WP1 Needs Analysis Report

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Introduction

This final report consists of five parts. The **first part (part A)** focuses on describing the basic features of the national education systems of all five participating countries (i.e. Cyprus, Romania, Greece, Ireland, Portugal). Specifically the following dimensions of each national system are examined:

- The structure of the national education system (primary and secondary level)
- Financing of the national system (levels of decision making, level of centralization or decentralization, level of public financing in terms of percentage of GDP allocated to primary and secondary school).
- The national education system in Figures (Number of school units per type, no of teachers per education level, no of students per type of attending school)
- Evidence about the quality of the system in terms of its learning outcomes, social justice and secondary level graduates' participation in the labour market (national inspection reports, PISA results, other outcomes of national evaluation systems).
- The situation of marginalized groups of students. Statistics and data available for the marginalized groups of students with special emphasis on the following categories:
  - Immigrant, refugees, asylum seekers students[1]
  - Students belonging to religious minorities
  - Roma students, Irish travellers
  - Disabled students (physically handicapped)
  - Students from deprived family backgrounds
  - Students with learning difficulties
  - Students from remote areas with difficult school access
  - Students with serious health issues
  - Students with mental health difficulties[2]
  - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)[3]

  The situation for the most populous of these groups is also presented at European level.
- Flagship inclusive and fair education policies (target groups, description, key stakeholders, duration, resourcing, outcomes-results, official evaluations whenever available). The picture is complemented by a brief reference to some of the key relevant policies initiated at a European level.
- The mapping of decision making processes at the school level. This section should focus on school decision making processes and procedures, challenges

[1] For definitions please visit https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/people-on-the-move/

[2] 'Mental health difficulties' refers to:

- long term mental illnesses or psychiatric conditions - which may be classified as a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act (1995).
- emerging mental health problems which may develop into conditions which require ongoing support or intervention
- temporary debilitating mental health conditions or reactions which impact on a student's ability to fulfill their academic potential.

[3] For definitions and resources please visit http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm

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- faced, placing particular emphasis on inclusive decisions and factors influencing them.
- Literature review (studies, practices, etc) concerning decision making for inclusion at school level in the participating countries. For each one of the reviewed studies the following information should be clearly mentioned:
  - Type of marginalized group of students
  - Methodological elements (main research questions, country, level of education, size of the sample, data collection instruments)
  - Main findings in terms of what seems to work in favor and what against inclusive decision making.

  This literature review is complemented by a quite extensive body of relevant research studies conducted in other than the participating countries.

Part B focuses on the presentation of the results yielded from the analysis of data collected through questionnaires. Specifically, part B consists of two sections. The first one of these two sections presents the methodology adopted for this part of the study while the second section present a synthesis of the most important results from the individual country reports.

Part C includes the results of the needs analysis phase that are yielded from a series of interviews with school principals and/or assistant school principals. The first section of this part presents all the methodological aspects of this needs analysis phase, while the second one presents the most important relevant results of the individual national reports, in a synthetic way.

Part D has exactly the same structure with parts B and C but it presents the results of the focus groups which were also conducted so as to complement the results of the needs analysis phase.

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Part A: The marginalized students in the national education systems of the participating countries

A.1 The national education systems

The education systems in all participating countries, but Ireland, are quite centralized being centrally managed by the national Ministries of Education which among other very important things, also formulate the official policies and commitments concerning inclusive education for marginalized groups. However, in all countries there have been undertaken various policy initiatives to decentralize their education systems by transferring some decisions at regional, local or even school level. The most advanced initiatives in this direction, have been undertaken in Ireland where the Department of Education and Science has undertaken a programme of restructuring which aims to delegate functions to external agencies (e.g. State Examinations Commission) and establish a network of regional offices.
In general though at school unit level there is very little autonomy in all kinds of decisions to name a few - curriculum decisions, staff management, use of resources etc. compared to other OECD countries.
In all countries the structure of the primary and secondary education levels is quite similar and is as follows:

- **Kindergarten** – three to five years and eight months;
- **Primary School** – five years and eight months to 12 years;
- **Lower Secondary School (Gymnasium)** – 12 to 15 years;
- **Upper Secondary School (Lyceum or Technical/Vocational School)** – 15 to 18 years;

Compulsory education in all countries finishes at the end of lower secondary school.
On the other hand though the participating counties vary significantly in terms of the level of public financing allocated to education ranging from 3.15% of the GDP in the case of Greece up to 6.5% of the GDP in the cases of Ireland and Cyprus (see Table 1).
Moreover, the participating countries also differ in terms of the size of their primary and secondary education systems as measured by the number of school units, number of teaching staff and number of students per level. Specifically according to the relevant data, Ireland seems to have the largest school units in terms of number of students, whereas Greece and Cyprus have the smallest ones, while Portugal and Romania lie somewhere in-between. This might have some effect on the way decisions are taken at school level as well as on the social climate existing in the schools of the participating countries.

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Table A.1: Level of public financing in terms of percentage of GDP allocated to education by participating country

Country	%GDP in education	%GDP in primary education	%GDP in secondary education
Ireland	6.5	N.A	N.A
Cyprus	6.5	N.A	N.A
Portugal	5.5	N.A	N.A
Romania	3.7	1.3	1.6
Greece	3.2	1.1	1.2

In terms of the quality of each education system, the only source of comparable data is that of the PISA assessment. According to this data the most academically successful system is that of Ireland followed in descending order by those of Portugal, Greece, Romania and Cyprus respectively. However, except of Ireland in all other countries, most 15yrs old students perform below the OECD average in PISA Mathematics, Reading and Science. This picture does not necessarily reflect systems of low academic quality (See Figure 1). It could also mean a mismatch between the type of school knowledge taught and the type of knowledge assessed by PISA as is the case for example for the Greek and the Cypriot system.

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Figure A.1: Ranking of OECD countries according to PISA results

Snapshot of performance in mathematics, reading and science

Countries/economies with a mean performance/share of top performers above the OECD average
Countries/economies with a share of low achievers below the OECD average
Countries/economies with a mean performance/share of low achievers/share of top performers not statistically significantly different from the OECD average
Countries/economies with a mean performance/share of top performers below the OECD average
Countries/economies with a share of low achievers above the OECD average

