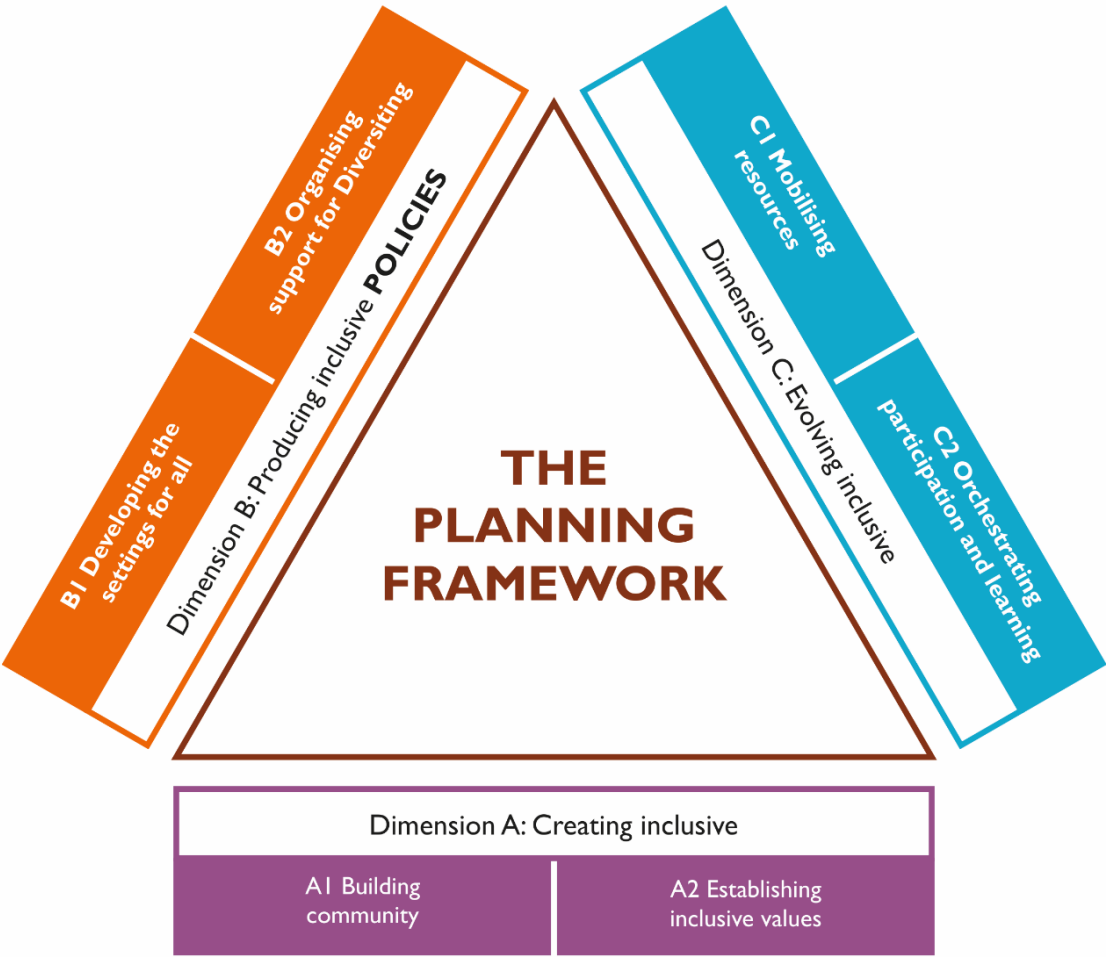
z)_____

The Planning Cycle



Inclusive development through the reflection and action of collaborating adults and children

Index dimensions and sections



DIMENSION A Creating inclusive cultures

A.1 | Building community

INDICATOR A.1.1 | *Everyone is made to feel welcome*

- a) Is the first contact that people have with the setting friendly and welcoming?
- b) Is the environment of the setting uplifting?
- c) Are children and their parents/carers always greeted and said goodbye to?
- d) Is the setting welcoming to all children, including children with impairments, Travellers and asylum seekers?
- e) Is the setting welcoming to all parents/carers and other members of its local communities?
- f) Is information about activities and policies provided for all parents/carers?
- g) Is information accessible to all, irrespective of home language or impairment (for example, available as necessary in translation, Braille, audiotape, large print)?
- h) Are Sign Language and other first language interpreters available when necessary?
- i) Does information about the setting state that all children from the surrounding communities are welcome?
- j) Are local cultures and communities celebrated in signs and displays?
- k) Are there positive rituals for welcoming new children and new practitioners and marking their leaving?
- l) Do children/young people feel ownership of the space/s or room/s?
- m) Do children, parents/carers, practitioners, management committee/governors and community members all feel ownership of the setting?

Further questions_____

DIMENSION B Producing inclusive policies

B.1 | Developing the setting for all

INDICATOR B.1.2 | *All new practitioners are helped to settle*

- a) Is there an agreed policy for introducing new practitioners to, and supporting them in, the setting?
- b) Are the difficulties recognised that new practitioners may have in settling into a new job in what may be a new locality?
- c) Do longer serving practitioners avoid making new practitioners feel outsiders, for example by the use of 'we' or 'us', which excludes them?
- d) Does every new practitioner have a mentor who is genuinely interested in helping him or her to settle in?
- e) Are there opportunities for all practitioners, including new practitioners, to share their knowledge and expertise?
- f) Are new practitioners provided with the basic information they need about the setting?
- g) Are new practitioners asked about what additional information they need, and is it provided?
- h) Are observations about the setting of new practitioners, and students on placement, sought and valued for the fresh insights that they may contain?
- i) Are the observations of practitioners who are leaving sought and valued for the insights that they may contain?

Further questions_____

DIMENSION C Evolving inclusive practices

C.1 | Orchestrating learning

INDICATOR C.1.3 | Activities encourage the participation of all children

- a) Do activities involve children emotionally and convey excitement and fun in learning?
- b) Is self-expression encouraged through art, music and dance as well as through language?
- c) Are puppets, dolls and photographs used to explore particular situations and emotions?
- d) Is use made of photo-diaries to record and share activities in and away from the setting?
- e) Do practitioners extend the range of stories, songs, games and rhymes from the familiar, drawing on other cultures and languages?
- f) Do activities build on language and literacy experiences which children have outside the setting?
- g) Do activities build on differences in children's previous knowledge and experience?
- h) Do practitioners recognise that the process of making something or attempting an activity can be more important than the end product?
- i) Do practitioners always respond positively to children's artistic and creative attempts?
- j) Do practitioners maintain contact with children by getting down physically to their level?

k) Do practitioners ensure that babies and young children are aware that an activity is about to start, for example by registering presence before picking them up, caring for, or feeding them?

l) Do practitioners recognise the physical or mental effort required by some children with impairments or chronic illness to complete activities, for example if lip-reading or low vision aids are used?

m) Do practitioners provide alternative ways of giving access to experiences or understanding for children who cannot engage in particular activities, for example, because of a visual impairment?

n) Are children with severe communication difficulties encouraged to feel that their responses to activities are valued?

o) Do practitioners provide children who communicate non-verbally with a range of opportunities to make choices using pictures, photographs and objects?

Further questions_____

QUESTIONNAIRE 1: INDICATORS

Please tick the boxes for the groups below which describe your involvement with the preschool:

☐ teacher ☐ teaching assistant ☐ other member of staff

☐ parent/carer ☐ child or young person ☐ governor

☐ other (specify) _____

		Agree	Agree and disagree	Disagree	Need more information
Please tick the box that best reflects your opinion →					
Dimension A – Creating inclusive cultures					
A1: Building community	1	Everyone is welcomed.			
	2	Staff co-operate.			
	3	Children Help each other.			
	4	Staff and children respect one another.			
	5	Staff and parents/ carers collaborate.			
	6	Staff and governors work well together.			
	7	the school is a model of a democratic citizenship.			
	8	The school encourages an understanding of the interconnections between people around the world.			
	9	Adults and children are responsive to a variety of ways of being a gender.			
	10	The school and local communities develop each other.			
	11	Staff link what happens in a school to children lives at home.			
A2: Establishing	1	The school develops shared inclusive values.			
	2	The school encourages respect for all human rights.			
	3	The school encourages respect for the integrity of planet earth.			
	4	Inclusion is viewed as increasing participation for all.			

	5	Expectations are high for all children.				
	6	Children are valued equally.				
	7	The school counters all forms of discrimination.				
	8	The school counters non-violent interactions and resolutions to disputes.				
	9	The school encourages children and adults to feel good about themselves.				
	10	The school contributes to the health of Children and adults.				
Dimension B – Producing inclusive policies						
B1: Developing the school for all	1	The school has a participatory development process.				
	2	The school has an inclusive approach to leadership.				
	3	Appointments and promotion are fair.				
	4	Staff expertise is known and used.				
	5	All new staff are helped to settle into school.				
	6	The school seeks to admit.				
	7	All new children are helped to settle into school.				
	8	Teaching and learning groups are arranged fairly to support all children's learning.				
	9	Children are well prepared for moving on the other settings.				
	10	The school makes its buildings physically accessible to all people.				
	11	The buildings and grounds are developed to support participation of all.				
	12	The school reduces its carbon footprint and use of water.				
	13	The school contributes to the reduction of waste.				
B2: Organising support	1	All forms of support are co-ordinated.				
	2	Professional development activities help staff to respond of diversity.				
	3	English as an additional language support is a resource for the whole school.				
	4	The school supports continuity in the educations of children in public care.				
	5	The school ensures that policies about "special education needs" support inclusion.				

	6	The behavior policy is linked to learning and curriculum development.				
	7	Pressures for disciplinary exclusion are decreased.				
	8	Barriers to attendance are reduced.				
	9	Bullying is minimized.				
Dimension C - Evolving inclusive practices						
C1: Constructing curricula for all	1	Children explore cycles of food production and consumption.				
	2	Children investigate the importance of water.				
	3	Children study clothing and decoration of body.				
	4	Children find out about housing and the built environment.				
	5	Children consider how and why people move around their locality and the world.				
	6	Children learn about health and relationships.				
	7	Children investigate the earth, the solar system and the universe.				
	8	Children study life on earth.				
	9	Children investigate sources of energy.				
	10	Children learn about communication and children technology.				
	11	Children engage with, and create, literature arts and music.				
	12	Children learn about work and link it to the development of their interests.				
	13	Children learn about ethics, power and government.				
C2: Orchestrating learning	1	Learning activities are planned with all children in mind.				
	2	Learning activities encourage the participation of all children.				
	3	Children are encouraged to be confident critical thinkers.				
	4	Children are actively involved in their own learning.				
	5	Children learn from each other.				
	6	Lessons develop an understanding of the similarities and differences between people.				

	7	Assessments encourage the achievements of all children.				
	8	Discipline is based on mutual respect.				
	9	Staff plan, teach and review together.				
	10	Staff develop shared resources to support learning.				
	11	Teaching assistants support the learning and participation of all children.				
	12	Homework is set to that is contributes to every child's learning.				
	13	Activities outside formal lessons are made available for all children.				
	14	Resources in the locality of the school are known and used.				

These are the three things I like best about this school:

1.

2.

3.

These are the three things I would most like to change about this school:

1.

2.

3.

QUESTIONNAIRE 2: MY CHILD'S SCHOOL

			Agree	Agree and disagree	Disagree
<i>Please tick the box that best reflects your opinion →</i>					
Planning Framework and Questionnaires	1	My child usually looks forward to coming to school			
	2	My child has good friends at the school			
	3	I feel part of the school community			
	4	The school keeps me well informed about what is going on			
	5	I have been asked to make a contribution to lessons			
	6	I think this is the best school in the area			
	7	The school and the playground are attractive			
	8	The toilets are clean and safe			
	9	The children get on well together			
	10	the teachers get on well together			
	11	Adults and children get on well together			
	12	The teachers and parents get on well together			
	13	All families are equally important to the teachers at the school			
	14	I have friends among the other parents			
	15	I like the teachers			
	16	The teachers take an interest in what I tell them about my child			
	17	It's good to have children from different backgrounds at the school			
	18	Just by being at the school my child learns how to get with people			
	19	My child learns what democracy means just by being at this school			
	20	My child learns the importance of caring for the environment			
	21	My child eats healthy at the school			
	22	I have been involved in making the school a better place			
	23	Any child who lobs near to this school is welcome to come here.			

24	When my children started at this school there was an effort to make me feel involved			
25	Every child is treated with respect			
26	Disabled children are accepted and respected at the school			
27	Boys and girls get on well together			
28	Being gay or lesbian or transgender is seen as an ordinary part of life			
29	You are respected irrespective of the color of your skin			
30	You are an equal part of the school whatever your religion or if you have no religion			
31	People do not look down on children because of what they wear			
32	You are respected for your effort not for the scores you get on tests			
33	Children avoid calling each other hurtful names			
34	Bulling is not a problem			
35	If anyone bullied my children I know that I would get from the school			
36	If children have been away for a day a teacher wants to know where they have been			
37	Teachers do not have favorites among the children			
38	I think the teachers are fair when they praise a student			
39	I think the teachers are fair when they punish a student			
40	When children are interrupting lessons other children help to calm them down			
41	My child learns how to settle disagreements by listening, talking and compromise			
42	The school sends children home if they have behaved badly			
43	Lessons make good use of what my child has learnt outside school			
44	The school has a good system for supporting children when they have a problem			
45	My child learns a lot at this school			
46	Children are often trusted to learn on their own			
47	The school is good about saving energy			

	48	My child learns to care for the environment in the school and the area around it			
	49	The children help each other when they stuck with their work			
	50	My child knows how to get help with his or her work when it is needed			
	51	The school is place where people really listen to each other's ideas			
	52	My child usually understands what to do next in lesson			
	53	My child usually understands what to do when he or she is given homework			
	54	Homework helps my child to learn			
	55	At lunchtimes my child sometimes joins in clubs or practice a sport			
	56	After school my child sometimes joins in clubs or practice a sport.			

These are the three things I like best about this school:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

These are the three things I would most like to change about this school:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

QUESTIONNAIRE 3: MY SCHOOL

Please note that in this questionnaire when we use the word child or children we mean to include older children and young people too.

		Agree	Agree and disagree	Disagree	
<i>Please tick the box that best reflects your opinion →</i>					
Planning Framework and Questionnaires	1	I look forward to coming to school			
	2	I feel part of a big community			
	3	The school and the playground look attractive			
	4	The toilets are clean and safe			
	5	The children get on well together			
	6	The adults get on well together			
	7	Adults and children get on well together			
	8	I have some good friends			
	9	I like my teachers			
	10	The school helps me to feel good about myself			
	11	The school helps me to feel good about the future			
	12	We are encouraged to stand up for what we believe is right.			
	13	It's good to have children from different backgrounds.			
	14	Just by being at the school you learn how to get on with people.			
	15	I have learnt what democracy means by being at the school.			
	16	I have learnt how my actions affect others in the schools.			
	17	I have learnt how my actions affect others around the world.			
	18	I have learnt how my values affects the way I act.			
	19	I eat healthily at school.			
	20	My family feel involved in what goes on at the school.			
	21	When teachers say they are going to do something they do it.			
	22	People admit when they have made a mistake.			
	23	There is a comfortable place inside the school a better place.			

24	I have been involved in making the school a better place.			
25	Any child who lives near to this school is welcome to come here.			
26	When I first came to the school I was helped to settle in.			
27	You are respected regardless of the helped to settle in.			
28	You feel equal part of the school whatever your religion if you have no religion.			
29	Children do not look down on the others because of what they wear.			
30	Boys and girls get on well together.			
31	Being gay or lesbian is seen as an ordinary part of life.			
32	Disabled children are respected and accepted.			
33	Children avoid calling each other hurtful names.			
34	If anyone bullied me or anyone else, I would tell a teacher.			
35	Teachers do not have favourites among the children.			
36	I have been away for a day a teacher wants to know where I have been.			
37	I think the teachers are fair when they praised a child.			
38	I think the teachers are fair when they punish a child.			
39	Teachers know how to stop children interrupting lessons.			
40	When children are interruption lessons other children calm them down.			
41	We learn how to settle disagreements by listening, talking and compromise			
42	In lessons children share what they know with other children			
43	In lessons children share what they know with other children.			
44	If I have a problem in a lesson, a teacher or teaching assistant will help me.			
45	I enjoy most of my lessons.			
46	I learn about what is going on in the world.			
47	I have learnt about the importance of human rights.			

48	I learn how suffering in the world can be reduced.			
49	I learn a lot at this school.			
50	At times children are trusted to learn on their own.			
51	We learn how to save energy at the school.			
52	We learn to care for the environment in the school and the area around it.			
53	We learn to respect planet earth.			
54	When teaching assistants are in the classroom they help anyone who needs it.			
55	Teachers are interested in listening to each other's ideas.			
56	Children are interested in listening to each other's ideas.			
57	In lessons I always know what to get on with next.			
58	I know myself when I have done good work.			
59	Teachers don't mind it if I make mistakes in my work as long as I try my best.			
60	My work is displayed on the walls in the school.			
61	When I am given homework I usually understand what I have to do.			
62	I find that homework helps me to learn.			
63	At lunch time or after schools I sometimes join in clubs or do sports practice.			

These are the three things I like best about this school:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

These are the three things I would most like to change about this school:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Questions about school access

DIMENSION B Producing inclusive **policies** B.1 | Developing the school for all

INDICATOR B.1.6 | The school seeks to admit all children from its locality

- a) Is the wish to include all children from the locality publicised as school policy?
- b) Is the comprehensive and community nature of the school reflected in its name?
- c) Are all children from the locality encouraged to attend the school irrespective of attainment, impairment or background?
- d) Are traveller children who visit the area actively welcomed to the school?
- e) Does the school seek to overcome barriers to participation for the variety of ethnic groups in the locality?
- f) Are children of asylum seekers and refugees encouraged to attend the school?
- g) Are children of families temporarily resident in the area encouraged to join the school?
- h) Are families from the locality with children currently in special schools encouraged to send these children to the school?
- i) Do staff advocate for the rights of children with impairments to attend their local school?
- j) When a child who has had difficulties at another school joins the school do staff avoid suggesting that membership of the school is only provisional?
- k) Does the school discharge its legal duty to ensure that children in public care are given first priority to attend the school?
- l) Does the school make known its interest in welcoming 'looked-after children' to the school?

m) Does the school comply with the law requiring them not to hold interviews or use information from conversations with parents, siblings or comments from anyone who knows a prospective entrant?

n) Does the school avoid asking for donations from families before a child can join the school?

o) Where the faith status of a school creates a balance of ethnicities unrepresentative of the surrounding communities does the school make strong relationships and work with other schools in the area?

p) Where a school has an attachment to a particular faith does proximity to the school take precedence for admission over the religious attachment of a child's family?

q) Do schools with an allegiance to a particular faith avoid restrictions on the appointment of staff of a particular faith group?

r) Does a school with a faith attachment minimise religious division, for example, by not favouring a particular branch of Christianity or Islam? s) Is there an increase in the proportion of children from the locality included within the school?

t) Is there an increase in the diversity of children from the locality included in the school?

u) _____

v) _____



Discussing evidences

Because people may have reasons for minimising or exaggerating problems, the group need to challenge each other gently to provide evidence for their views: what they have read, seen or heard to support their opinions. The group should agree on an indicator where they think the setting is performing well and another where they think there is considerable room for development. In each case they should provide the evidence to support their view, for example through the following questions:

- What is the extent of agreement on this indicator?
- What evidence is there to support the views about this indicator?
- What evidence is there that other indicators, in the same or different dimensions, reinforce this view?
- What additional information might be useful?

Identifying school priorities

How much important are the issues you identified in terms of

	Urgency	Feasibility	Impact	Total
Issue 1				
Issue 2				
Issue 3				
Issue 4				
Issue 5				

Urgency	1 = Not Important 2 = Somewhat Important 3 = Very Important 4 = Essential
Feasibility	1 = No Chance 2 = Very Little Chance 3 = Some Chance 4 = Very Good Chance
Impact they would have	1 = Very low 2 = Low 3 = Strong 4 = Very strong

An example of action sheet

Action sheet for indicator A.1.3: “Practitioners work well together”

What do we want to achieve?	What Steps ca we take?	Who will do this?	What will it cost?	When will we review this?	What are we looking for?	What happened?
To work better together (plan for September to December)	1. Have a monthly whole staff meeting	Mary to write up a list of dates.All to try to attend	1 hour extra hall hire mobthly	December	Most staff attending each meeting	Brilliant attendance, but costs increased with decisions to pay for extra hours. This had to go to management committee
	2. Plan activities in pairs	All staff to identify one activity per week and plan with a partner	Nothing	October	Stuff running activities jointly	This didn't get going properly, as no time allocated in original plan.Also, hard to make sure that it was happening, so see 6
	3. Run activities in pairs	All staff to identify one activity per week and run it with a partner	Nothing	October		
	4. Staff stay behind at end if Friday session for cofee	Jane to buy coffee and nice biscuits. Informal note kept of whether people stay	Coffee etc	October and December	Majority of staff to stay	Staff who do not work Friday missed out, so coffee sessions now on Weds as well
	5. Staff social event at Xmas	Jane to ask around and then plan event	The sky's the limit!	All the staff meeting	A brilliant night out for the majority if not all	It was very hard to find something that all could get to, but we did it
Adjustment to action sheet						
	6. Staff to plan one activity a week in pairs	All staff to let Mary know what they are doing for this and when. Mary to keep a record	1 hour O/T per person per fortnight	November	Record of each weekly planning session	After a few hiccups this got going. Chance to do proper planning helped everyone
	7. Staff to run one activity a week in pairs	All staff to log what they have done in the day book	1 hour O/T per person per fortnight	November	Log showing sessions and what happened	Paired activities were not very good at first but got better. Some pairs found it hard

INCLUSIVE ACTION SHEET

1. Our Value(s)

2. Priority (description)

3. Who will work with us to achieve it (inside/outside the school)?

4. Who is responsible?

For what?

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5. What kind of resources we need? (space, time, materials, equipment, language, money...)

6. By what date we think the objective will be achieved?

7. What are the phases... and the milestones of the project?

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8. What will help us understand that the priority has been achieved?

9. How will we communicate about the project and make visible the advancements of the process?

10. What will we do to celebrate milestones? And the final achievement of the priority?

Caring for communication

A local authority obtained funding for school teachers' training on the Index. Towards the end of the first session in one setting, the practitioners went through the Index questionnaire and then selected an indicator from each dimension where they felt that the setting should do further work.

In relation to Dimension C, several of them had to highlight a concern about the extent to which they were encouraging the children to talk with each other and adults picked out indicator C.1.2 'Activities encourage all children to communicate'. When they looked in detail at the questions associated with the indicator, they felt that there was much to build on in their practice but there were areas in which they could do more. They talked about when it was that children sat and chatted with them and each other during the daily routine (C.1.2g) and also had conversations about what open ended questions were (C.1.2j) and what it meant to encourage the development of language for thinking and learning (C.1.2h).

While all of them were concerned to give the children space to play and learn and relate to others without too much adult interference, there was productive discussion about how adults could foster, and remove barriers to, learning and relationships as well as engage in activities with children which extended their ideas and helped them to consider their own and other people's feelings.

Before the next session they did some observations of a day in the setting. They found, that although there was a lot of talk in the playgroup most of the adult talk involved giving directions. They found that some of the children talked to each other while others said very little. At the next session of the course they drew up an action sheet on ways to extend and deepen opportunities for discussion in the setting.

- They decided that they needed some further discussion in encouraging language use and booked a session with the local authority advisers on 'promoting the language and communication environment'.
- They decided to rearrange snack time as they felt that this could provide a good opportunity for relaxed talk. They decided to sit children in smaller groups together with their key worker.

- The group agreed to reflect on the quality of the conversations they had with children as they joined in activities and to share with each other at their weekly meeting how to let children lead communication with adults more frequently.
- They agreed to share occasions when they had stimulated conversations with other children, for children who were shy or reluctant to speak with others.
- They decided use the time they spent with parents to raise the issue of what children liked to talk about at home to try to bridge the gap between home and setting.

At the following session of the course they reported on how things were going. They found that for some of them it was difficult to get out of the habit of asking questions to which they already knew the answer. They discussed how they could connect their working practices with how they were at home with their own children or other children they knew well and how 'professional' conversation could impede the talk of children. They spoke about how they were identifying more strongly with the way parents viewed their own children and were finding ways to link activities in the setting to what happened at home through an exploration of indicator A.1.6, 'Practitioners link what happens in the setting to children's lives at home', which they had selected as their indicator from Dimension A. They mentioned examples of when they asked questions of children to which they genuinely wanted an answer and how their engagement in activities with children, as participants, generated more informal talk.

At subsequent sessions, as they began to work in implementing concerns in the other dimensions, they reported that children were more often coming to staff to tell them about their ideas during play and to show them the way they were making a model or building something. Staff were more frequently invited to become part of role play and children spoke more about what had happened at home. As one practitioner put it: 'We feel that we know the children better.' After the extra session on language, a practitioner said: 'We found it useful but we were already doing most of the things suggested in the course, following our work with the Index and the way we are taking more opportunities to share our ideas.'



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RESCUE

**Strategic Partnerships for School Education Cooperation for
innovation and the exchange of good practices**
Reading Early School leaving signals - RESCUE

Developing learning and participation in challenging schools through the Index for Inclusion

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RESCUE
READING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING SIGNALS

II. 3. Developing learning and participation in challenging schools through the Index for inclusion

IO4 - School based prevention mechanism

A shared enterprise

Inclusion is a shared enterprise.

When we plan for implementing school based prevention mechanism, we see the promotion of learning and participation as the most important measure to ensure educational success and prevent early school leaving.

This involves us all in reflecting on, and reducing, the barriers that have been created to prevent school success of students.

The Index for inclusion

The *Index for inclusion* is a resource to support the inclusive development of schools, especially those working in a challenging environment where ESL is a widespread issue.

The *Index* can help everyone in these settings to find their own next steps to increase the participation and learning of all children.

The materials are designed to challenge and help any setting to become more inclusive, however “inclusive” it is thought to be currently.



Not a make-up, nor a SEN tool

Inclusion is an approach to tackle ESL and improve educational access, attendance, and success for all pupils.

The Index is not an addition to the many activities that take place in school settings, but a way of carrying them out according to inclusive values.

Inclusion is often associated with children and young people who have impairments or are seen as having 'special educational needs'. However, in the Index, inclusion is concerned with increasing the participation and learning of all children as well as all the adults involved in a setting.

It involves a detailed look at how to reduce the barriers to learning and participation of any child. It is about helping settings to become more responsive to the diversity of children and young people in their communities.



A number of concerns

We feel that the emphasis in education on the results of tests in National Language, Maths and Science is sometimes at the expense of an effort to build supportive communities for children and staff within schools.

We see that competition between schools could undermine their attempts to tackle ESL by strengthening relationships with local communities.

We are concerned that a concentration on a narrow range of outcomes of education could deflect attention from the conditions in which teaching and learning flourish.

A supportive process

The Index is a practical document, which shows what inclusion can mean for all aspects of settings related to enrolment, attendance, and success of students.

It provides a supportive process of self-review and development, which builds on the knowledge and views of practitioners, children and young people and parents/carers, other members of the surrounding communities as well as those who manage or advise those working in the setting.

This supportive approach to improving a setting offers an alternative to one based on inspection, competition and fear of failure.

Working for lasting improvements

The Index fosters the development of school attendance by encouraging the best use of available resources, minimising barriers in the setting itself and building a culture of collaboration.

It supports the active involvement of children and young people in their own participation and learning, building on the experience and knowledge they bring with them from home.

In developing the cultures of settings, and helping to clarify the purpose of activities, the Index can contribute to lasting improvements.

Using the Index to develop school settings

The Index for inclusion is a set of materials to support the self-review of all aspects of a school, including activities aimed to promote students attendance and adults engagement. It encourages all staff, parents/carers and children to contribute to an inclusive development plan and put it into practice.

Inclusion is about increasing participation for all children and adults. It is about supporting schools to become more responsive to the diversity of children's needs and potentials, in terms of backgrounds, interests, experience, knowledge and skills.

IO5 - Training curricula for improved cooperation between teachers

Training curricula to prevent ESL: an overview of the Index



The elements of the Index

The Index has 5 main elements:

1. **Key concepts:** to support thinking and discussion about tackling ESL through inclusive development.
2. **Planning framework:** to structure the approach to review and development.
3. **Collecting evidences:** to enable a detailed review of all aspects of a setting and help to identify and implement priorities for change.
4. **An inclusive process:** to ensure that the processes of review, planning and implementing change are themselves inclusive.
5. **Documenting and networking:** to consolidate, communicate and review the process by expanding the inclusive network.

Key concepts: Inclusion

Everyone has his or her own view of what inclusion means.

We think of it as a principled approach to action in education and society. It encompasses such commitments as the idea that every life and every death are of equal value. However, the materials of the Index tie down the meaning of such broad principles to everyday actions and provide a progressively more detailed and practical view.

Many people find that their notion of inclusion becomes clearer as they engage with these materials.



Key concepts: Exclusion

Developing inclusion involves reducing all forms of exclusion. In the Index, exclusion, just like inclusion, is considered in a broad way. Besides referring to more obvious discrimination, exclusion refers to all those temporary or longer lasting pressures that get in the way of full participation.

Many of ESL triggers are connected to the effects of wider societal factors outside the education system. However, certain features of our education and training systems may especially exacerbate educational disadvantage, create additional barriers for learners who are struggling and hinder their educational pathways.

Inclusion is about minimising all barriers to learning and participation for all children.



Key concepts: Early school leaving

The skills and competences gained in school are seen as the minimum credentials for successful labour market entry and as the foundation for further learning and training opportunities. These skills and competencies help prepare children for life, developing the potential in every person so that they become fulfilled and active citizens.

It is well documented that early leaving from education and training leads to reduced employment opportunities and increased likelihood of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. About 60% of early school leavers are either unemployed or inactive and face long-term social and economic disadvantage.

Key concepts: Diversity

Inclusion involves a deep recognition of both the differences and similarities between all children and young people.

The development of inclusive settings builds on differences in ways that value everyone equally. For example, it involves taking care to avoid placing a higher value on some children because of their progress in physical development or attainment.

Recognizing that children differ from each other does not mean that they should all be engaged in individual tasks, but that we understand the diverse ways in which they respond to shared experiences.

Key concepts: Whole person, whole school

To include any child we have to be concerned with the whole person. This can be neglected when inclusion is focused on only one aspect of a child, such as an impairment, or a need to learn the national language as an additional language. The particular pressures experienced by children may be entirely unrelated to the way we categorise them and we may only find these out as we interact with them and get to know them over time.

Policies to reduce early school leaving should be embedded in an overall inclusive learner-centred vision of education, based on a “whole-school approach”, in which high quality education is accessible to all.

Key concepts: Differences

When we focus on children whose learning or participation is of concern to us, we need to recognise that the work done in identifying and reducing the difficulties of one child may benefit many other children who were not a particular focus of concern. This is one way in which differences between children in interests, knowledge, skills, background, home language, attainments or impairment can be resources to support school access and retention.

Key concepts: Community

Inclusion is about building communities that encourage and celebrate their achievements. But inclusion is also about building community more widely. Settings can work with other agencies and with surrounding communities to improve educational opportunities and social conditions within their localities, so reducing the ESL risk.



Drawing together all principled approaches

There are other attempts to promote educational development in schools which reflect similar values to the Index and overlap with its content and approach. The Index helps to draw these together into a singular approach to development; a single tree from many roots. It reduces policy fragmentation and initiative overload.

Work within schools using these other labels widens the communities of people concerned with implementing inclusive values. It does not matter if inclusion or some other word is chosen to integrate these activities. But they need to be linked together and alliances made between their proponents.



Key concepts: Alliances

There are other attempts to promote educational development and school attendance, which reflect similar values to the Index and overlap with its content and approach. The Index helps to draw these together, reduce policy fragmentation and initiative overload.

'Development', 'improvement', 'quality', 'good practice' belong to a family of concepts whose use implies underlying values, yet these are rarely made explicit. People view good practice or development in very different ways.

For us educational development is change in accordance with inclusive values.



Education development/ school improvement
 Democratic education
 Comprehensive community education
 Values based education
 Rights based education
 Critical pedagogy
 Experience based learning
 Cooperative learning
 Health promoting schools
 Citizenship/Global Citizenship Education
 Education for Sustainability
 Equalities education
 Anti-discrimination /anti- bias education
 Community Cohesion
 Learning without ability labelling
 Peace/non-violent education
 Dialogic Education
 Education for All
 Child -friendly/girl-friendly schools
 Responsive education

Key concepts: Barriers to learning and participation

We see school attendance as being impeded when children or practitioners encounter barriers to learning and participation.

These can occur in any aspect of the setting, such as its physical arrangement, its organisation, the relationships between children and adults, and the nature of activities. Such barriers inevitably extend beyond the setting and may be found within communities and in local and national policies.

Children encounter difficulties, then, when they experience barriers to learning and participation which can prevent access to a setting or limit participation within it. The notion of these barriers can be used to direct attention at what needs to be done to improve the experience of any child as well as adults in the setting.

Questions to address barriers and resources

1. What are the barriers to school attendance, learning, and participation?
2. Who experiences barriers to school attendance, learning, and participation?
3. How can barriers to school attendance, learning, and participation be minimised?
4. What resources are used to support school attendance, learning, and participation?
5. What additional resources can be brought into action to support school attendance, learning, and participation?

Key concepts: Special educational needs

By using the notion of 'barriers to learning and participation' to discuss difficulties in education and care and how they can be resolved we avoid using the language of 'special educational needs'.

The idea that the difficulties children experience can be resolved by identifying some of them as 'having special educational needs' has considerable limitations.

It confers a label that can lead to lowered expectations. It deflects attention from the difficulties experienced by other children without the label, and from sources of difficulty that may occur in relationships, cultures, the nature of activities and resources, the way practitioners support learning and participation, and the policies and organisation of settings.

Key concepts: Disability

Disabilities are barriers to participation for people with impairments or chronic illness.

Disabilities may be created in the environment or by the interaction of discriminatory attitudes, actions, cultures, policies and institutional practices with impairments, pain, or chronic illness.

Impairment can be defined as a long-term 'limitation of physical, intellectual or sensory function', though the notion of an intellectual impairment is

problematic and may suggest an unwarranted physical basis to difficulties experienced in learning.

While there is little that settings can do to overcome impairments, they can considerably reduce the disabilities produced by discriminatory attitudes and actions, and institutional barriers.

Key concepts: Institutional discrimination

Barriers that arise in the way institutions are structured or run are sometimes described as ‘institutional discrimination’.

It includes the ways institutions may disadvantage people because of their age, gender, disability, class, ethnicity, or sexual orientation as well as their educational history and qualifications. It creates barriers to access and participation, and in education may impede learning.

Racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ageism and disablism share a common root in intolerance to difference and the way power is abused to create and perpetuate inequalities. The development of inclusion may involve people in a painful process of challenging their own discriminatory practices, attitudes and institutional cultures.

Key concepts: Resources to support learning and participation



The minimising of barriers to school access, retention and success involves mobilising resources within the setting and its communities.

There are always more resources to support learning and participation than are currently used.

Resources are not just about money.

Like barriers they can be found in any aspect of a setting: in practitioners, management committee/ governors, children, parents/ carers, communities, and through changes in cultures, policies and practices.

Practitioners may have skills that they have not revealed or are not fully used and there may be community members who share a background or an impairment with a child who can help to make them feel at home.

The resources in children, in their capacity to direct their own learning and participation to support each other, may be particularly underutilised, as may the potential for practitioners to support each other's development.

Key concepts: Support for diversity

When difficulties are thought to arise from the 'special educational needs' of children and young people it can seem natural to think of support as about providing additional people to work with particular individuals. We see support far more broadly as all activities which increase the capacity of a setting to respond to diversity.

Providing support to individuals is only one way to increase the participation of children. Support is also provided when practitioners plan activities with all children in mind, recognising their different starting points, experiences, interests and learning styles, or when children help each other.

When activities are planned to support the participation of all children, the need for individual support is reduced. Equally, the experience of supporting an individual may lead to an increase in active, independent learning for that child and provide ideas for improving learning for a wider group of children.

What is support?

- What activities count as support for access, participation, and learning?
- What are the implications of the definition of support for the work of practitioners?
- What are the implications of this view for professional development?
- What are the implications of this definition of support for how support is co-ordinated?

Key concepts: Empowerment

In settings that have a number of practitioners and many children, major responsibility for the co-ordination of support may rest with one person. In such circumstances, those taking on this role should link support for individuals with activities to empower the knowledge and skills of practitioners, so that they can better engage all children and young people in school attendance and activities.