	Mathematics				Reading		Science	
	Mean score in PISA 2012	Share of low achievers in mathematics (Below Level 2)	Share of top performers in mathematics (Level 5 or 6)	Annualised change in score points	Mean score in PISA 2012	Annualised change in score points	Mean score in PISA 2012	Annualised change in score points
OECD average	494	23.0	12.6	**-0.3**	496	**0.3**	501	**0.5**
Shanghai-China	613	3.8	55.4	**4.2**	570	**4.6**	580	1.8
Singapore	573	8.3	40.0	**3.8**	542	**5.4**	551	**3.3**
Hong Kong-China	561	8.5	33.7	**1.3**	545	**2.3**	555	**2.1**
Chinese Taipei	560	12.8	37.2	1.7	523	**4.5**	523	-1.5
Korea	554	9.1	30.9	1.1	536	**0.9**	538	**2.6**
Macao-China	538	10.8	24.3	**1.0**	509	**0.8**	521	**1.6**
Japan	536	11.1	23.7	0.4	538	**1.5**	547	**2.6**
Liechtenstein	535	14.1	24.8	0.3	516	**1.3**	525	0.4
Switzerland	531	12.4	21.4	0.6	509	**1.0**	515	0.6
Netherlands	523	14.8	19.3	**-1.6**	511	-0.1	522	-0.5
Estonia	521	10.5	14.6	0.9	516	**2.4**	541	1.5
Finland	519	12.3	15.3	**-2.8**	524	**-1.7**	545	**-3.0**
Canada	518	13.8	16.4	**-1.4**	523	**-0.9**	525	**-1.5**
Poland	518	14.4	16.7	**2.6**	518	**2.8**	526	**4.6**
Belgium	515	19.0	19.5	**-1.6**	509	0.1	505	-0.9
Germany	514	17.7	17.5	**1.4**	508	**1.8**	524	1.4
Viet Nam	511	14.2	13.3	m	508	m	528	m
Austria	506	18.7	14.3	0.0	490	-0.2	506	-0.8
Australia	504	19.7	14.8	**-2.2**	512	**-1.4**	521	-0.9
Ireland	501	16.9	10.7	-0.6	523	**-0.9**	522	**2.3**
Slovenia	501	20.1	13.7	-0.6	481	**-2.2**	514	-0.8
Denmark	500	16.8	10.0	**-1.8**	496	0.1	498	0.4
New Zealand	500	22.6	15.0	**-2.5**	512	**-1.1**	516	**-2.5**
Czech Republic	499	21.0	12.9	**-2.5**	493	-0.5	508	-1.0
France	495	22.4	12.9	**-1.5**	505	0.0	499	0.6
United Kingdom	494	21.8	11.8	-0.3	499	0.7	514	-0.1
Iceland	493	21.5	11.2	**-2.2**	483	**-1.3**	478	**-2.0**
Latvia	491	19.9	8.0	0.5	489	**1.9**	502	**2.0**
Luxembourg	490	24.3	11.2	-0.3	488	**0.7**	491	0.9
Norway	489	22.3	9.4	-0.3	504	0.1	495	1.3
Portugal	487	24.9	10.6	**2.8**	488	**1.6**	489	**2.5**
Italy	485	24.7	9.9	**2.7**	490	0.5	494	**3.0**
Spain	484	23.6	8.0	0.1	488	-0.3	496	1.3
Russian Federation	482	24.0	7.8	1.1	475	**1.1**	486	1.0
Slovak Republic	482	27.5	11.0	**-1.4**	463	-0.1	471	**-2.7**
United States	481	25.8	8.8	0.3	498	-0.3	497	1.4
Lithuania	479	26.0	8.1	-1.4	477	1.1	496	1.3
Sweden	478	27.1	8.0	**-3.3**	483	**-2.8**	485	**-3.1**
Hungary	477	28.1	9.3	**-1.3**	488	**1.0**	494	-1.6
Croatia	471	29.9	7.0	0.6	485	1.2	491	-0.3
Israel	466	33.5	9.4	**4.2**	486	**3.7**	470	**2.8**
Greece	453	35.7	3.9	**1.1**	477	0.5	467	-1.1
Serbia	449	38.9	4.6	**2.2**	446	**7.6**	445	1.5
Turkey	448	42.0	5.9	**3.2**	475	**4.1**	463	**6.4**
Romania	445	40.8	3.2	**4.9**	438	1.1	439	**3.4**
Cyprus[1,2]	440	42.0	3.7	m	449	m	438	m
Bulgaria	439	43.8	4.1	**4.2**	436	0.4	446	2.0
United Arab Emirates	434	46.3	3.5	m	442	m	448	m
Kazakhstan	432	45.2	0.9	**9.0**	393	0.8	425	**8.1**
Thailand	427	49.7	2.6	1.0	441	**1.1**	444	**3.9**
Chile	423	51.5	1.6	**1.9**	441	**3.1**	445	1.1
Malaysia	421	51.8	1.3	**8.1**	398	**-7.8**	420	-1.4
Mexico	413	54.7	0.6	**3.1**	424	**1.1**	415	0.9
Montenegro	410	56.6	1.0	**1.7**	422	**5.0**	410	-0.3
Uruguay	409	55.8	1.4	**-1.4**	411	**-1.8**	416	**-2.1**
Costa Rica	407	59.9	0.6	-1.2	441	-1.0	429	-0.6
Albania	394	60.7	0.8	**5.6**	394	**4.1**	397	2.2
Brazil	391	67.1	0.8	**4.1**	410	**1.2**	405	**2.3**
Argentina	388	66.5	0.3	1.2	396	-1.6	406	2.4
Tunisia	388	67.7	0.8	**3.1**	404	**3.8**	398	**2.2**
Jordan	386	68.6	0.6	0.2	399	-0.3	409	**-2.1**
Colombia	376	73.8	0.3	1.1	403	**3.0**	399	1.8
Qatar	376	69.6	2.0	**9.2**	388	**12.0**	384	**5.4**
Indonesia	375	75.7	0.3	0.7	396	**2.3**	382	-1.9
Peru	368	74.6	0.6	1.0	384	**5.2**	373	1.3

1. Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to "Cyprus" relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue".
2. Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Union: The Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The annualised change is the average annual change in PISA score points from a country's/economy's earliest participation in PISA to PISA 2012. It is calculated taking into account all of a country's/economy's participation in PISA.

Note: Countries/economies in which the annualised change in performance is statistically significant are marked in bold.
Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the mean mathematics score in PISA 2012.
Source: OECD, PISA 2012 Database; Tables I.2.1a, I.2.1b, I.2.3a, I.2.3b, I.4.3a, I.4.3b, I.5.3a and I.5.3b.

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A2. The situation of marginalized groups of students in the participating countries

In all participating countries, an increasing policy concern, translated into specific legislative provisions, has been observed over the last two decades. According to the relevant legislations all countries take measures to ensure full access to their education systems of all kinds of marginalized groups of students while guaranteeing their fundamental human rights at the same time. However, systematic data records seem to be kept only for immigrant students or students with special educational needs. In all other cases, relevant data can be found on an occasional only basis. Below, we briefly present the image that emerges from the synthesis of all the national reports as far as some of the main categories of marginalized groups of students are concerned (see Appendix A).

Immigrant students

The percentage of foreign students in the participating countries range from 4% in the case of Portugal up to 16.4% in the case of Cyprus (Greece-10% and Ireland-10%). The number of immigrant students is constantly rising over the last decade in all countries (it is characteristic that in the case of Cyprus the relevant number has doubled during the last eight years). However, most of the countries have done only little to cater for the cultural difference of these students. In most of the cases, countries are oriented towards the integration of this group of students into the dominant national culture. Non-national students are more likely to attend big schools in urban areas both at primary and post-primary levels, due to the availability of both employment and available housing. In addition, they are somewhat more likely to attend schools with designated disadvantaged status (e.g. DEIS schools in the case of Ireland)

Roma students

The numbers of Roma children in most cases have not been officially recorded but their percentage can vary from 0% – 12% according to the area a school unit is situated at. Roma children are not integrated at all and a very high percentage generally leaves the educational system after completing the primary level (approximately 75-90% depending on the country). Indeed, their educational profile is characterized by low school enrollment percentages, premature termination of compulsory education, unmannerly stance by classmates, parents and teachers. However, it must be noted that in all countries the level of participation of these students to the education system has shown considerable improvement. Despite these improvements literacy levels remain low. It is characteristic that in Romania that 25% of those over 16yrs state that that they cannot read or write.