This shift of view of support is very important. An approach to support that continues to attach assistants to individuals, without an aim to reduce such reliance, remains common. It can create a major barrier to the participation of those individuals and may block the development of a shared responsibility towards all children reflected in the way practitioners collaborate and activities are planned and encouraged.



Key concepts: Change

Inclusion may involve profound changes in what goes on in the activities and relationships of the setting and in relationships with parents/carers.

Inclusion involves change. It is an unending process of increasing participation and learning for all, an ideal or aspiration that is never fully reached. There is no fully inclusive setting. Excluding pressures are widespread, persistent and may take new forms.

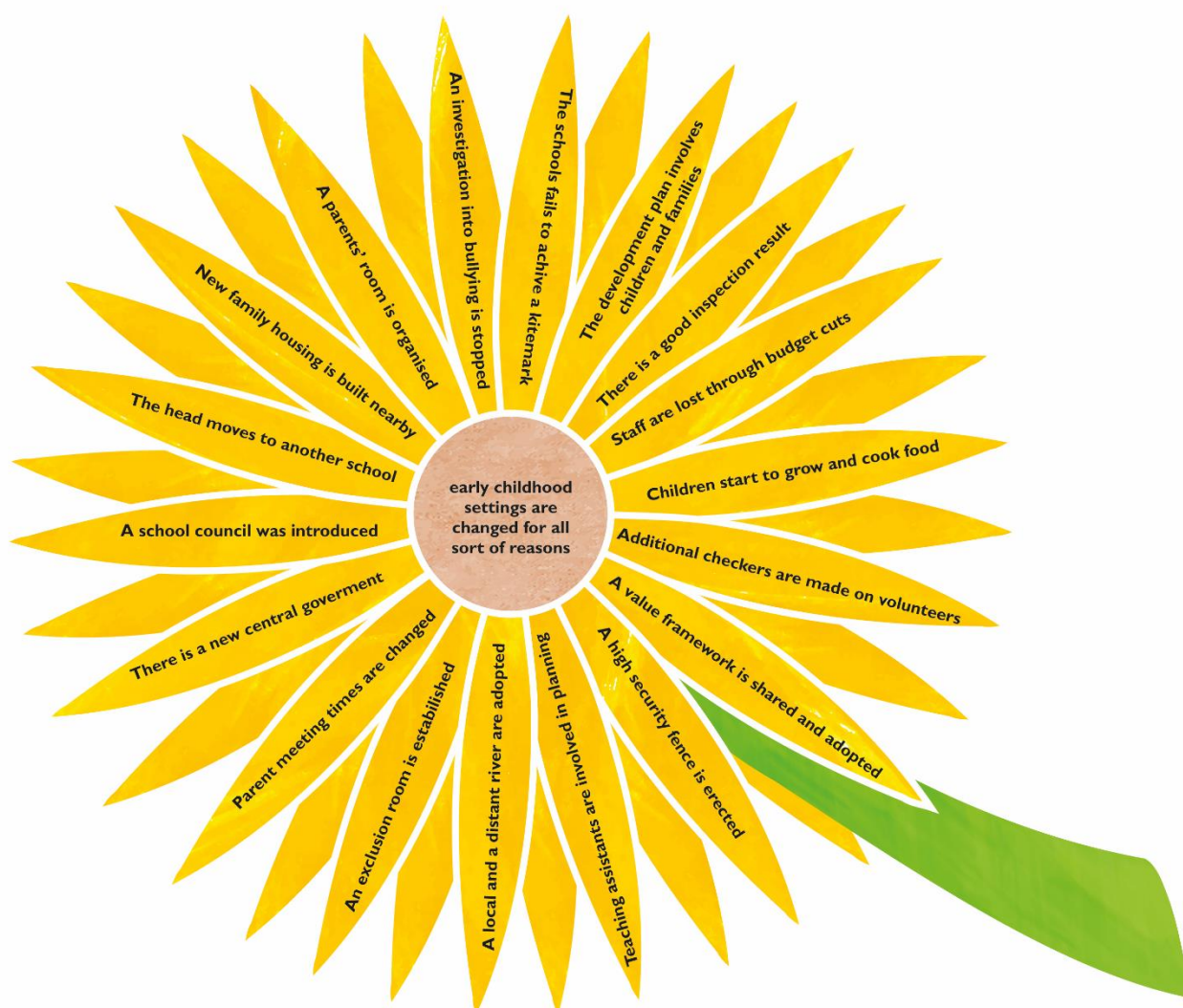
But inclusion happens as soon as the process of increasing participation is started. An inclusive setting is always on the move.

How are schools changed?

Schools are always changing, in all sorts of ways for all sorts of reasons. Only some of these changes happen as a result of a school development plan.

Changes may not be consistent with each other or with the development of inclusion.

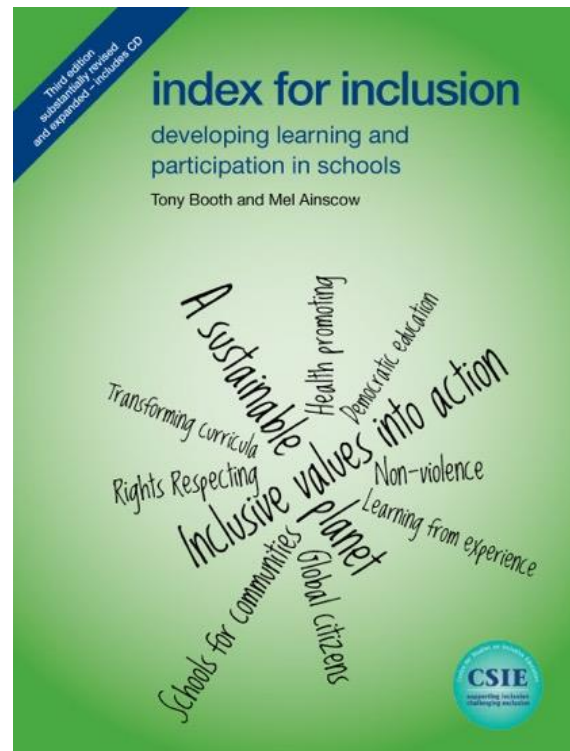
- Do all the changes you make to the school pull in the same direction?
- Do all changes support inclusion?



How do you work with the Index?

Inclusive development happens when adults and children connect their actions to inclusive values and draw compatible initiatives together. This implies a commitment to making a formal school development plan which reflects inclusive values.

The Index can be integrated into this planning process by structuring a detailed analysis of the school and its relationship to its communities and environment, involving staff, governors, parents/carers and children. Such a process itself contributes to the inclusive development of the school. It builds on what is already known and encourages further investigation. It draws on concepts of barriers to participation and learning, resources to support participation and learning and support for diversity.

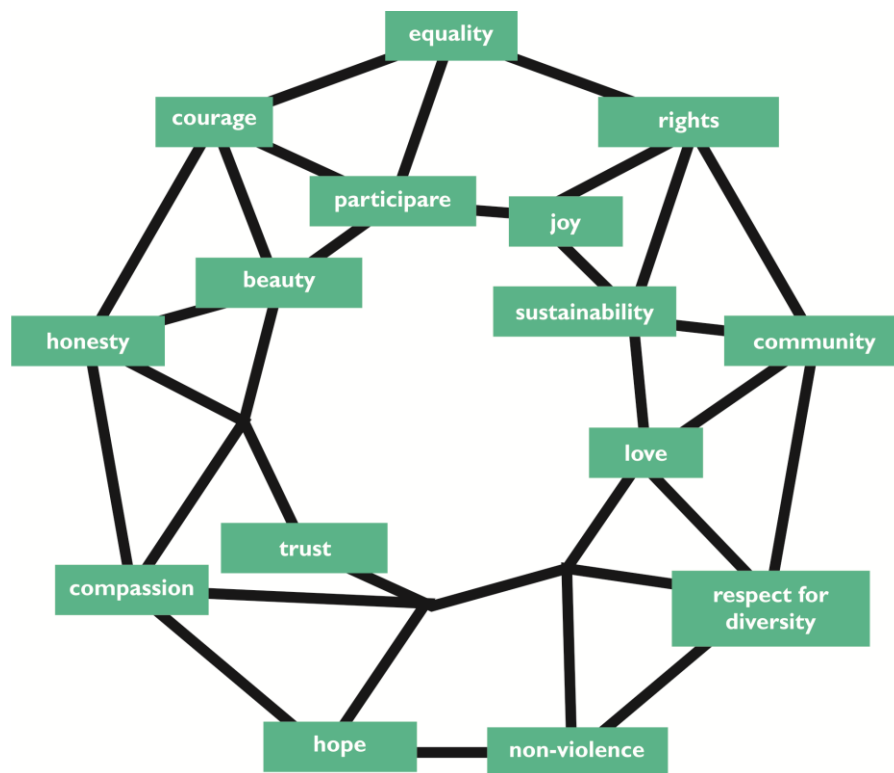


Key concepts: Values

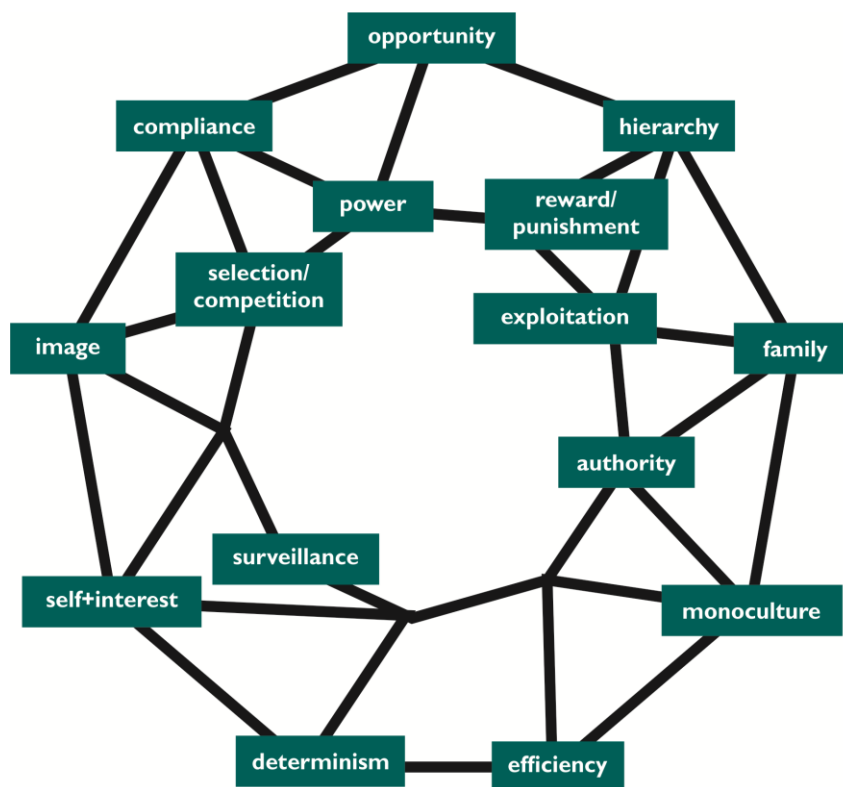


Above all, inclusion involves thinking about the beliefs and values that we bring to our work and actions, and then relating what we do to inclusive values. We see such values as to do with equity or fairness, honesty and integrity, the importance of participation, building communities and the right to good local provision, compassion, respect for difference, a concern with creating a sustainable future for our children and young people and the encouragement of joyful engagement in learning and relationships.

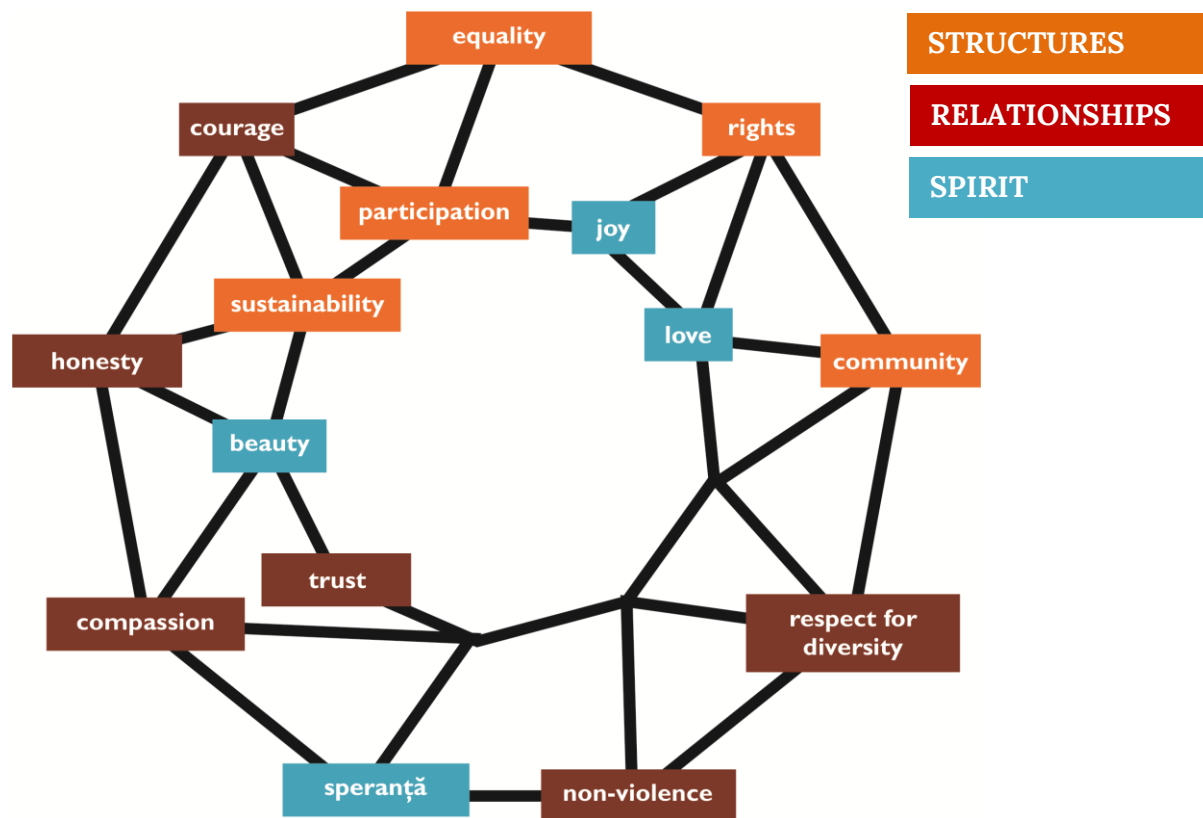
How should we live together?



A framework of excluding values



A framework of inclusive values



Does our school develop shared inclusive values?

- Do staff, governors, parents/carers and children give time to talking about values, their implications for action, the nature of their own values and how they differ between people?
- Are values understood as revealed through actions rather than words?
- Is everyone in the school committed to the equality of value of all people and to the participation of all?
- Do adults and children explore the values behind their ways of working and acting in the school?
- Do adults and children avoid assuming that everyone in a community shares the same values?
- Is it understood that it involves practice and trust to honestly express the values that inform one's own actions?
- Is it understood that agreement about values is usually partial, since differences of view, for example about participation and equality, may be revealed as conversations deepen?

- h) Do staff, children, parents/carers and governors broadly agree upon a framework of values that can be drawn on in shaping actions within the school?
- i) Is an agreed framework of values used to resist pressures from outside the school to act according to different values?
- j) Do staff review their practices in the light of their agreed values and propose changes where practices are informed by values that they reject?
- k) Is it understood that applying shared values may involve steering between competing interests, for example, when one child's participation interferes with that of another?
- l) Do adults and children draw attention to actions inside and outside the school that are inconsistent with an agreed framework of values?
- m) Are changes in the school made in accordance with an agreed framework of values?
- n) Do discussions go beyond headings for values to the complexity of their meanings?
- o) Do staff and children link any summary statement of school values to more detailed understandings?
- p) Are the limitations of ideas of national, global or Western values explored?
- q) Does the school publicise its values and encourage others to engage with staff and children on the basis of the values agreed within the school?
- r) Does an agreed framework of values apply equally to adults and children?
- s) Is it recognised that we all have to work hard to act in accordance with our values?
- t) Is it understood that a strong framework of values may be held by people with no religion as well as a variety of religions?
- u) Is it understood that having a religion or a particular political position does not ensure inclusive values?
- v) Do people connect the ways they act outside school with the way they act inside it?
- w) Is it understood that the implications of some values, such as caring equally for all and encouraging hope in the future, are aspects of the professional duties of staff?

What is inclusive development?

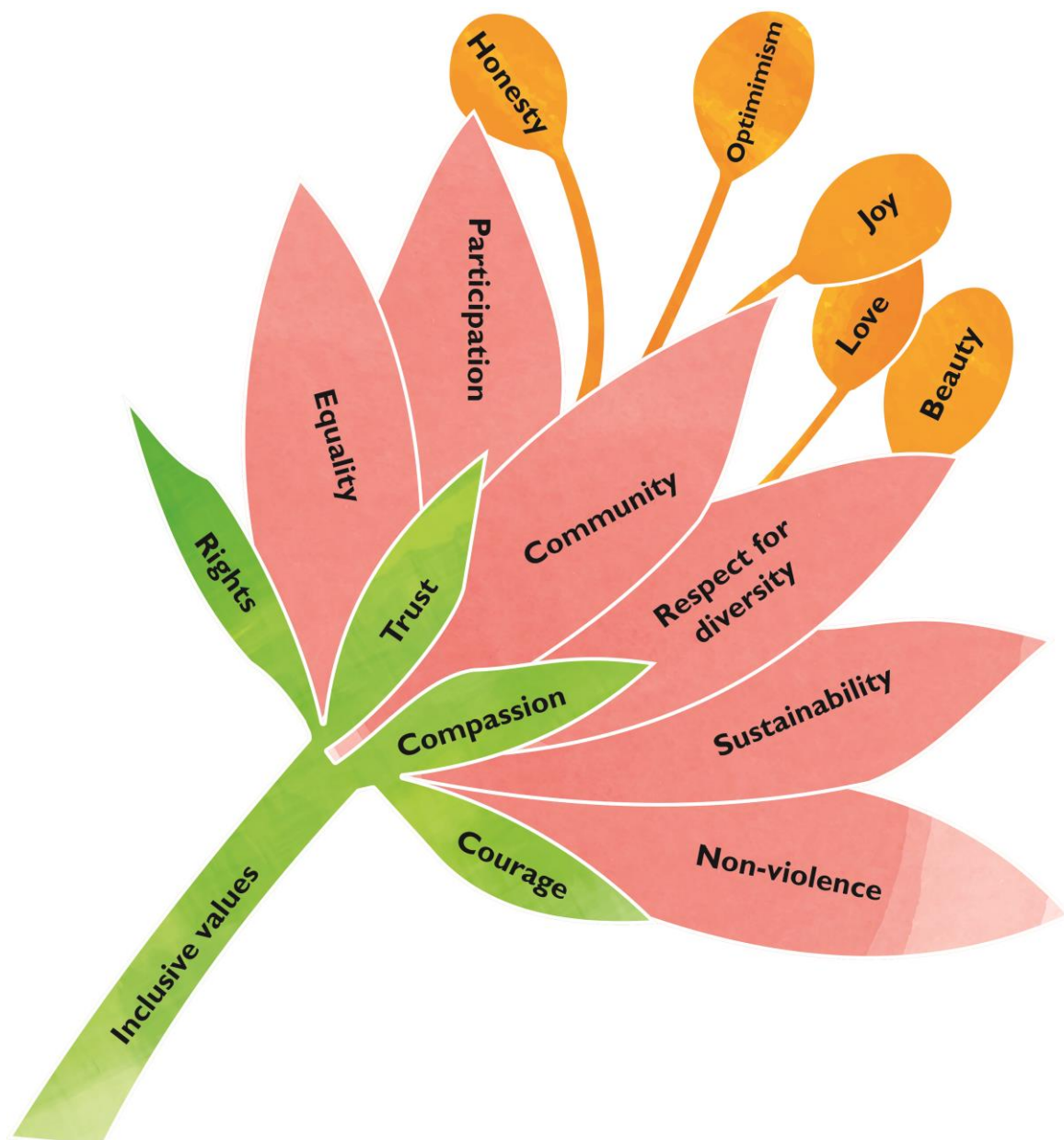
Change in schools becomes inclusive development when it is based on inclusive values.

Doing the right thing involves *relating actions to values*.

Relating your actions to your values can be the most practical step you take in developing your school.

Participation implies learning, playing or working in collaboration with others. It involves *making choices about, and having a say in, what we do*.

More deeply it is about being recognised and accepted for ourselves.



Establishing a planning group

This first phase of the Index starts by bringing together *a group of people* who will lead the analysis process.

Group members raise awareness of the Index within the setting, inform themselves about the materials and use them to carry out inquiry about the setting and coordinate planning in collaboration with practitioners, management committee/governors, parents/carers and children.

It is important that the group reflects the ethnic and social composition of the setting and may also include representatives of parents/carers, the local community and the management committee/governors.

Including a critical friend

It is helpful to include a 'critical friend' into the planning group. This should be *someone from outside the setting who knows it reasonably well*, is supportive but challenging, and is committed to seeing the process through to completion. He or she needs to have the



confidence of the group and others in the setting, and to respect the sensitive nature of some of the discussions in which he/she will be involved. It might be someone who is already familiar with the Index, who can help with detailed investigations and the gathering and analysis of views of practitioners, management committee/governors, parents/carers and children.

A critical friend can help to make sure that practitioners do not avoid important issues on which they disagree. More generally, all members will need to gently challenge each other to produce evidence for their opinions. Critical friendship can become a model for professional relationships.

IO6 - Training curricula and instruments for identification of ESL signs

The Planning Cycle



Inclusive development through the reflection and action of collaborating adults and children



Get started

1. Get started – starting anywhere is much better than not starting at all.
2. Keep a separate Index note-book to make brief records of your work.
3. If you work in school find colleagues who, like you, wish to engage in developing education inclusively. If you are a parent/carer or a young person, find others with like minds to work with you.
4. Try to involve a senior member of staff in planning work with the Index.
5. Select questions to share with others that you think could prompt the removal of barriers to access, participation and learning in your school. Think how previously overlooked resources can be mobilised. Consider how staff, children, families can contribute their knowledge and experience to identify and overcome barriers.
6. Aim to change something small that is within your power.
7. Make a list of initiatives in the school. How can the Index bring these together?
8. Consider the framework of values in Part 2 of the Index. What might you want to change so that your actions more closely reflect your values?
9. Look at something that you and/or others are trying to do already as a school, perhaps in the school development plan, but you are not sure how successful its implementation will be. Explore the extent to which the Index might modify what you are trying to do and help you with it.
10. If you plan to use the materials to engage in whole school development, you might contact someone with experience of working with the Index to support you.

Index dimensions

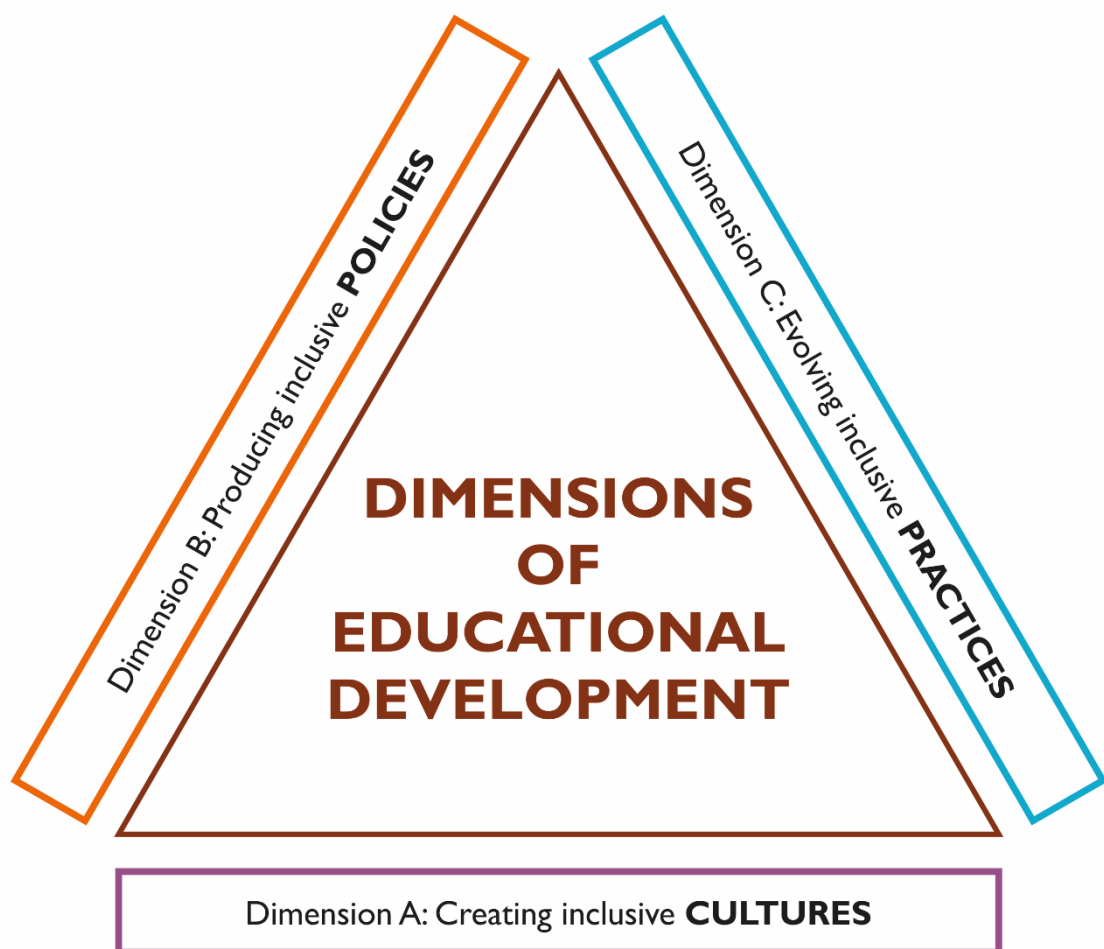
The analysis is considered along three dimensions: cultures, policies, and practices.

Policies are concerned with how the school is run and plans to change it.

Practices are about what is learnt and taught and how it is learnt and taught.

Cultures reflect relationships and deeply held values and beliefs.

Changing cultures is essential in order to sustain development.

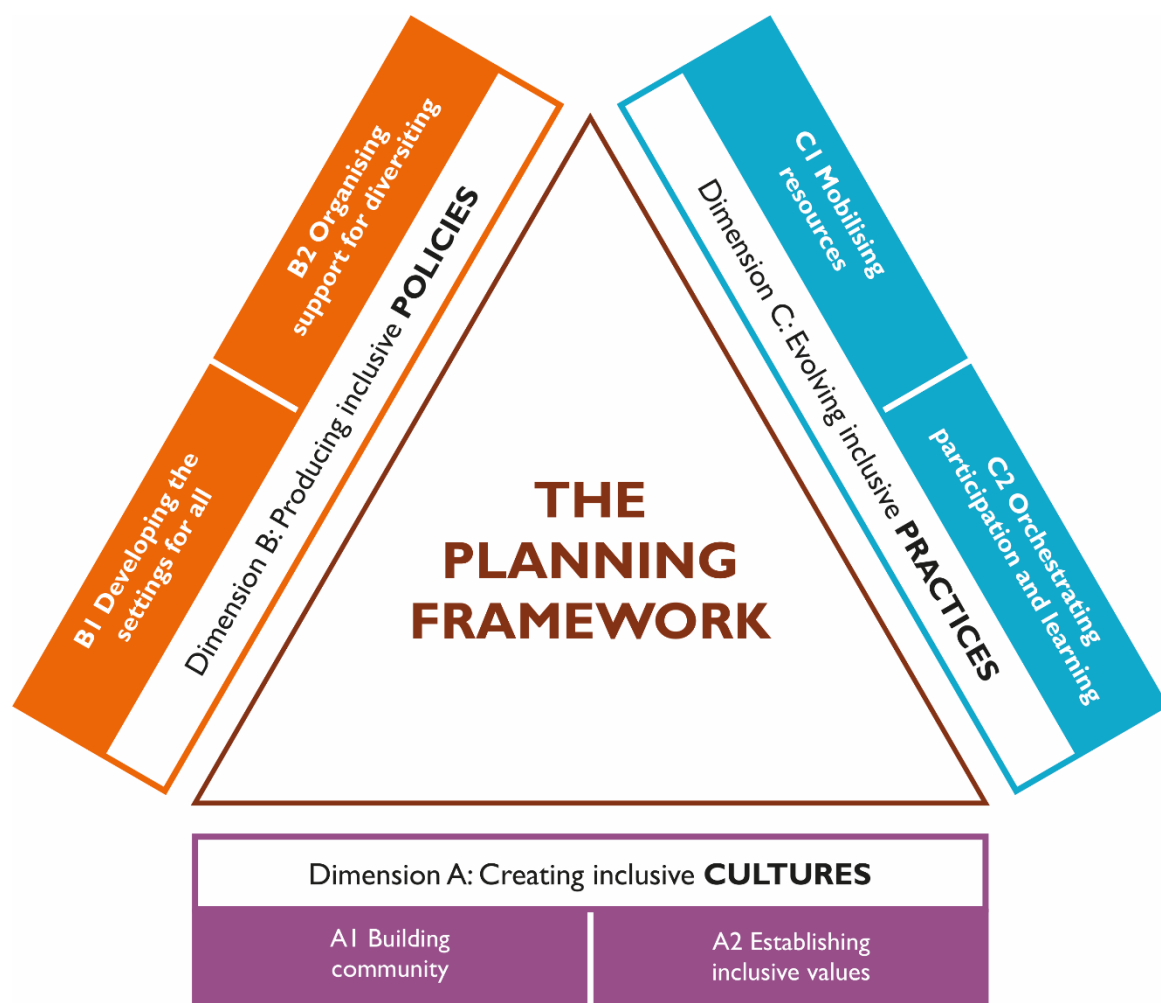


Index sections

Each dimension is divided into 2 sections.

Dimensions and sections can form a planning framework.

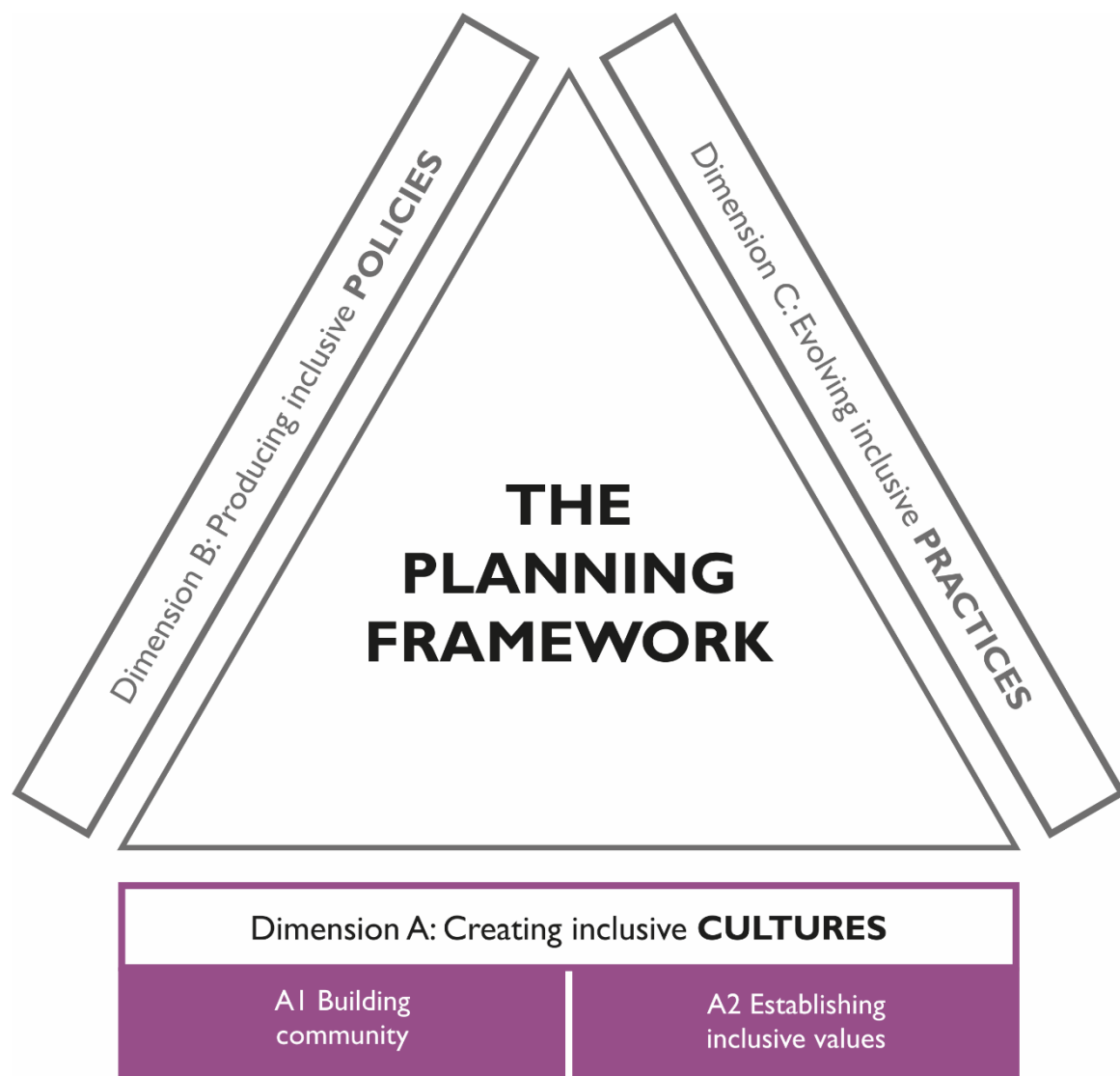
Planning entries in each section helps to ensure that actions support each other.



Cultures

Dimension A: Creating inclusive cultures

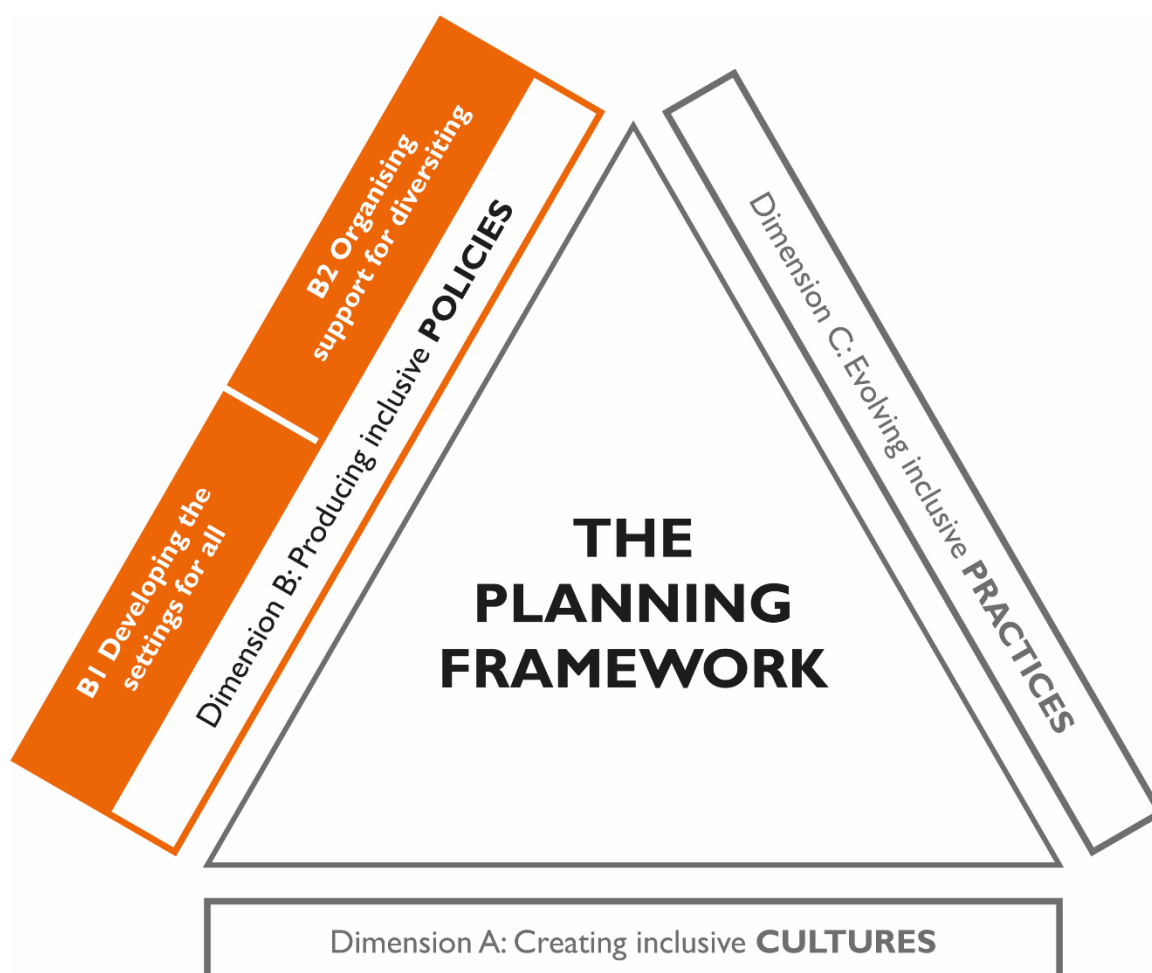
This dimension is about creating secure, accepting, collaborating, stimulating, welcoming communities, in which everyone is valued. Shared inclusive values are developed and conveyed to all staff, children and their families, governors, surrounding communities and all others who work in and with the school. The values of inclusive cultures guide decisions about policies and moment-to-moment practice, so that development is coherent and continuous. The embedding of change within school cultures ensures that it is integrated into the identities of adults and children and is passed on to new arrivals to the school.