Religious minorities

Children of religious minorities are integrated in the school however, no provisions are made for their religious needs and no efforts are made to integrate their religious celebrations etc. into the school life. However, in all countries, these students can be exempted from attending classes where Religious subjects are taught.

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Students with disabilities

The number of students with diagnosed disabilities seems to have increased ever since official records are kept. In all participating countries the vast majority of these students (varying from 70-85%) attend regular schools. In other words all countries seem to have adopted the more inclusive model of coeducation.

Students from remote areas with difficult school access

This group seems to be important only for Greece and Romania where the school network is composed of thousands of comparatively small schools, many with low pupil-teacher ratios, resulting in not only an inefficient system but a system that lacks the capacity to ensure high-quality educational opportunities for all of their young people. Both Greece and Romania have many small, isolated communities in mountainous regions and/or on small islands, which presents a major challenge in efforts to develop a more efficient and high-performing educational system.

In the mountainous or isolated localities, the conditions of travel to and from school (generally located far away from students who attend it by coming from peripheral villages) are very difficult, and during the cold season or in the rainy periods almost impossible. In these schools the school dropout rate is high.

LGBT students

The only country that seems to have some organized intervention concerning this group of students is Ireland. Specifically in Ireland GLEN, The Gay and Lesbian Equality Network, recognise school years as critical years for young people in developing an understanding of themselves and the formation of their identity and a sense of belonging and for this reason it develops a series of interventions for improving the school life of LGBT students. The fact that all rest of the countries have not developed organized policies for addressing the needs of this group of students does not mean that the problem does not exist within their education systems.

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A3. The situation of marginalized groups of students at a European level

At a European level, there seems to exist a rather coherent picture for: a) immigrant students, b) students with special needs and c) roma students. Less information was identified for student from deprived family backgrounds and even less for LGBT students. Below, we present the existing situation of the aforementioned groups of marginalized students at a European level.

Immigrant students

Participation in pre-compulsory early childhood education

In most countries for which there is available data, native and migrant children enrol equally in systems where participation in organised instruction is nearly universal, such as in Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
The second pattern is that children with parents born abroad appear to participate slightly more than native children in Estonia and the Czech Republic. According to the same data set, in both countries the overall participation is rather high. In Portugal, on the other hand, the gap is about 10 percentage points with 100% of migrant-background children registered as participating in ISCED 0. Finally, there is a third group of countries where the participation of children with migrant parents in formal ECEC is lower. This is the case in Austria, Cyprus, Iceland and Italy. The largest discrepancies appear in Iceland and Cyprus in which there is a difference of over 20 and 10 percentage points, respectivel. The same is true for Italy, where the proportion of ECEC children with native parents reaches 96%, compared to 88% for migrant-background children.

Early leavers from education and training
Young people with a migrant background are generally more at risk of exiting the education and training system without having obtained an upper secondary qualification. This is a concerning trend given that early school leaving adds to the already high risk of exclusion faced by young people with migrant background. As shown in Figure 2, the overall disparity between migrant and non-migrant early school leaving rates for the EU-27 is high. The percentage is almost double for young people with a migrant background (26.3% vs. 13.1%), which is similar to figures for 2008; although for both groups there has been a slight overall decrease. The most marked differences in these ratios are in Southern Europe (Greece, Spain, Italy and Cyprus) and France. Within this group, countries in which the overall rate for migrants is far above the EU average are Greece (44.4%), Spain (45%) and Italy (42.4%). The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is also in this category, with 43.8% of migrants and 15.9% native early leavers.

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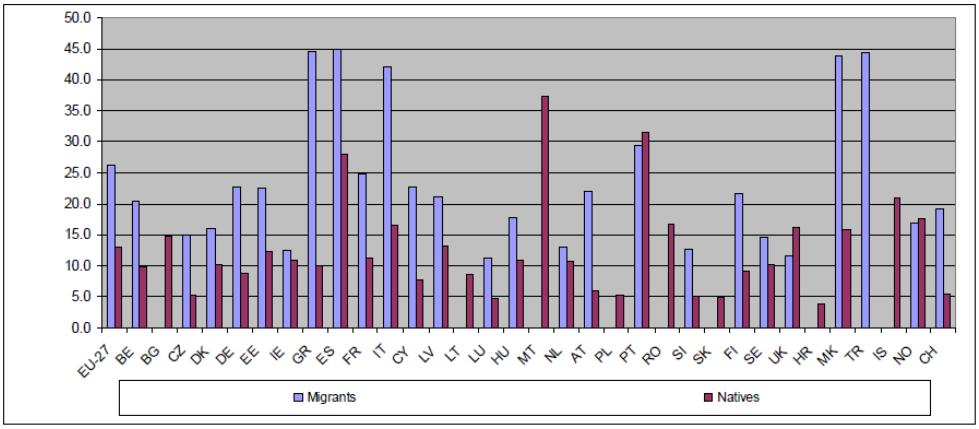
Most other countries, however, display a similar pattern of increased likelihood of early school leaving for students of migrant background, for example, in Austria (22.1% compared to 6.0%) and Germany (22.7% compared to 8.8%), where migrants are between 3 and 4 times more likely to leave the educational system without completing upper secondary education or continuing their education with alternative learning activities. There are a few countries where the situation is reversed, namely Portugal, the United Kingdom and Norway; in the latter case there is little difference in respect to the completion rates for migrants (17.0%) and natives (17.7%).

Figure A.2: Early leavers from education and training by migrant status, 2009 (rates)



Source: Eurostat (LFS)
Notes: Data for Luxembourg, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia, Finland and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia lack reliability due to small sample size
Migrants include non-nationals and those born abroad
*MK: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; see Annex 2

Educational performance of migrant students

Even after accounting for socio-economic background and for the language spoken at home, there is still a considerable achievement gap between native and migrant students.

In comparing the reading literacy achievement of native versus migrant fourth grade students in PIRLS 2006, there is a consistent pattern reflecting migrant students' lower performance. For the majority of countries there is a significant difference of around 40 points between the two groups of students. Latvia is the only country where the difference is much smaller and to the advantage of migrant students.

PISA 2009 data show a broadly constant gap since 2000. In some countries such as Belgium, (from a very high previous level), Denmark, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece the gap is narrowing. In other countries such as Spain, France, Italy and Ireland it is widening. The gap in scores is the widest in Ireland, Finland, Belgium and Sweden. At the EU level, migrant students are one and a half year behind their native peers at the age of 15 with regard to their reading skills.

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It is worth noting that research studies on the learning inequalities amongst immigrant children using other surveys found that immigrant children perform relatively better in mathematics than in reading (Schnepf, 2008). The explanation seems to be that in surveys such as TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science study) most of the mathematics questions are in a multiple-choice format and thus require less language skills. In contrast, reading surveys such as PISA which requires the interpretation of word problems, language proficiency plays a significant role, immigrant children tend to perform even worse. Finally in the majority of countries, second generation migrant students generally perform better than first generation.