Policies

Dimension B: Producing inclusive policies

This dimension ensures that inclusion permeates all plans for the school and involves everyone. Policies encourage the participation of children and staff from the moment they join the school. They encourage the school to reach out to all children in the locality and minimise exclusionary pressures. Support policies involve all activities which increase the capacity of a setting to respond to the diversity of those involved in it, in ways that value everyone equally. All forms of support are connected within a single framework aimed at ensuring everyone's participation and the development of the school as a whole.

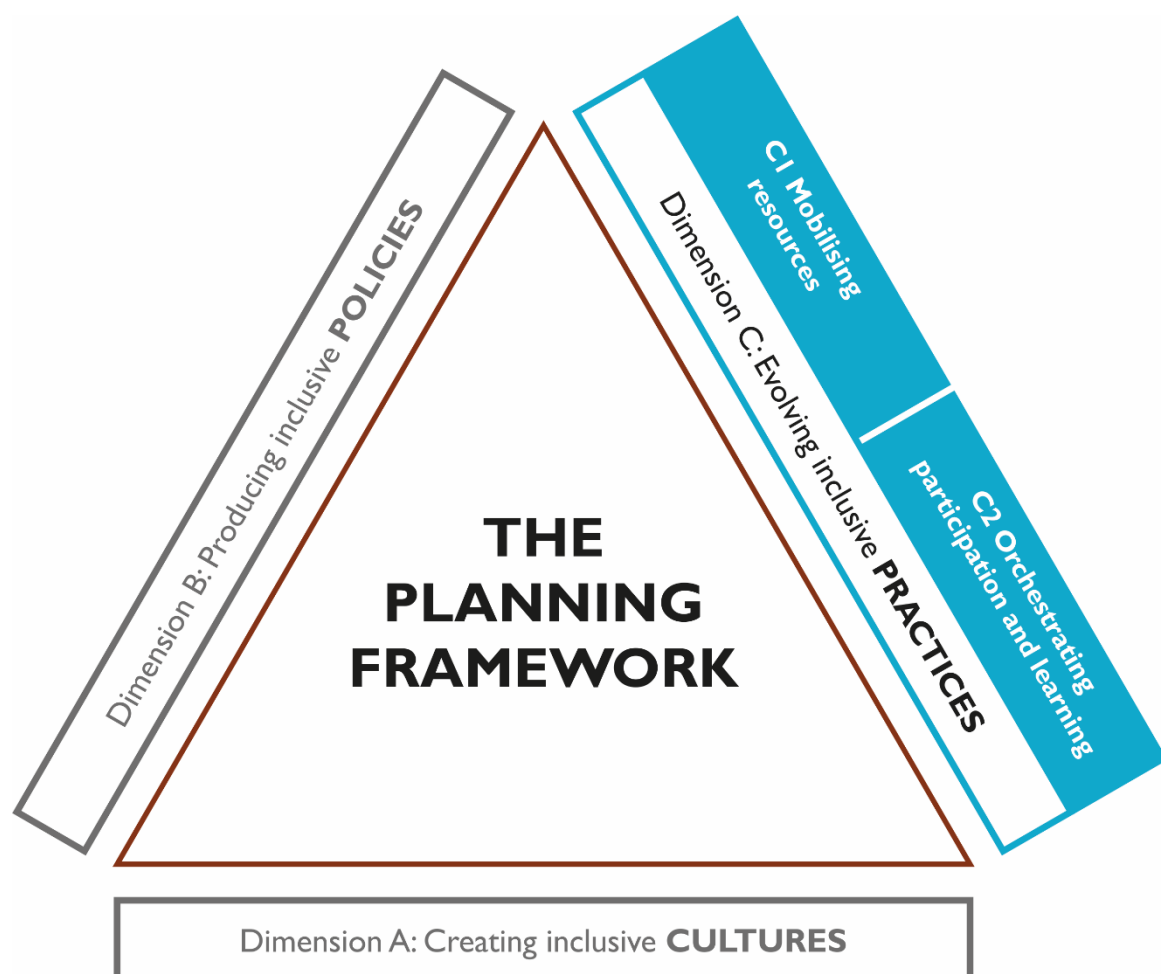


Practices

Dimension C: Evolving inclusive practices

This dimension is about developing what is taught and learnt, and how it is taught and learnt, so that it reflects inclusive values and policies.

This ensures that school activities are orchestrated so that learning is made responsive to the diversity of young people within the educational setting. Children are encouraged to be active, reflective, critical learners and are viewed as a resource for each other's learning. Adults work together so that they all take responsibility for the learning of all children.



Deepening into dimensions



Preparing a questionnaire (1)

Questionnaires can be used to stimulate dialogue and initial expressions of the priorities for development from children, parents/carers, governors and staff. The first is based on the indicators and is for anyone involved in the school. The others are for parents and children. schools may wish to shorten them further or otherwise adapt them for their own purposes.

At the end of the questionnaire there is space to write up to five priorities for development. The questionnaire focuses attention on aspects of the setting so that priorities can be identified for further investigation.

If questionnaires are used in the Index process it may be important to remember that it is the priorities they help to identify rather than the results of the whole questionnaire that should be collated. The detailed analysis of questionnaires, and the compiling of graphs, bar charts and tables, can be unacceptably time consuming and can delay the start of development work.



Preparing a questionnaire (2)

Many people tend to play down difficulties and there is also a tendency for people generally to agree with statements in questionnaires. This may result in a view of the setting as more inclusive than it is.

Questionnaires can be useful in gathering information, but may contribute most when used with a group to prompt dialogue.

Questionnaires can be answered individually and then the responses compared with those of others in the group so that differences can be discussed. Children may need help in responding to statements on a questionnaire. With young children, it may be best to read each question and offer help to those who have difficulty with the language or instructions or in writing their priorities at the end of the questionnaires.

Questionnaires can be adapted to a particular age group and to reflect the recent history and shared knowledge of the school.

QUESTIONNAIRE 1: INDICATORS

Please tick the boxes for the the groups below which describe your involvement

☐ teacher ☐ teaching assistant ☐ other member of staff ☐ parent
☐ child or young person ☐ governor ☐ other (please specify) _____

Please tick the box that best reflects you

Dimension A – Creating inclusive cultures
1 Everyone is welcomed.
2 Staff co-operate.
3 Children help each other.
4 Staff and children respect one another.
5 Staff and parents/carers collaborate.
6 Staff and governors work well together.
7 The school is a model of democratic citizenship.
8 The school encourages an understanding of the interconnections between people around the world.
9 Adults and children are responsive to a variety of ways of being a good person.
10 The school and local communities develop each other.
11 Staff link what happens in school to children's lives at home.
12 The school develops shared inclusive values.
13 The school encourages respect for all human rights.
14 The school encourages respect for the integrity of planet earth.
15 Inclusion is viewed as increasing participation for all.
16 Expectations are high for all children.
17 Children are valued equally.
18 The school counters all forms of discrimination.
19 The school promotes non-violent interactions and resolutions to conflict.
20 The school encourages children and adults to feel good about themselves.
21 The school contributes to the health of children and adults.
22 The school contributes to the reduction of waste.

Dimension B – Producing inclusive policies

1 The school has a participatory development process.
2 The school has an inclusive approach to leadership.
3 Appointments and promotions are fair.
4 Staff expertise is known and used.
5 All new staff are helped to settle into the school.
6 The school seeks to admit all children from its locality.
7 All new children are helped to settle into the school.
8 Teaching and learning groups are arranged fairly to support all.
9 Children are well prepared for moving on to other settings.
10 The school makes its buildings physically accessible to all people.
11 The buildings and grounds are developed to support participation.
12 The school reduces its carbon footprint and use of water.
13 The school contributes to the reduction of waste.

QUESTIONNAIRE 2: MY CHILD'S SCHOOL

Please tick the box that best reflects your opinion

1 My child usually looks forward to coming to school.
2 My child has good friends at the school.
3 I feel part of the school community.
4 The school keeps me well informed about what is going on.
5 I have been asked to make a contribution to the school.
6 I think this is the best school in the area.
7 The school and the playground are attractive.
8 The toilets are clean and safe.
9 The children get on well together.
10 The teachers get on well together.
11 Adults and children get on well together.
12 The teachers and parents get on well together.
13 All families are equally important to the school.
14 I have friends among the other parents.
15 I like the teachers.
16 The teachers take an interest in what I tell them.
17 It's good to have children from different backgrounds.
18 Just by being at the school my child learns a lot.
19 My child learns what democracy means.
20 My child learns the importance of caring for others.
21 My child eats healthily at the school.
22 I have been involved in making the school a better place.
23 Any child who lives near to this school is welcome to come here.
24 When my child started at this school they were welcomed.
25 Every child is treated with respect.
26 Disabled children are accepted and respected.
27 Boys and girls get on well together.
28 Being gay or lesbian or transgender is seen as an ordinary part of life.
29 You are respected irrespective of the colour of your skin.
30 You are an equal part of the school whatever your religion or if you have no religion.
31 People do not look down on children because of what they wear.
32 You are respected for your effort not for the scores you get on tests.
33 Children avoid calling each other hurtful names.

QUESTIONNAIRE 3: MY SCHOOL

Please note that in this questionnaire when we use the word child or children we mean to include older children and young people too.

Please tick the box that best reflects your opinion

	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
1 I look forward to coming to school.			
2 I feel part of a big community.			
3 The school and the playground look attractive.			
4 The toilets are clean and safe.			
5 The children get on well together.			
6 The adults get on well together.			
7 Adults and children get on well together.			
8 I have some good friends.			
9 I like my teachers.			
10 The school helps me to feel good about myself.			
11 The school helps me to feel good about the future.			
12 We are encouraged to stand up for what we believe is right.			
13 It's good to have children from different backgrounds.			
14 Just by being at the school you learn how to get on with people.			
15 I have learnt what democracy means by being at the school.			
16 I have learnt how my actions affect others in the school.			
17 I have learnt how my actions affect others around the world.			
18 I have learnt how my values affect the way I act.			
19 I eat healthily at school.			
20 My family feel involved in what goes on at the school.			
21 When teachers say they are going to do something they do it.			
22 People admit when they have made a mistake.			
23 There is a comfortable place inside the school I can go to at lunchtimes.			
24 I have been involved in making the school a better place.			
25 Any child who lives near to this school is welcome to come here.			
26 When I first came to the school I was helped to settle in.			
27 You are respected regardless of the colour of your skin.			
28 You feel equal part of the school whatever your religion or if you have no religion.			
29 Children do not look down on others because of what they wear.			
30 Boys and girls get on well together.			
31 Being gay or lesbian is seen as an ordinary part of life.			
32 Disabled children are respected and accepted.			
33 Children avoid calling each other hurtful names.			
34 If anyone bullied me or anyone else, I would tell a teacher.			
35 Teachers do not have favourites among the children.			

Preparing meetings with practitioners

A professional development event is one way to start gathering information. It might involve more than one setting working cooperatively, and support from people who have already worked with the Index. If it is done well practitioners will feel the benefits of an inclusive experience as well as being fired up to promote inclusion.



Before the event, activities will need to be selected and adapted. Some people feel overwhelmed by the materials as they familiarise themselves with them, thinking that they are expected to change everything at once. It will need to be stressed that the purpose of the meeting is to select priorities for development, rather than to make wholesale changes at any one time. The materials need to be comprehensive so that important issues arising in any aspect of the setting can be uncovered.

Preparing meetings with parents



The planning group might consider alternative ways to the questionnaires to increase the involvement of parents into the inclusive process.

They might consider meeting parents and other community members away from the school if attendance is likely to be greater in a different setting. A variety of opportunities to

contribute may need to be arranged. In one school a parent liaison worker employed in the school, and a member of the planning group, arranged for translation of questions for those parents/ carers that were not native speakers and acted as interpreters in the discussion groups.

Collecting additional information

Additional information may be needed before priorities can be finalised. During the consultations, issues will have been identified which can be clarified by gathering further information.

For example, it might be necessary to analyse attendance records or the learning results of children of different genders and ethnic groups. The gathering of additional information may have emerged during the consultation process as one group identified questions that needed to be addressed to other groups. For example, new staff may need to be asked specifically about the success of their induction. T

he gathering of further information can be part of development work, for example, when teachers and teaching assistants observe, record and reflect on each other's practice to improve teaching and learning.



IO9 - Community based ESL prevention and intervention mechanism

ESL prevention and intervention mechanism: working with indicators (1)

A set of indicators, which represent the inclusive aspirations for your school, allow you a more detailed exploration of possibilities for inclusion.

Each indicator is connected to questions which define its meaning, refine exploration, spark off reflection and dialogue, and prompt further questions.



ESL prevention and intervention mechanism: working with indicators (2)

The indicators and questions are our contribution to answering the question: 'What do inclusive values imply for the activities of all aspects of schools?' Indicators are suggested aspirations for development. They can be used to review existing arrangements in order to set development priorities. They are headings designed to capture an important possible^[1] aim for a school committed to developing inclusively. Sometimes the importance of^[2] an issue such as ESL, ethnicity, or impairment, is reflected by being spread through the indicators as a whole, rather than being given its own indicator. Gender concerns are both given their own indicator but are also raised in many other places. The permeation of issues through the questions can limit the extent to which priorities for development can be determined by focusing on the indicators.

Working with questions

The questions define the meaning of indicators. They challenge thinking about a particular indicator and draw out existing knowledge about the school. They

- sharpen the investigation of the current situation in the school,
- provide additional ideas for development activities, and
- serve as criteria for the assessment of progress.

Often, it is when people begin to engage with the detail of the questions that they see the practical power of the Index. Some schools using the Index start from dialogues around a very few questions chosen by a group of colleagues working together. Indicators and questions can be used to initiate dialogues about values and the connection between values and actions.

Questions about school access

DIMENSION B Producing inclusive policies B.1 | *Developing the school for all*

INDICATOR B.1.6 | The school seeks to admit all children from its locality

- a) Is the wish to include all children from the locality publicised as school policy?
- b) Is the comprehensive and community nature of the school reflected in its name?
- c) Are all children from the locality encouraged to attend the school irrespective of attainment, impairment or background?
- d) Are traveler children who visit the area actively welcomed to the school?
- e) Does the school seek to overcome barriers to participation for the variety of ethnic groups in the locality?
- f) Are children of asylum seekers and refugees encouraged to attend the school?
- g) Are children of families temporarily resident in the area encouraged to join the school?

h) Are families from the locality with children currently in special schools encouraged to send these children to the school?

i) Do staff advocate for the rights of children with impairments to attend their local school?

j) When a child who has had difficulties at another school joins the school do staff avoid

suggesting that membership of the school is only provisional?

k) Does the school discharge its legal duty to ensure that children in public care are given first priority to attend the school?

l) Does the school make known its interest in welcoming 'looked-after children' to the school?

m) Does the school comply with the law requiring them not to hold interviews or use information from conversations with parents, siblings or comments from anyone who knows a prospective entrant?

n) Does the school avoid asking for donations from families before a child can join the school?

o) Where the faith status of a school creates a balance of ethnicities unrepresentative of the surrounding communities does the school make strong relationships and work with other schools in the area?

p) Where a school has an attachment to a particular faith does proximity to the school take precedence for admission over the religious attachment of a child's family?

q) Do schools with an allegiance to a particular faith avoid restrictions on the appointment of staff of a particular faith group?

r) Does a school with a faith attachment minimise religious division, for example, by not favouring a particular branch of Christianity or Islam?

s) Is there an increase in the proportion of children from the locality included within the school?

t) Is there an increase in the diversity of children from the locality included in the school?

u) _____

v) _____

Working in group

Working in group, and more generally, in school usually involves a lot of interpersonal communication and could be tense sometimes. To minimise tensions and conflict remember to:

- Assign roles and task (e.g. agenda producer, facilitator, note taker, timekeeper...) to each member of the group;
- Ensure that the group use structured materials (e.g. indicators, forms, questionnaires, diagrams...) to focus discussion on them more than on personal characteristics.



Involving local authorities

Some indicators and questions refer to matters for which schools share responsibility with local authorities, such as access to school buildings, statements of 'special educational needs' and admissions policies.

We hope that schools and local authorities will work constructively together to produce building plans, procedures for developing statements, and admissions policies, which encourage the participation in the mainstream of all students from a school's locality.

Adapting and expanding the questions

At the end of each set of questions there is an invitation to add further questions. In this way adults and children in every school may make their own version of the Index by adapting and changing existing questions and adding their own.

Schools are expected to respond in different ways and to adjust the materials to their own requirements. However, adaptation should be resisted if it is proposed because an indicator or question poses an uncomfortable challenge.

Discussing evidences

Because people may have reasons for minimising or exaggerating problems the group need to challenge each other gently to provide evidence for their views: what they have read, seen or heard to support their opinions. The group should agree on an indicator where they think the setting is performing well and another where they think there is considerable room for development. In each case they should provide the evidence to support their view.

- What is the extent of agreement on this indicator?
- What evidence is there to support the views about this indicator?
- What evidence is there that other indicators, in the same or different dimensions, reinforce this view?
- What additional information might be useful?

Choosing priorities

When your group discusses evidences, you should take into account three factors that can help you to decide about your priorities for the process of improving inclusive education in your school.

How much important are the issues you identified in terms of

- *Urgency* -- Not Important | Somewhat Important | Very Important | Essential
- *Feasibility* -- No Chance | Very Little Chance | Some Chance | Very Good Chance
- *Impact they would have* -- Very low | Low | Strong | Very strong

An example of action sheet

Action sheet for indicator A.1.3: “Practitioners work well together”

What do we want to achieve?	What Steps ca we take?	Who will do this?	What will it cost?	When will we review this?	What are we looking for?	What happened?
To work better together (plan for September to December)	1. Have a monthly whole staff meeting	Mary to write up a list of dates.All to try to attend	1 hour extra hall hire mobthly	December	Most staff attending each meeting	Brilliant attendance,but costs increased with decisions to pay for extra hours. This had to go to management committee
	2. Plan activities in pairs	All staff to identify one activity per week and plan with a partner	Nothing	October	Staff running activities jointly	This didn't get going properly, as no time allocated in original plan.Also, hard to make sure that it was happening, so see 6
	3. Run activities in pairs	All staff to identify one activity per week and run it with a partner	Nothing	October		
	4. Staff stay behind at end if Friday session for cofee	Jane to buy coffee and nice biscuits. Informal note kept of whether people stay	Coffee etc	October and December	Majority of staff to stay	Staff who do not work Friday missed out, so coffee sessions now on Weds as well
	5. Staff social event at Xmas	Jane to ask around and then plan event	The sky's the limit!	All the staff meeting	A brilliant night out for the majority if not all	It was very hard to find something that all could get to,but we did it
Adjustment to action sheet						
	6. Staff to plan one activity a week in pairs	All staff to let Mary know what they are doing for this and when. Mary to keep a record	1 hour O/T per person per fortnight	November	Record of each weekly planning session	After a few hiccups this got going. Chance to do proper planning helped everyone
	7. Staff to run one activity a week in pairs	All staff to log what they have done in the day book	1 hour O/T per person per fortnight	November	Log showing sessions and what happened	Paired activities were not very good at first but got better. Some pairs found it hard

Defining the plan

Outlining the plan is the first crucial step in the direction of fulfilling the activities devised during the preparatory work.

Through an analytical process, the plan helps you to define the elements that practitioners need to consider in order to achieve the inclusive objectives settled for the school:

- Identified values
- Goal(s) you want to achieve
- Who will work on it (inside and outside the school)
- Who is responsible for?
- What kind of resources are required to fulfill the goal?



Specifying the plan

In the second part, the plan is addressed to clarify some more aspects needed to achieve the expected goals for inclusion in terms of steps, achievements, and evaluation. Through an analytical process, the plan helps you to define the elements that practitioners need to consider in order to achieve the inclusive objectives settled for the school:

- Time you will need to implement the change;
- Phases and milestones (small successes) of the process;
- Indicators that allow you to understand the process advances and conclusion;
- How you will make visible the process advances;
- How you will celebrate the process milestones and final results.

Using the action sheet

Every subgroup should choose a priority for development taken from one dimension, also considering what developments need to take place in other dimensions to support it.

A priority might be framed in terms of an indicator or group of indicators, a question or group of questions or an issue that is important to the setting that is not covered within the indicators and questions in the *Index*.

INCLUSIVE ACTION SHEET	
1. Our Value(s)	
<hr/> <hr/>	
2. Priority (description)	
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
3. Who will work with us to achieve it (inside/outside the school)?	
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
4. Who is responsible?	For what?
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
5. What kind of resources we need? (space, time, materials, equipment, language, money...)	
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

Putting it all into practice

People do not need to wait for the emergence of a school plan to examine their own values frameworks and their implications for their engagement with others in classrooms and staffrooms, to start to make different use of resources inside and beyond the school, to increasingly relate learning activities to local and global events.

Even though at this stage of the planning inclusive projects could be really different in terms of subjects addressed, resources and time allocated, and possible impact, it is worthy to remember that fostering inclusion in school is always involving one or more of the following actions:

- removing barriers
- mobilising resources
- rethinking support
- integrating interventions

Maintaining momentum

As priorities are put into action, commitment to them has to be maintained. Activities to create more inclusive cultures may be continuous. They can sustain and be sustained by the active involvement of staff, governors, children and parents/carers in making principled changes.

Where priorities challenge deeply held beliefs and values, considerable effort may be required to walk the talk and overcome resistance. Some staff, children or parents/carers may not agree with a particular development. The planning team can encourage dialogue about differences and may need to refine developments so that they are widely supported. The prize can be considerable changes in the school experience of adults and children.



Consolidating inclusion

As inclusion is a dynamic and fragile endeavour, it requires to be recognised, and valued in order to survive and flourish.

To this aim, schools need to learn how to systematically record everyday activities meant to promote inclusion. This implies working extensively on documenting all kind of actions and events developed at the school such as play-based activities, art-based workshops, outdoor activities, storytelling and reading, special projects and investigations, conversations with children, meetings with parents and carers, and so on.

To record what is being achieved throughout the project, teachers need to use all the means available: texts, drawings, collages, sculptures, pictures, videos, posters, diagrams, diaries, photobooks. This way they can produce an inclusive portfolio that will help them to share not only the outcomes, but also the process which has lead to acquire a more inclusive environment.

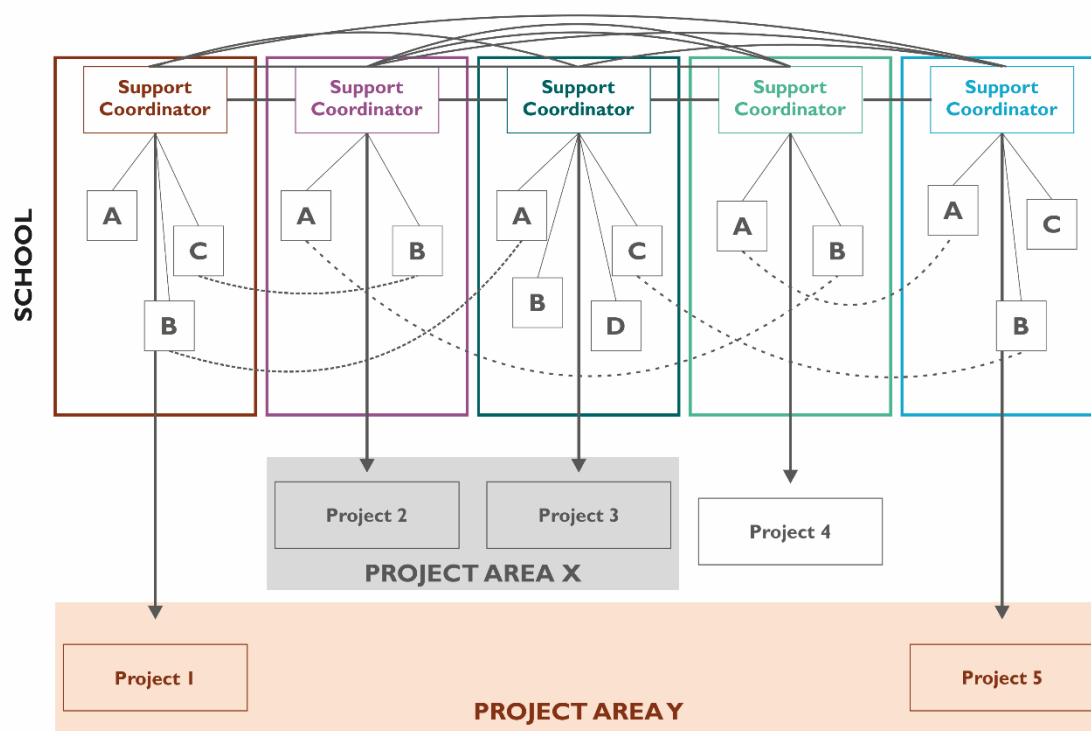
Communicating inclusion

Documenting all inclusive activities fostered by schools accomplishes some important tasks:

- It helps stakeholders to reflect collaboratively on the process of improving the level of inclusion of educational services, assessing good and weak points, and helping the fine tuning of methods and targets;
- It allows teachers to communicate and spread good practices developed within one educational service, so as they can be adopted, after appropriate adaptation, by other schools;
- It enables schools to strengthen relationships and collaboration among them, and to build a network of systematic exchange of good practices and reflections on inclusive education.



Building an internal/external network



Reviewing the process

The member of the school planning team with overall responsibility for implementing a development priority will make sure that progress is checked and recorded and that adjustments are made to development plans. This may involve discussions with staff, children, governors and parents/carers, and the examination of policy documents, as well as observations of practice. A half-termly record of progress might be kept on the implementation of priorities. This might be circulated in a school newsletter.

The planning group might reflect on the changes in the light of success criteria in the plan and how these have had to be modified as new issues emerged. They might consider how to continue the work in the following year. Development may also be evaluated as a result of the review of the school using the indicators and questions as a new planning year begins.

Celebrating inclusion

Everyone should be kept informed about progress. This can be done through assemblies, staff meetings, staff development days, newsletters, registration/tutorials, circle time activities, children's councils, notice boards, websites and community organisations.

As well as providing information, the group should continue listening to others, particularly those who have fewer opportunities to be heard.

The team might invite others using the Index to join them in a celebration of what has been achieved in the last year. They might involve all stakeholders in presenting their experience of the work, being as creative as their energy allows. They might delegate a mixed group to prepare a display showing a network or web of achievements. They might treat this display, or a photograph of it, as their Index inclusion award for a year and place it in their entrance hall until it can be replaced with a record of their next achievements.

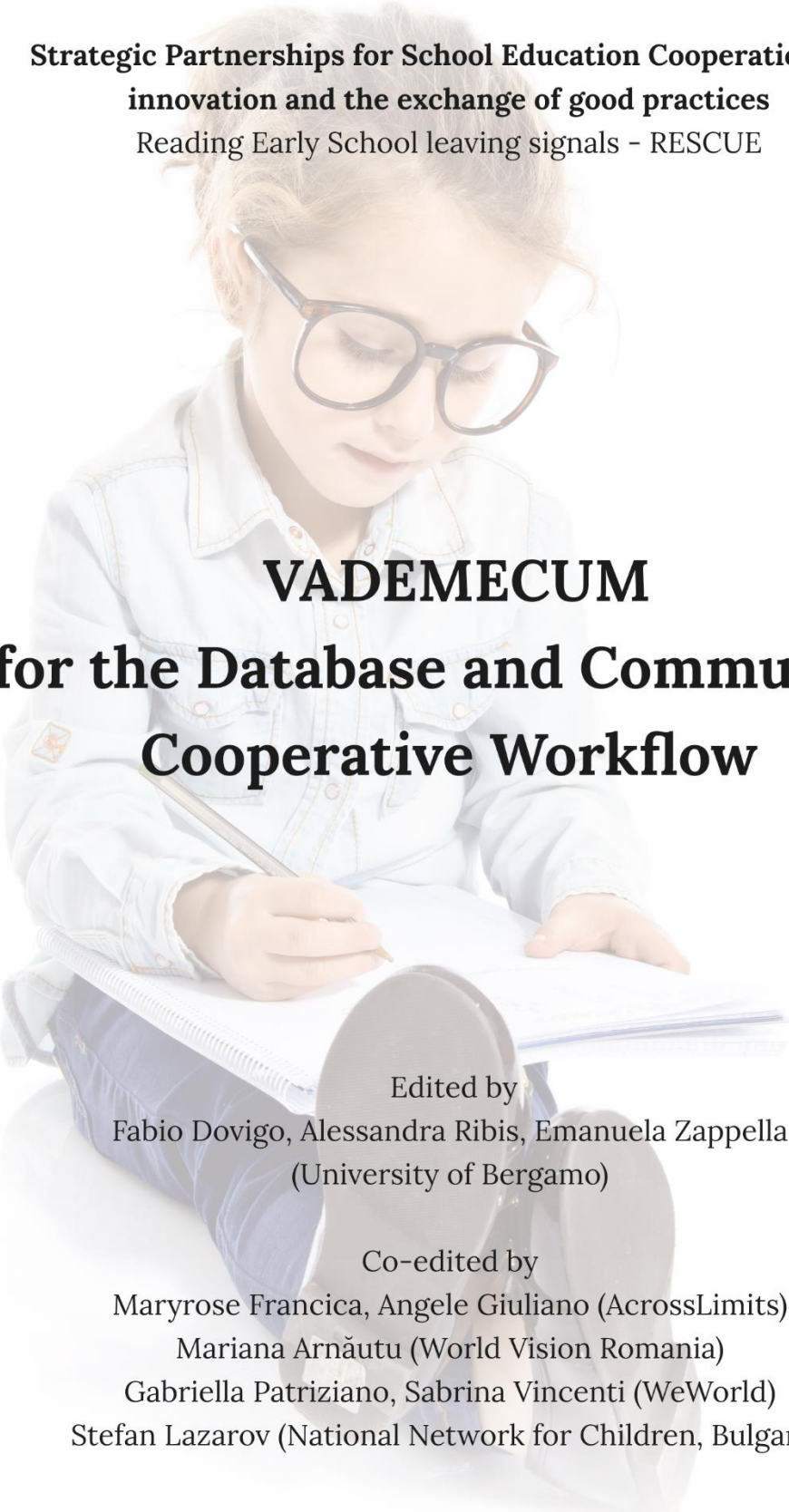




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RESCUE

**Strategic Partnerships for School Education Cooperation for
innovation and the exchange of good practices**
Reading Early School leaving signals - RESCUE



VADEMECUM for the Database and Community Cooperative Workflow

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RESCUE
READING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING SIGNALS

II.4. Vademecum for the Database and Community Cooperative Workflow

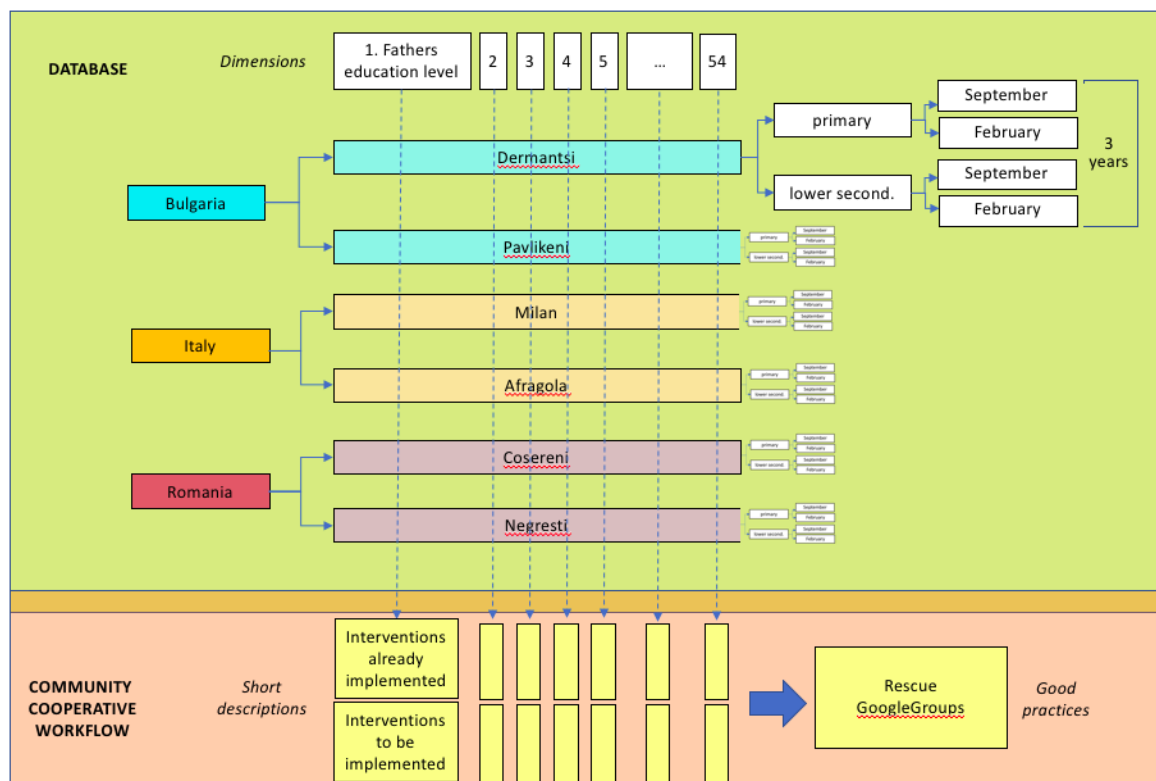
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- The database
- Short descriptions
- Google and Facebook groups
- The prevention & intervention (PIA) approach
- Language
- Data collection and production
- Appendix: Using Google groups
- Appendix: Using Facebook groups

The prevention and intervention approach (PIA)

The structure of the “Prevention & Intervention Approach” (i.e. “mechanism”) is composed by three parts:

- The database;
 - Short descriptions
 - Google groups or Facebook groups
- } Community Cooperative Workflow



The database is a quantitative tool, aimed at identifying the risk level (low/high) of schools with regard to ESL.

Short descriptions are a qualitative tool, aimed at offering an overview of the actions already (or to be) implemented face to the high risk factors identified.

Google and Facebook groups are qualitative tools, aimed at delving into some of the actions implemented by schools in terms of good practices.

Short descriptions and Google or Facebook groups are the two parts of the “Community cooperative workflow” of the project.

It is essential to use the PIA tools strictly in combination, not separately. They are conceived to favour a detection + intervention strategy, which cannot be reduced to a simple diagnosis (database) or fragmented practices (workflow).

The Database

The database is a quantitative tool, aimed at identifying the risk level (low/high) of schools with regard to ESL.

It includes 54 dimensions, grouped into four areas (see excel file, columns A and B):

- a) background (dimensions 1-6)
- b) families (dimensions 7-17)
- c) children (dimensions 18-27)
- d) school (dimensions 28-54)

Area	Risk level (Dimensions)
Background	1. Fathers education level
	2. Mothers education level
	3. Economic conditions
	4. Family employment
	5. Transport
	6. Community

There are two indicators for each dimension: high risk and low risk (columns C and F). For example, risk is high if the father education is at primary or lower secondary school level, while is low if it is at upper secondary school level or higher.

C	D E	F
High (Indicators)		Low (Indicators)
Primary or lower secondary school		Upper secondary school or further
Primary or lower secondary school		Upper secondary school or further
20% (or more) of families are below the poverty threshold		More than 80% of families are above the poverty threshold

To keep the assessment system simple, there are only two indicators for each dimension. The overall risk level is made by the total of high risk indicators identified for each school (line 57, column D), according to the “Overall Risk Level” scale indicated.