Students with special education needs

The inclusion of students with special education needs (SEN) in mainstream schools and, more generally, the goal of inclusive education, has been part of the EU agenda in the field of equity in education for several years.

Recently, Council Conclusions on a Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training identified, among the objectives for the period 2010-2020, the need "to ensure that all learners –including those ...with special needs...-complete their education" (Council, 2009).

There are substantial differences between countries in the definition of what constitutes a special need. Therefore, two different approaches have been applied in the field of international studies on SEN. The first one uses national definitions as the basis of data collection. This is the approach followed by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. An alternative approach, developed by OECD, in order to collect more internationally comparable data, was discussed in the 2009 Progress Report. Recently, Eurostat launched a new project in order to answer the Council request to provide information on the definition of an indicator on special needs education, appropriate data to monitor progress in SEN and other relevant technical specifications (Council, 2007).

Countries include different categories of learners within their definitions of SEN such as disability (sensory, physical and psychological), learning difficulties, behaviour problems, health problems, social or other kinds of disadvantages.

Nevertheless, it is possible to compare the percentage of pupils in compulsory school who are educated in segregated settings, as this refers to a category that most ountries use in data collection.

During the period 2004-2010, the percentage of SEN pupils in segregated settings did in fact increase in most countries. Currently the EU average of SEN pupils in compulsory education taught in segregated settings is 2.3%, including both special schools and segregated classes in mainstream schools.

Notwithstanding this, some changes in national legislation and policy for SEN do highlight possible moves towards inclusion that may later have an impact on this measure. The situation varies between individual countries.

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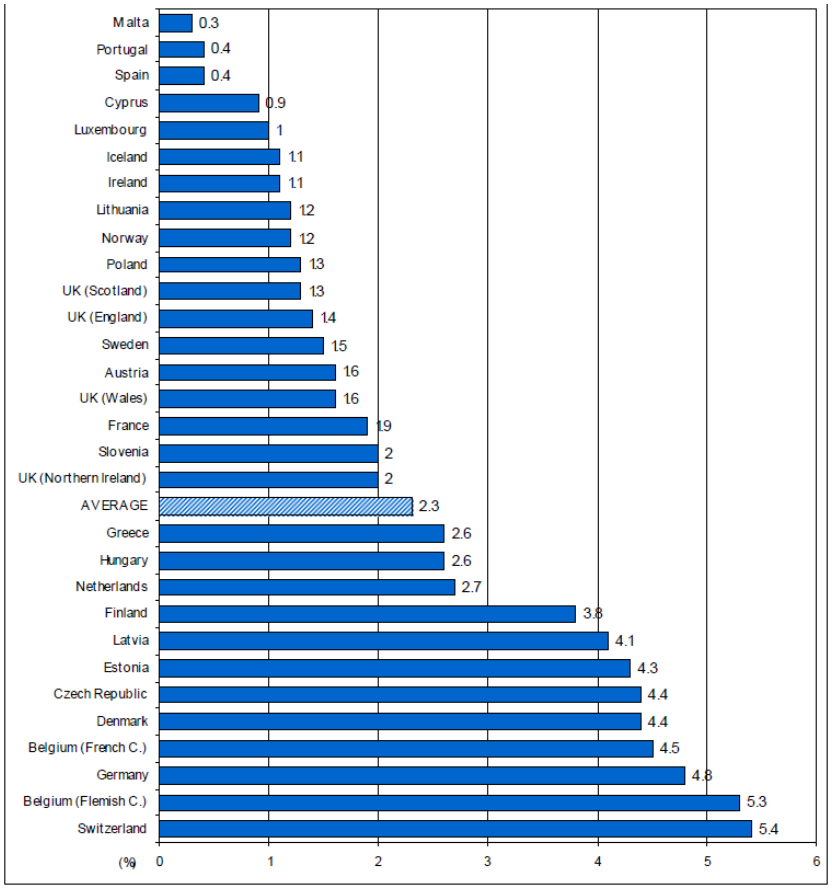
The indicator is about 4-5% in Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and the Czech Republic. It is low (i.e. below 1%) in most Southern European countries. In Italy, where a fully inclusive policy has been put in place, almost no pupils with SEN are educated in segregated settings. Among those above the EU average, the increase during this period was notable in Denmark and the Netherlands. Decreases were most evident in countries with an already low rate of SEN pupils in segregated settings.

Figure A.3: Percentage of students with SEN in all segregated settings (separate schools and classes)



Source: DG Education and Culture and European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

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Roma students
(adapted from http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014_roma-survey_education_tk0113748enc.pdf)

Roma people form Europe's largest ethnic minority and have for centuries constituted an integral part of European society. But despite efforts at national, European and international level to improve the protection of their fundamental rights and advance their social integration, many Roma still face severe poverty, profound social exclusion, barriers to exercising their fundamental rights and discrimination. These problems affect their access to quality education, which, in turn, undermines their employment and income prospects, housing conditions and health status, curbing their overall ability to fully exploit their potential.

Exclusion from education takes different forms: from refusal to enrol Roma children under pressure from non-Roma parents to placement in 'special schools' or ethnically segregated classes. Ethnic segregation is influenced by factors ranging from residential characteristics to anti-Roma prejudice. Concerning ethnic segregation there seem to exist three country groups: Roma children attending schools or classes where all or many of their classmates are also Roma; Roma children attending ethnically mixed but balanced classes; and classes where there are some or no Roma classmates. The first group includes Slovakia and Hungary, where 58% and 45%, respectively, of the children attend classes with all or many Roma pupils (Figure 4). Bulgaria and Spain form the second group with around 60 % of Roma children attending ethnically mixed classes, while in the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Portugal and Poland more than 50% of Roma children attend classes with some or no Roma classmates. Less than 10% of Roma children attend segregated classes in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Poland. About 90% of the Roma children in Poland attend classes with mainly non-Roma, 60% in Portugal and about 50% in the Czech Republic, Italy and France. In Greece, about a third of the Roma children were reported by the household respondents to attend schools or classes, where all or many of their school or classmates were Roma; a quarter attended mixed classes.

In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights concluded in a landmark judgment that placing Roma children in special schools on the basis of their ethnic origin violated the government's obligation to ensure children's access to education without discrimination.
According to the results of the 2011 FRA Roma survey on education, considerable gaps between Roma and non-Roma children persist at all levels of education, from preschool to secondary education. Roma also often find themselves in segregated schools or classes. As an increasing number of young Roma enter the workforce, especially in some Member States, it is particularly worrying to see that on average only 12% of the Roma aged 18 to 24 who have been surveyed had completed upper-secondary general or vocational education. However, the situation is better for younger age groups, which shows not only that progress has been made, but also, more importantly, that further progress is possible and feasible.

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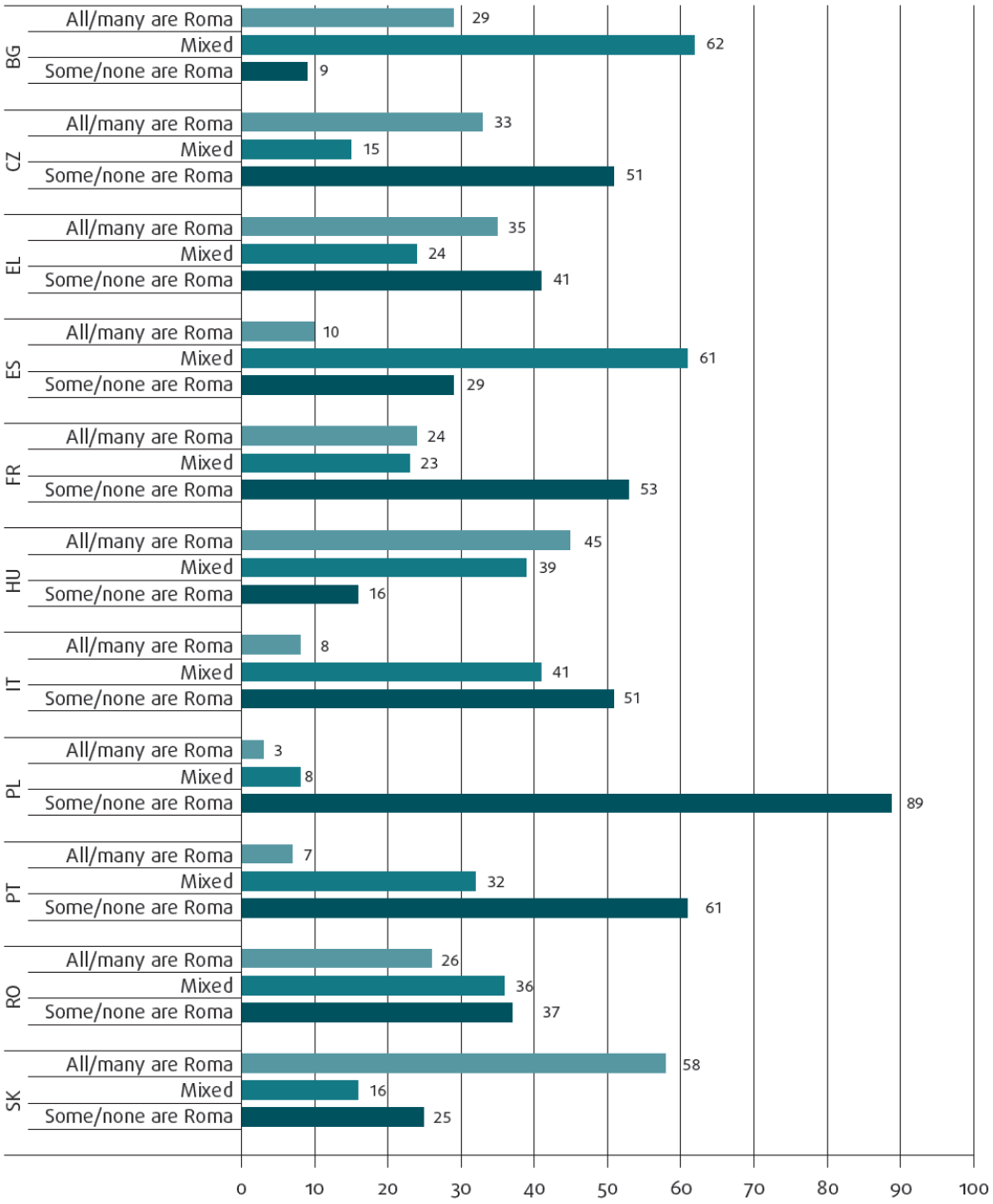
Figure A.4: Ethnic composition of school classes attended by Roma students by EU member state (%)



Question: *B12. What is/was the background of his/her classmates in school or kindergarten?*

Notes: *Information about the ethnic background of the classmates of children (Roma and non-Roma) is used as a rough indicator of the ethnic mix in classrooms. Given that the sampling methodology covers areas where Roma live in higher density than the country average, answers would be expected to reflect a higher proportion of Roma children in a school/kindergarten. It is also worth mentioning that the share of Roma children attending segregated classes is lower in new EU Member States, according to the UNDP results. The methodologies used might in part explain the differences between the two surveys: in the FRA survey a randomly selected respondent in the household provided the information on all children in the household, while the UNDP survey asked the child's main caretaker. Reference group: All children in the surveyed Roma and non-Roma households up to the age of 15 who are or have been in school.*

Source: *FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011*

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According to data presented in the report entitled "*The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States – Survey results at a glance"*, a joint FRA, UNDP, World Bank and European Commission publication, roma students are characterized by:

- **Low preschool attendance:** On average, only half the Roma children surveyed aged 4 up to compulsory school age attended preschool or kindergarten in 2010/2011. In contrast to 70%–97% of non-Roma, only 20 % of Roma aged 6–15 in Greece, and less than 50 % in the Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain had ever attended preschool. The exceptions are Hungary and Poland, where Roma preschool participation is high but still lower than for the non-Roma populations living close by.

- **High compulsory school attendance in most Member States**: With the exception of Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, nine out of 10 Roma children aged 7–15 are reported to attend school. On average, 14% of the Roma children of compulsory school age in the households surveyed are not in education, compared to 3% of the non-Roma children living close by. There are pronounced differences between EU Member States: in Greece, 43 %, and in Romania, 22 %, of school-age children do not attend school, while the share is minor in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Spain (5%–7%). In Bulgaria, France, Italy and Portugal the share of Roma school-age children not attending school is 11%–14%.

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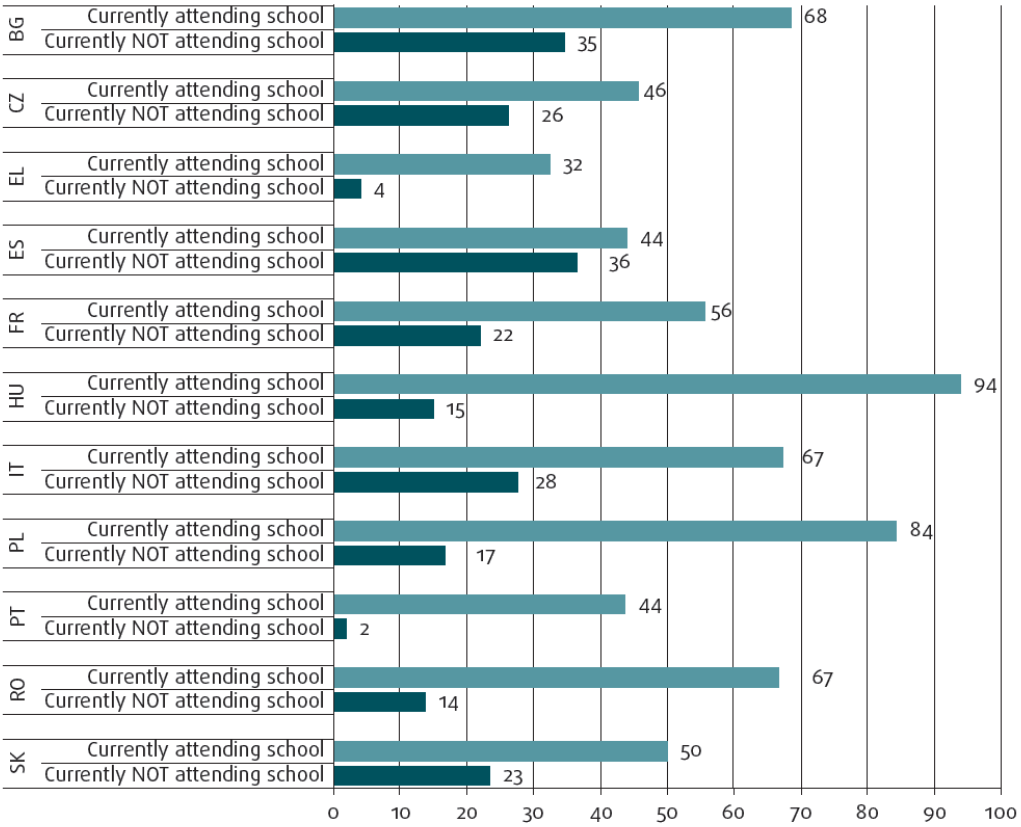
Figure A.5: Roma children of compulsory school age and pre-school experience attending compulsory school or not by EU member state (%)