54.	Wellbeing	The school favours achievement through competition as a watchword			The school encourages children & adults to feel good about themselves
Total					
		<p style="text-align: center;">OVERALL RISK LEVEL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3-5=Very low 6-8=Low 9-11=Average 12-14= High 15 or more=Very high</p>			

For example a school with only 4 high risk indicators identified is a “ESL low risk” school. Vice versa a school with a total of 18 high risk indicators should be considered a “ESL high risk school”.

Consequently, one indicator (e.g. being disabled or Roma) is not per se a predictor of ESL, but only in conjunction with some other indicators (e.g. being

from a poor, rural family, dyslexic, and in a school where the yearly turnover of staff is more than 20%).

Short Descriptions

Short descriptions are a qualitative tool, aimed at offering an overview of the actions already (or to be) implemented face to the ESL high risk factors identified.

For each HIGH risk indicator identified, schools should provide a short description of actions that have already been put in place (columns I-J), or that are planned to be soon implemented (columns K-L).

Current interventions (National language)		Planned interventions (National language)	
Current interventions (English)		Planned interventions (English)	
Short description of interventions already implemented		Short description of interventions to be implemented	

Descriptions should be summarised in three-four lines max.

For example, if the national language is the second language for 20% of children or more (indicator n. 23), description could be “An after school course in Bulgarian [or Italian, Romanian] as a second language has been (columns I-J) / will be (columns K-L) organised to support migrant children from October to December”.

Children	23. Language	National language is the second language for 20% of children (or more)	X	National language is the first language for more than 80% of children	An after school course in Bulgarian as a second language has been organised to support migrant children from October to December	An after school course in Bulgarian as a second language has been organised to support migrant children from October to December

Google and Facebook Groups

Google and Facebook groups are qualitative tools, aimed at delving into some of the actions implemented by schools in terms of good practices (see the link on the Excel file, column M).

Good practices
Link to the Rescue GoogleGroups

or Link to the <https://www.facebook.com/rescueESL/>

The Google or Facebook groups will offer schools the opportunity to expand the short description of actions already implemented (columns I-J) to prevent or minimise ESL. The design, implementation, and evaluation of some especially valuable actions will be documented through pictures, drawings, diaries, tables, video, written notes, and so on.

Whichever one of the groups that are chosen (Google or Facebook) will enable all teachers to share materials and comments about the good practices developed or in development.

For example, if an after school course to learn the national language (as a second language) has been implemented, teachers will provide through the Google or Facebook groups platform materials as course planning, pictures, children compositions, short videos, teachers' observations, and so on. This way, other teachers from other schools will be able to add comments and suggestions by interacting through the platform.

The Prevention and Intervention Approach (PIA) organisation

There are four possible options of managing the PIA database:

- 1) at the entire school level;
- 2) at the primary school level; at the lower secondary school level;
- 3) at class level;
- 4) at the individual child level.

The database should be ideally updated twice per year (in September and February) at least for three years, so as to offer a dynamic, developmental overview of ESL interventions.

In our opinion, option 1 (2 reports per school per year) is too vague. Option 3 and 4 would be unsustainable at this project stage, as they mean a minimum of 80 reports per school per year.

Therefore, we suggest to adopt option 2 (see the picture) i.e. two reports (September, February) both at the primary and lower secondary school level per year. For example, Dermantsi primary school will fill the PIA in September and February per three years (at least). The same for Dermantsi lower secondary school, etc.



Language

To maximise access to the PIA at the national and European level, we suggest the following language structure:

- Database: a version of the database will be provided in the national language of each school (Bulgarian for Dermantsi, Italian for Milan etc.). Comparison among schools and countries will be made possible by cross-checking indicators in English.
- Short descriptions: short descriptions will be written both in the national language (columns I & K) and in English (columns J & L) to enable at least basic shared understanding across different countries;
- Google and facebook groups: we will exploit the Google and Facebook translate tools' ability to provide rough translation in any of the project languages. Communication will be made easier as much participants will use a mix of instruments (pictures, drawings, video...), keeping written texts as short as possible.

Data collection and production

Three main activities are involved in the collection and production of data through PIA, as information must be

- gathered from different sources within the school (teachers, head-teachers, families, students...);
- put into the database system;
- translated from national language to English and vice versa (e.g. to fill the short descriptions).

Each school will identify 1/2/3 teachers responsible for the management of the above activities.

It is pivotal that the collection of data would be a shared enterprise, gathering as many sources and voices as possible. It is not acceptable that only one person would be delegated to fill the database for the entire school.

To manage communication with the board of the project and the other schools, every school (Dermantsi, Pavlikeni, Milan, Afragola, Cosereni, and Negresti) will appoint 1 contact person, whose name and email will be sent to all partners.

Appendix - Using Google groups to share your ESL good practices

To share through Google groups the good practices you developed in your school to prevent or minimise early school leaving, follow these instructions:

1. Download and install Google Chrome on your computer or smartphone
<https://.google.com/chrome/>

2. Install the Google translate add-on on Google Chrome

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/google-translate/aapbdbdomjkkjkaonfhkkikfgjllcleb?hl=en>

3. If you already have a Google account, go to the #4 step.

If you don't already have a Google account, create a new one on the webpage

<https://accounts.google.com/SignUp?>

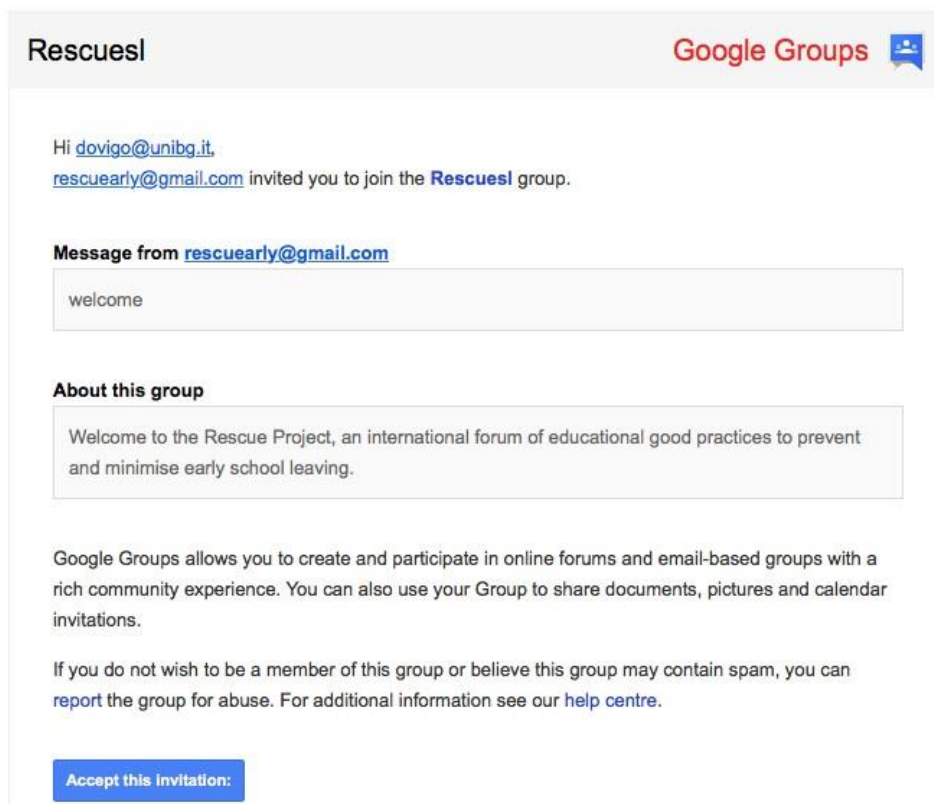
[continue=https%3A%2F%2Faccounts.google.com%2FManageAccount](https://accounts.google.com/SignUp?continue=https%3A%2F%2Faccounts.google.com%2FManageAccount)

4. Using the email on your Google account, contact the Google groups moderator

(rescuearly@google.com) to request access to the group.

5. You will receive an e-mail inviting you to join the group from rescuearly@google.com

Click on the "Accept this invitation" blue button.



6. Now you are a RESCUE project member. To go to the Google group RESCUE project page

(<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/rescuesl>)

click on “Visit this group’s homepage”



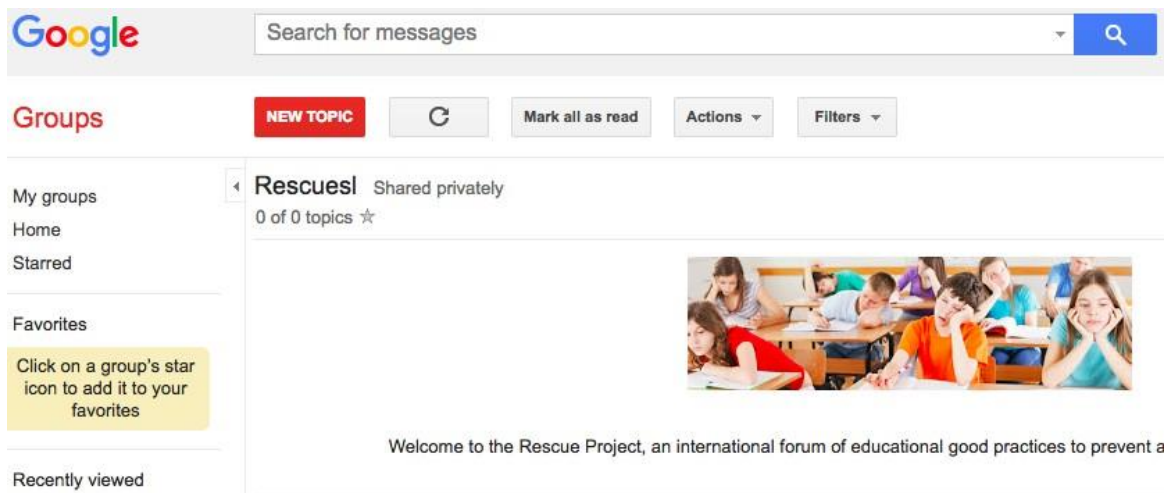
Rescuesl

You have successfully joined the group [Rescuesl](#).

Make a start and join the conversation with your new group

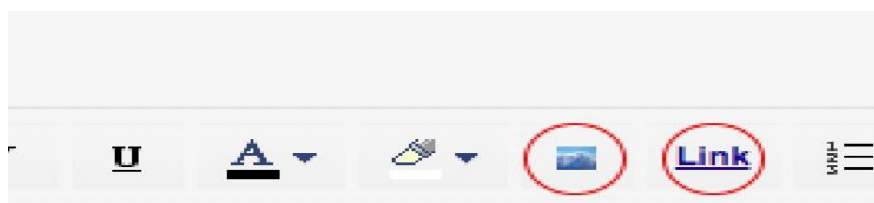
- Visit this group's [homepage](#) ←
- Email this [group](#)
- [Learn more](#) about Google Groups

7. On the project page, if you want to add your projects or materials to the Group, click on the red button on the left (“New topic”).



8. On the new page, write the subject of your message on the “Subject” space

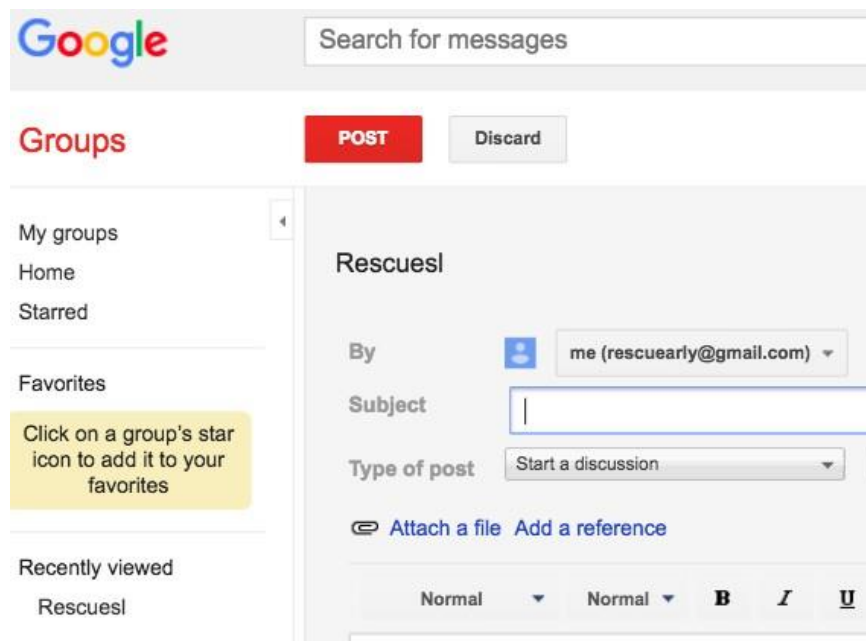
Then you can write your message on the white field below. You can insert a picture or a link directly in the text field using these controls



If you want to attach a word, pdf, or picture file use the command “Attach a file” near the clip symbol

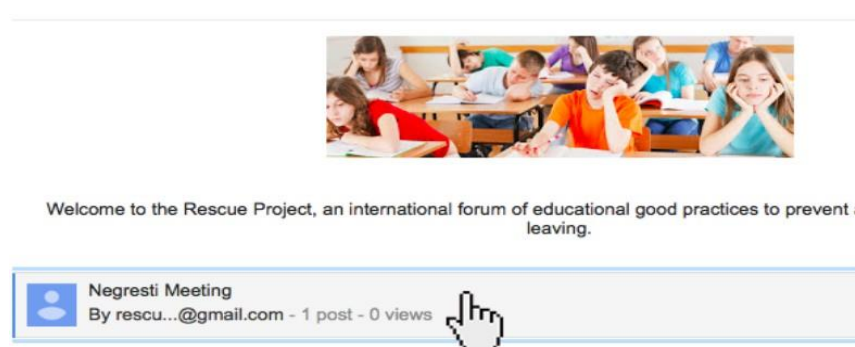


When the message is ready, click on the red button “Post” (top left) to send your message to the group.

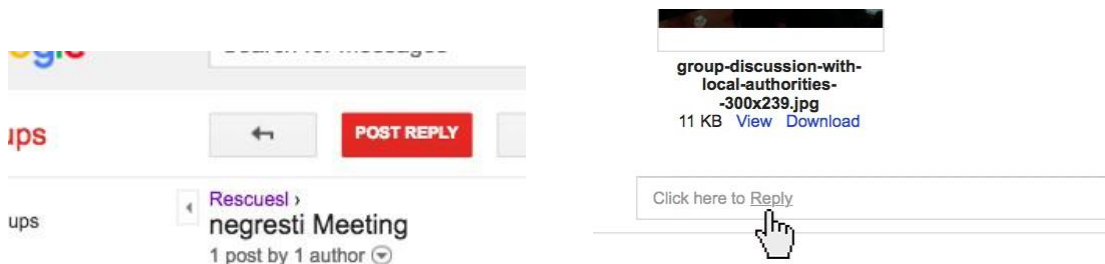


9. Everyone inside the Google group “RESCUE” will receive an e-mail as soon as someone post his/her message.

10. If you want to answer to a message, just click on the message line

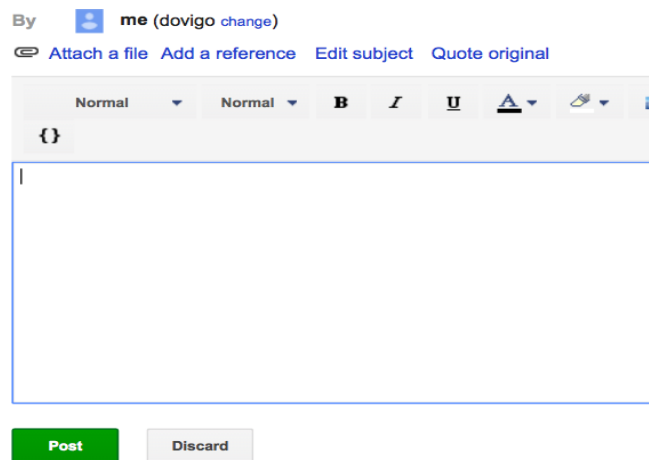


Then press the red button “Post reply” on top left; or go to the bottom of the message page and click on the line “Click here to Reply”

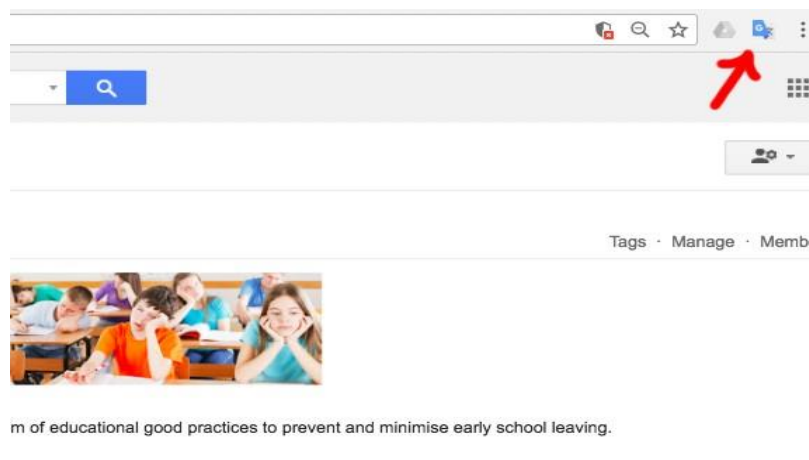


Now you can write your reply.

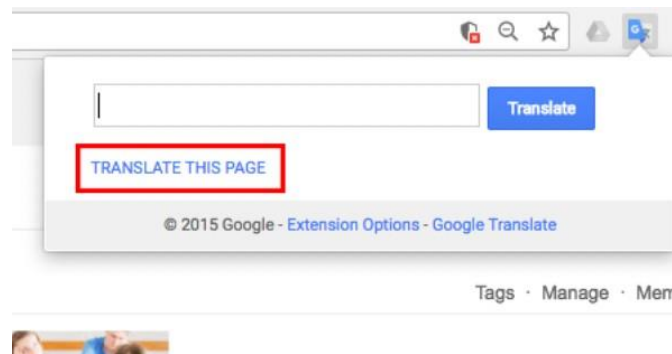
At the end, press the “Post” green button to send your answer.