Question: *Preschool experience:*
B14. Has he/she ever attended kindergarten or preschool?
B9. Which education level was he/she attending this (IN SUMMER ASK: the previous) school year?
Not attending school:
B9. Which education level was he/she attending this (IN SUMMER ASK: the previous) school year? 01 Not yet in education 06 temporarily not in school/skipped the year) 07 Stopped working completely 08 Working.

Note: *Reference group: All children in the surveyed Roma households of compulsory school-age up to age 15*

Source: *FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011*

- **Low completion rates of secondary education**: Only 15 % of those Roma adults aged 20–24 who were surveyed had completed upper-secondary general or vocational education. On average, 89 % of the Roma surveyed aged 18 to 24 had not acquired any upper secondary qualification compared to 38 % of non-Roma living close by. The share of Roma not having completed upper secondary education was highest in Greece, France, Portugal, Romania and Spain, at more than 90 %.

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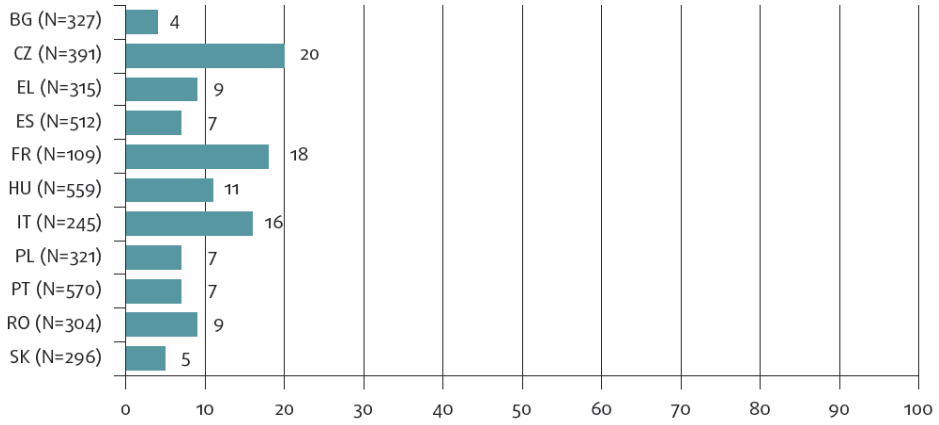
- On the other hand, data hint at a **positive change over time in some Member States**. In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Italy, for instance, Roma aged 18 to 24 have higher **upper secondary completion rates** than Roma of older age groups. In France, Greece, Portugal, Romania and Spain, however, completing upper secondary school remains rare also for the young age group (below 10%).

To identify possible reasons for non-attendance the survey asked respondents why they stopped going to school or why they never attended school. Respondents could choose up to three different answers from a list of twelve. Possible responses included financial reasons, such as the need to work and the cost of education, given that households have associated costs. Other responses reflect circumstantial reasons, such as illness, long distance from school, marriage and childbirth or a lack of documents, as well as aspirational reasons, such as did poorly at school or judged to be sufficiently educated. Finally there are reasons related to the school environment, which may, for example, be hostile. Migration and the necessity to assist in the household or family business were not among the defined response categories and fall under 'other', the response chosen most frequently in Portugal, Italy, Spain and France.

The FRA survey of 2011 also asked whether respondents had felt discriminated against by school staff because of their ethnic origin at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. The relevant results are shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure A.6: Roma respondents aged 16 and above who experienced discrimination in education in the last 12 months, by EU Member state (as a % of those Roma who had contact with education institutions)



Questions: *J2E. Over the past 5 years (or since you have been in the country, if less than 5 years) have you ever in [COUNTRY] come into contact with an education or training institution either as a student or a parent? 01 yes.*
J3E: Over the last 5 years in [COUNTRY], [or since you have been in the country if less than 5 years], have you ever been discriminated against by people working in a school or in training? This includes schools, colleges and other further education. This could have happened to you as a student or as a parent. 01 yes.
J5E: Thinking about the last time this happened, when was this: in the last twelve months or before then?
Notes: *Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above who have been in contact with educational institutions in the last 5 years.*
Source: *FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011*

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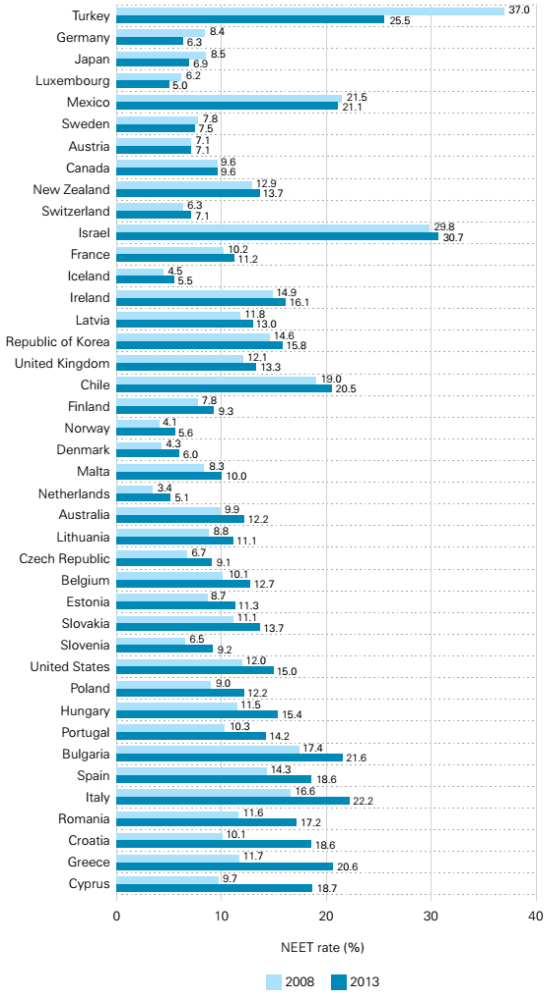
Given the overall poor educational situation of Roma compared to that of non-Roma, the low rates of perceived discrimination in this area and the even lower reporting rates may come as a surprise, but might be explained either in terms of the overall importance attached to education or the way in which 'discrimination in education' was interpreted by the respondents. The fact that Roma in Italy, the Czech Republic and Hungary more often reported experiences of discrimination in the survey and were also more willing to report such incidents to the authorities could be related to more rights awareness and the greater impact of equality bodies.

Students from deprived family backgrounds

The recent financial crisis has had deleterious effects on families' income in all participating countries and thus has impacted all aspects of children's lives including education. According to Figure 7 shown below, the youth aged 15-25 characterized as NEETS (not in education, employment or training) has dramatically increased in most of the participating countries (Portugal, Greece, Cyprus and Romania).

Figure A.7: Youth aged 15-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET)
(Source: Unicef, 2014)



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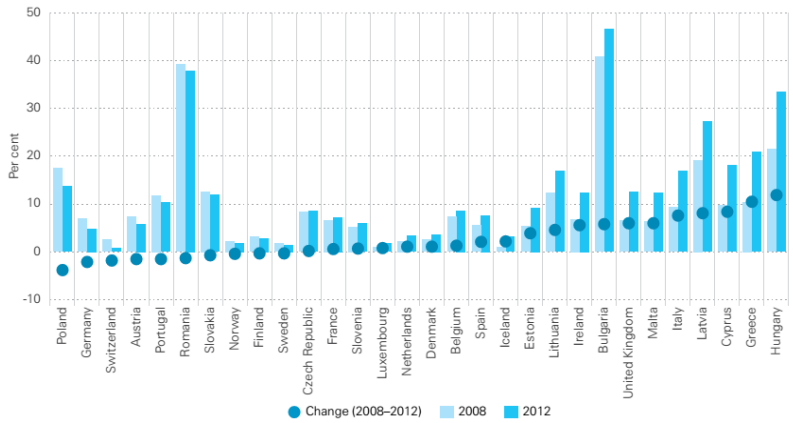
The same picture emerges from Figure A.8, depicting the change in severe child material deprivation, especially for the cases of Greece and Cyprus.

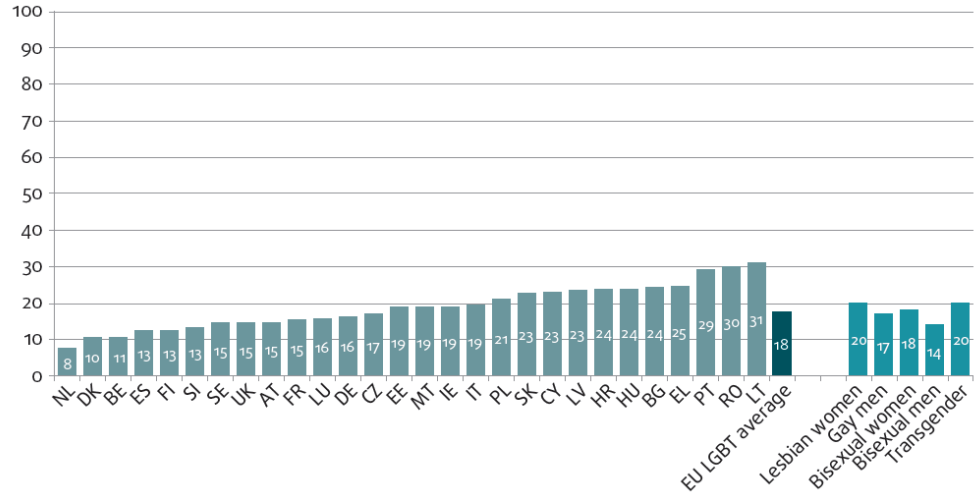
Figure A.8: Change in severe child material deprivation (2008-2013)
(Source: Unicef, 2014)



LGBT students

As shown in Figure A.9 below, a significant percentage of students in all countries feels discriminated against by school or university personnel because of being LGBT.

Figure A.9: Respondents who felt discriminated against by school or university personnel in the last 12 months because of being LGBT, by country and by LGBT group (%)



Question: *C4. During the last 12 months, have you personally felt discriminated against because of being [category on the basis of A3 or A4] in any of the following situations: Answer: F. By school/university personnel?*

Note: *Categories for self-identification in A3 and A4 included transgender, transsexual, woman with a transsexual past, man with a transsexual past, gender variant, cross dresser, queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.*

Base: *EU LGBT survey respondents who have attended school/university themselves or whose child/children was/were in school/at university in the past 12 months.*

Source: *FRA, EU LGBT survey, 2012*

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A4. Flagship inclusive and fair education policies in the participating countries

All national reports include a wide range of flagship inclusive and fair education policies in the corresponding countries. According to the type of beneficiaries these policies fall into the following main categories:

- Support of students with special needs
- Interventions for supporting weaker students and preventing school drop out
- Catering from students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Catering for socially disadvantaged students
- Strengthening VET education options for students from lower socio-ecomomi backgrounds
- Anti-racist and democratic citizenship education against social exclusion and discrimination
- Improvement of health school action plans.

Most of these national policies have been launched relatively recently (since the mid of 2000s) while some of them are still at a pilot stage. Moreover, in many cases countries seem to provide similar solutions, especially in the case of students from disadvantaged communities as well in the cases of special and intercultural education.
Specifically for students from disadvantaged communities both Greece and Ireland have the model of zones of educational priority (ZEP in Greece, DEIS: Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools' Action Plan in Ireland and Priority Intervention Education Territories Program (TEIP) in Portugal). According to this model policies focus on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years). This is accomplished through the provision of more human and financial resources to schools in areas with social indicators of high poverty, unemployment and social conflict.
In the case of intercultural education two are the dominant policies. On the one hand special cross-cultural schools are established in regions with a high population density of foreign, repatriated or Roma pupils. According to the second model the general curricula of state schools are reinforced by reception classes and tutorials, by special educational activities and by additional learning materials and staff in order to achieve the smooth and balanced social and educational integration of pupils. Importance is attached to the effective learning of the national language.
Finally in the field of special education in general, educational provision for children with special needs is made:

- In special schools;
- In special classes attached to ordinary schools;
- In integrated settings in mainstream classes.

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A5. Flagship inclusive and fair education policies at European level

On 17 March 2015 in Paris the 'Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education' was adopted by the EU Education Ministers.
The Declaration defined common objectives for Member States and urged the EU to ensure the sharing of ideas and good practices with a view to:

- *'Ensuring that children and young people acquire social, civic and intercultural competences, by promoting democratic values and fundamental rights, social inclusion and non-discrimination, as well as active citizenship'*

- *'Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the Internet and social media, so as to develop resistance to all forms of discrimination and indoctrination'*

- *'Fostering the education of disadvantaged children and young people, by ensuring that our education and training systems address their needs'*

- *'Promoting intercultural dialogue through all forms of learning in cooperation with other relevant policies and stakeholders'*

This effort will be shielded by a series of concrete measures to be taken during 2016 and 2017 by the European Commission. Such measures include:

- 'Mobilizing funding' is one measure to make support the development of innovative policy approaches and practices and thus 400 million EUR has been made available to transnational partnerships.