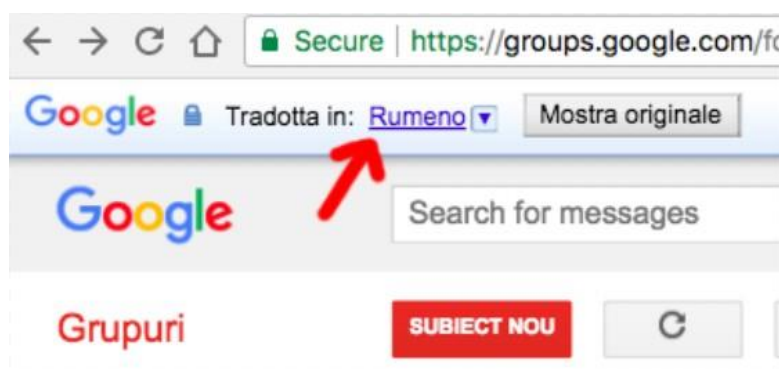
11. As messages on the Google groups will be in different languages, to translate the page in your own language click on the “Google translate” symbol on top right.



Then click on “Translate this page”.



On the top left of the page, you can choose the language you want to translate the page in.



Appendix - Using Facebook groups to share your ESL good practices

To share through Facebook groups the good practices you developed in your school to prevent or minimise early school leaving, follow these instructions:

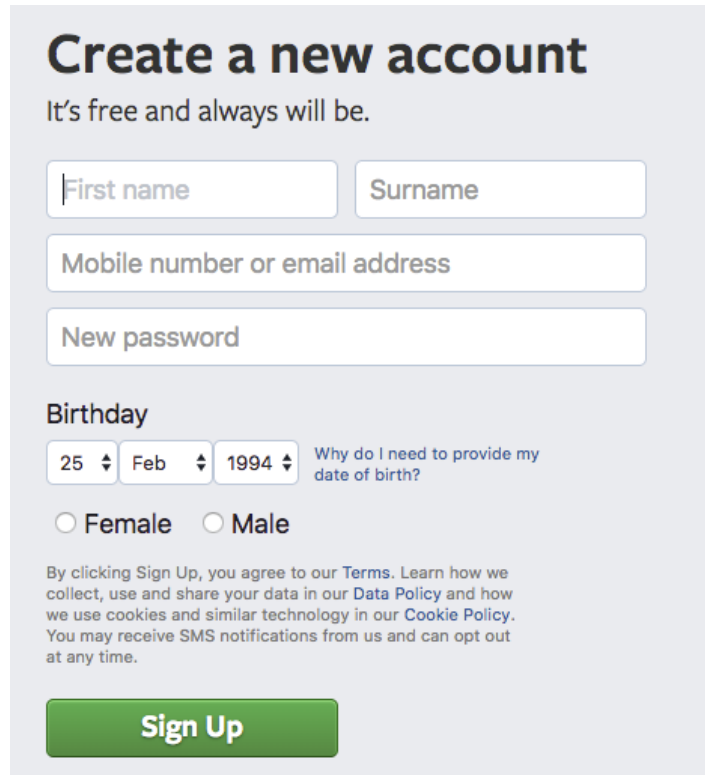
1. Go to <http://www.Facebook.com> from your internet browser



2. If you already have an account, please enter your email and password to login

Email or Phone	Password	Log In
<input type="text"/>	<input type="password"/>	
Forgotten account?		

3. If you do not have an account, simply fill in the details to create a new one and then login



Create a new account
It's free and always will be.

First name Surname

Mobile number or email address

New password

Birthday
25 Feb 1994 [Why do I need to provide my date of birth?](#)

☐ Female ☐ Male

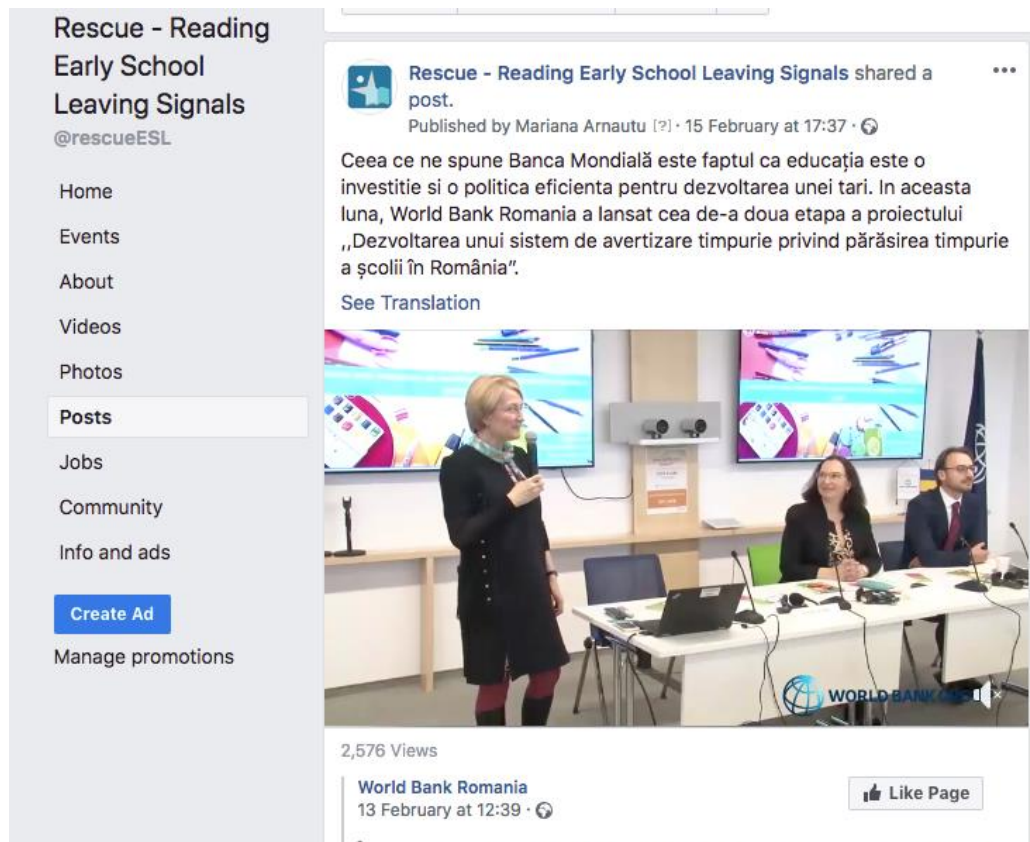
By clicking Sign Up, you agree to our [Terms](#). Learn how we collect, use and share your data in our [Data Policy](#) and how we use cookies and similar technology in our [Cookie Policy](#). You may receive SMS notifications from us and can opt out at any time.

Sign Up

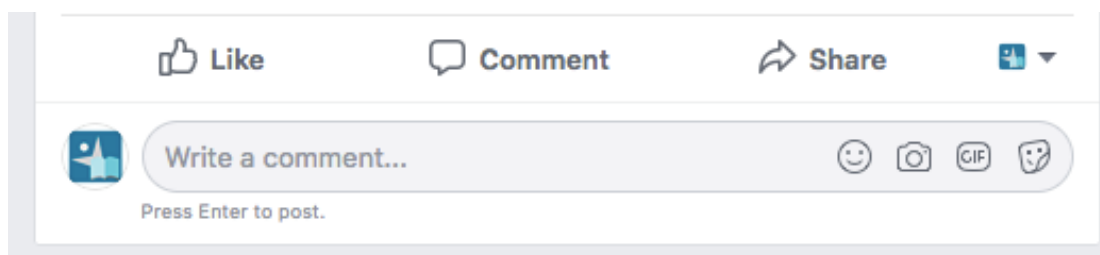
4. Once you are logged in, from the top bar start writing “Rescue – Reading Early School Leaving Signals” and press enter or simply click on the page link <https://www.facebook.com/rescueESL/>



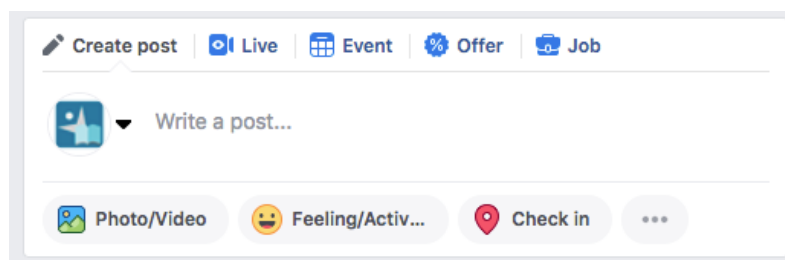
5. In order to see previous messages, from the left hand menu click on “Posts” and the most recent posts will be shown latest first



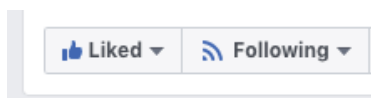
6. You can interact with existing posts by pressing the Like button, posting a comment underneath or else sharing it on your other facebook pages or profile



7. To start a new post, from the top of the page, start writing in your own language (facebook will offer all users the ability to automatically translate your text). You can also add photos or videos to your post, specify how you are feeling or checkin in a particular physical location to show where you are



8. Do not forget to press the Like button at the top of the Rescue Facebook page in order to be kept updated on all new posts or comments



III. Conclusions

Teachers participating in the project become a critical mass in the target schools, able and willing to engage with the other stakeholders in a broader community effort tackling ESL as an important factor affecting the social, cultural and economic development at local level. The teachers achieve a better understanding of their key stakeholders' role in this holistic development process which naturally and vitally includes ESL. Target schools become a more friendly and supportive environment, contributing to a healthier and more motivated attitude of students towards education – a very important factor in preventing ESL. They are able to turn their singular attempt to prevent ESL into a joint community effort and as a consequence they will integrate deeper in the long term community development effort.

Community stakeholders (parents, children, authorities etc) participating in the project in the target communities are more sensitized and conscious, more active and more responsible towards their children and their education. They strengthen their own capacity to organize and work as a team. They become more proactive and intentional at their own community level and more vocal and better fitted to advocate for measures to prevent ESL, at the local and even regional level.

Local stakeholders: school and local government and civil society strengthen their own capacity to organize and work as a team. They will become more proactive and intentional at their own community level and more vocal and better fitted to advocate for measures to prevent ESL, at the local and even regional level.

The project facilitates the building of a sustainable partnership between different relevant institutions, either public or private, in the same community and creates a good context for exchange of information and good practices in prevention and combating of ESL.

The ESL prevention mechanisms resulting from the project were produced based on realities in three different country contexts (Romania, Italia and Bulgaria) and six different local contexts (rural area in Cosereni and Negresti in Romania, Afragola and Naples in Italy, Dermantsi and Pavlikeni in Bulgaria).

These give them enough versatility to be successfully applied in these different contexts and enough flexibility to be adapted to the specific of each context.

IV. Annexes

Annex 1: INSTRUMENT FOR MEASURING RISK OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IN CLASS - CURRENT INTERVENTIONS - PLANNED INTERVENTIONS -GOOD PRACTICES

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Area	Risk level (Dimensions)	High (Indicators)			Low (Indicators)			Current interventions (National language)	Current interventions (English)	Planned interventions (National language)	Planned interventions (English)	Good practices (National language)
Background	1. Fathers education level	Primary or lower secondary school			Upper secondary school or further			Short description of interventions already implemented	Short description of interventions already implemented	Short description of interventions to be implemented	Short description of interventions to be implemented	
	2. Mothers education level	Primary or lower secondary school			Upper secondary school or further							
	3. Economic conditions	20% (or more) of families are below the poverty threshold			More than 80% of families are above the poverty threshold							Link to the Rescue Google Groups
	4. Family employment	20% (or more) of parents are looking for an employment			More than 80% of parents are employed							
	5. Transport	20% (or more) of families live 1 hour (or more) far from school			More than 80% of families lives less than 1 hour far from school							

[illegible]

[illegible]

in a two parents' family	More than 90% of children have 3 siblings or less	More than 90% of children not working nor in charge for family care	More than 90% of children' families are not looked after by social/mental services	Early marriage/pregnancy is common in less than 10% of children' families	Less than 10% of children' families have been affected by domestic violence
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[illegible]

Children						
18. Gender	Most children in school are boys	Most children in school are girls				
19. Health	10% (or more) of children are suffering from prolonged illness	More than 90% of children are normally in good health				
20. School transfer	10% (or more) of children transferred from another school	More than 90% of children attend the same school from the beginning				
21. School attendance	Truancy level is 20% (or more)	Truancy level is less than 20%				
22. Grade repetition	10% (or more) of the children repeated 1 or more grades	Less than 10% of children' repeated a grade				
23. Language	National language is the second language for 20% of children (or more)	National language is the first language for more than 80% of children				
24. Physical impairments	5% (or more) of the children have a permanent physical impairment	Less than 5% of the children have a permanent physical impairment				

[illegible]

Less than 5% of the children have a mild/severe cognitive impairment	Less than 10% of children suffer from learning difficulties	Less than 2 disciplinary sanctions every week in school	Expectations are high for all children	The school seeks to admit all children from its locality	Barriers to attendance are reduced
--	---	---	--	--	------------------------------------

25. Cognitive impairments	5% (or more) of the children have a mild/severe cognitive impairment
26. Learning difficulties	10% (or more) of the children suffer from learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia)
27. Behaviour	2 (or more) disciplinary sanctions (e.g. written reprimand, suspension) per week in school
28. Expectations	Expectations for some children are limited
29. School enrolment	The school doesn't have family outreach policies
30. Barriers	Barriers to attendance remain unchanged or increase

School

[illegible]

37. Participation	Learning activities encourage the participation of some children more than others	Learning activities encourage the participation of all children				
38. Planning	Learning activities are planned having a "typical child" in mind	Learning activities are planned with all children in mind				
39. Assessment	Assessment primarily encourages competition and selection	Assessments encourage the achievements of all children				
40. Support	The forms of support are scarcely connected to each other	All forms of support are co-ordinated				
41. Professional development	Professional development activities are rarely focused on ESL	Professional development activities help staff respond to ESL				
42. Staff induction	New staff has to find its own way to settle into the school	All new staff are helped to settle into the school				
43. Turnover	Yearly turnover of staff is more than 20%	Yearly turnover of staff is less than 20%				

Learning activities encourage the participation of all children	Learning activities are planned with all children in mind	Assessments encourage the achievements of all children	All forms of support are co-ordinated	Professional development activities help staff respond to ESL	All new staff are helped to settle into the school	Yearly turnover of staff is less than 20%
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[illegible]

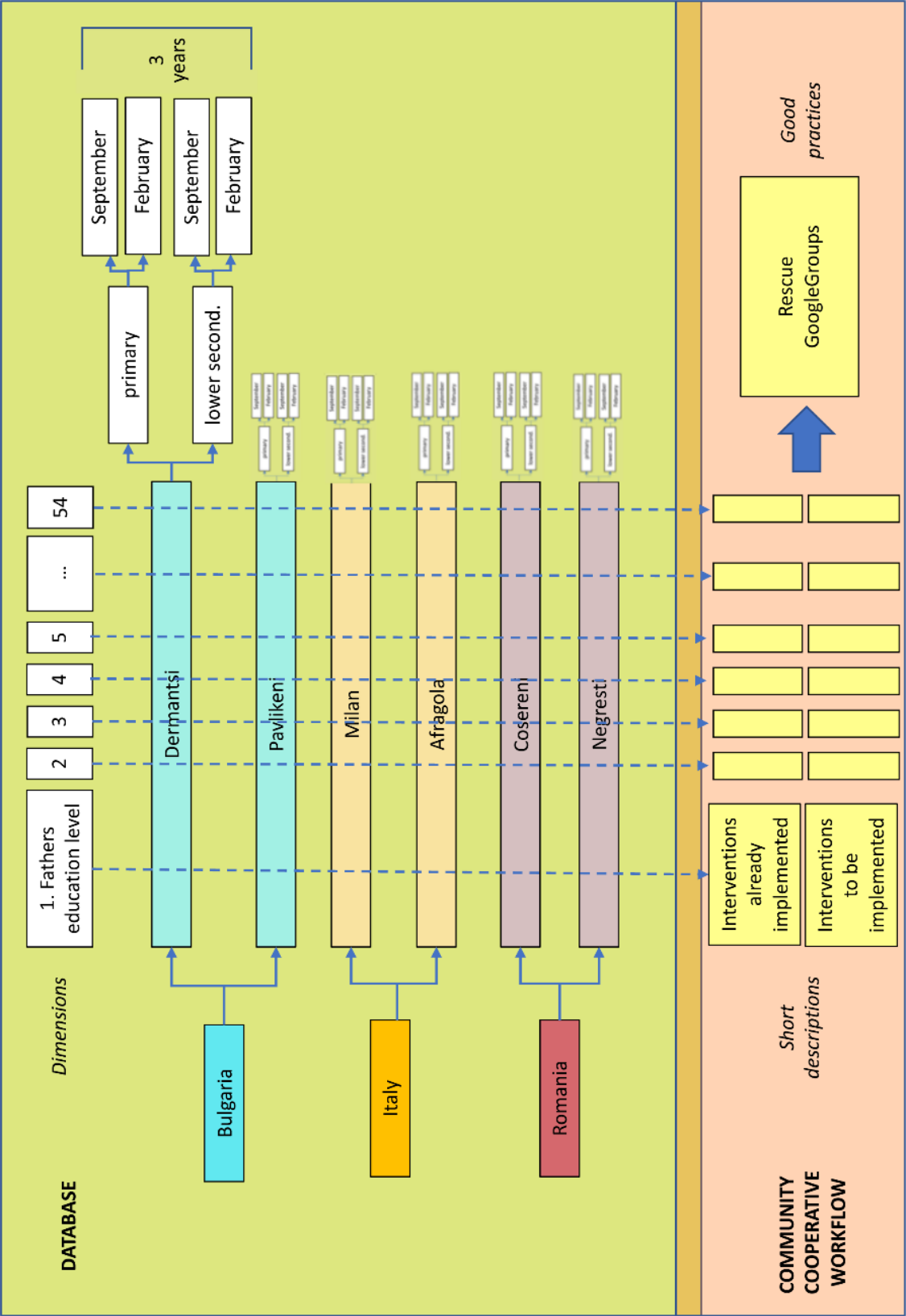
[illegible]

forms of discrimination	The behaviour policy is linked to learning and curriculum development	Pressures for disciplinary exclusion are decreased	Staff link what happens in school to children's lives at home	The school contributes to the health of children and adults	The school encourages children and adults to feel good about themselves
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seen as a school problem	
The behaviour policy is administered by teachers and head- teachers on a case by case basis	
Disciplinary measures are seen as an unpleasant but unavoidable task	
Children's lives at home is deemed as a privacy matter separated from school	
Health is considered essentially the area of intervention of healthcare	
The school favours achievement through competition as a watchword	

	50. Behaviour policies	51. Discipline	52. School-home continuity	53. Health	54. Wellbeing
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Annex 2: DATABASE + COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE WORKFLOW STRUCTURE



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