- 'Better knowledge and policy support' is another measure aiming to reinforce the collection of concrete evidence at EU level with regards to policy support on inclusive education. Further to this: a) a policy framework for promoting inclusion and fundamental values through education and an online-compendium of good practices, will be developed as part of the ET2020 Working Group, b) the annual Education and Training Monitor will be taken into consideration as it captures the evolution of Europe's education and training systems by bringing together a wide array of evidence in one report, c) conduct and evaluation of a study on citizenship education across Europe by Eurydice in Member States (2017), d) release of a report titled: "Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training", which examines how European education systems can better prepare future citizens for tolerance, respect for diversity and civic responsibility.

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- 'Teachers and Schools'. Specifically, the European Commission will: a) enhance the use of eTwinning, connecting teachers and classrooms across Europe, to step up support to teachers and foster exchanges, b) establish a network under the Erasmus+ programme to allow direct contacts with positive role models for young people, such as entrepreneurs, artists, sportspersons, as well as formerly radicalised people, c) expand the European Toolkit for School which is a new online platform, offering good practice examples and resources on how to introduce collaborative approaches in schools to improve inclusiveness and achieve success for all, d) encourage more teacher training courses on citizenship education through Erasmus+. The objective is to empower teachers to deal with today's more diverse classrooms and to bring into practice the Paris Declaration principle.

- 'Higher Education'. The European Commission encourages higher education institutions to award credits for volunteering and to develop curricula that combine academic content with civic engagement.

- With regards to 'Youth work Volunteering and Virtual exchanges', the EU via the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges aims to promote online engagement with young people outside the EU by providing a structured platform for cross-cultural awareness, understanding and cooperation, run by trained moderators. Furthermore, develop a specific toolkit, with practical guidance, methods and case studies for training youth workers and youth organizations to reach out and work with young people at risk of marginalization. Also, strengthen the European Voluntary Service and especially promoting diversity, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, common values of freedom, tolerance and respect of human rights. Finally, reinforce support to grass-roots youth projects in Erasmus+.

The last measure concerns 'Sport'. The European Commission will promote successful and innovative projects through a European Award for social inclusion in sports.

Moreover, a large number of projects have been conducted under the ERASMUS+ Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport spanning various thematic areas form inclusion to marginalized youth, leadership, equality, citizenship and others. A number of these projects have been distinguished for impact, contribution to policy-making and innovation among other parameters. So far the ERASMUS+ Programme can showcase includes 21 distinguished projects out of 331 dealing with inclusion, 4/103 on leadership, 3/149 on disability, 3/21 on tackling marginalization and many more. Projects are focused on literature reviews as well as case studies leading to data driven results, tools and best practice examples. These projects and other ongoing efforts are the ones that contributed and will continue to contribute to the EU overall policy on 'promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education'.

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In help of paving the way to a more inclusive European education a number of reviews and case studies analysis have been also undertaken to identify issues that affect inclusion, such as educational leadership, interventions and their effectiveness, tools and processes, organizational and instructional shortcomings, continued education for school leaders and educational staff and other aspect on educational practices across Europe.

Therefore, it is a core European policy that education and training should **enable all citizens to benefit from quality education** and to acquire and update over a lifetime the knowledge, skills, and competences needed for employment, inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment.

Inequalities persist though in European education systems. Pupils from poor socio-economic backgrounds perform worse at school than their peers in all EU countries. Children from immigrant backgrounds, the disabled, and Roma children are among the most vulnerable groups affected. At the same time, there are large differences between countries in the extent to which family background influences learning outcomes.

Against this background, Europe seeks to implement more efficient but at the same time more inclusive and equitable education systems, which give access to quality educational provision. The European Union actively supports and supplements Member States efforts in this regard.

Apart from those already mentioned, a series of more focused European initiatives in recent years have provided strong stimulus, comparison and policy guidance to help Member States strengthen equity in their education systems in a way that would ensure both quality and fairness. These include:

- The Council Recommendation on Roma integration measures
- The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies which explicitly links the success of the Europe 2020 strategy to inclusion in education. The Framework, adopted in 2011, identifies a clear goal for Roma education that each EU Member State should achieve and develop in its own national integration strategies: “Ensure that all Roma children complete at least primary school”
- The Council Conclusions on the social dimension of higher education
- The Communication on National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020
- The Communication on early childhood education and care
- The Council Recommendation on reducing early school leaving
- The Council Conclusions on the social dimension of education and training
- The Working Document on education and mobility/migration
- The Communication on Efficiency and Equity in European Education Systems

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As part of its commitment to promoting evidence-based policy-making in education, the European Commission issues independent reviews of research on equity-related issues, principally through the Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training. These summarise existing knowledge on specific topics, provide independent policy guidance and set out the supporting evidence.

In addition, the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education provides analysis, evidence and information about the reality of inclusive education across Europe, recommendations for policy and practice as well as tools to evaluate and monitor progress.

Specifically for immigrant students, schools across Europe are seeing a rise in the number of children born and raised in a different country. This can place strain on language teaching capacity and many immigrant children lag behind in academic achievement. In fact, students born outside the EU are twice as likely to leave school early. The Commission has established the Sirius network (http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/), comprising researchers, policy-makers, and NGOs seeking to improve policy implementation on migration and education across the EU. The Commission also monitors the achievement gap between local and migrant children in the EU school systems.

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A6. Decision making processes at the school level

All participating countries (apart from Ireland) have very centralized education systems that leave little space to school units to adapt their work according to the special conditions of their local communities or their student populations. Specifically, apart from Ireland and Portugal, schools have a very limited range of decisions to take which are mainly related to procedural and administrative tasks. In particular schools in Greece, Romania, and Cyprus have restricted freedom to decide on curricular or strategic planning issues. However, schools in Portugal and Ireland are more autonomous in making decisions on curricular and teaching issues. Especially in Portugal at the school level, the curriculum reform and legal framework which gives schools more autonomy over curriculum management, instruction time and flexibility in planning teacher's training has been launched very recently in 2012. Moreover, these two countries seem to have launched more systematic school level programs for tackling the problems of marginalized groups of students.

In all countries the central decision making body at school level consists of the school principals and two or three deputy principals. Therefore, the administrative structure of schools is highly hierarchical. Teachers, students, parents, representatives of local communities are also represented in school governing bodies but have more the role of consultants to the decision making processes. Exception to this is Greece which schools are governed through a highly democratic and participative decision making model. Even for the restricted fields that decisions are left to the school unit in this country, these decisions are taken from the school assembly which is the main decision body a principal must consult with for all important issues. However, in practice this participative process has been transformed to a mere ritual rather a substantial decision-making process. The reason for this is that all parts recognize that their opinion is asked for but for only trivial issues.

Another deviating case is that of Ireland where the internal school management team is led by the school Principal and may consist of the Principal, Vice Principals, 'A' post/posts of responsibility holders, Programme/Education Coordinators and student support team. Within the school setting decisions regarding inclusiveness and student welfare are made at this level.

In the most centralized systems of Romania, Greece and Cyprus studies show that a tremendous amount of bureaucracy largely shapes the daily routine of the school principals. Namely, the school administration, organization and internal relationships are the most important areas school principals are expected to actively decide on and implement. However in these countries, educational-pedagogic issues constitute a marginal area of principals' activities and consequently decision-making in this area.

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A7. Literature review (studies, practices, etc) concerning decision making for inclusion at school level in the participating countries

There were identified very few empirical studies concerning decision making for inclusion at school level in the participating countries.
These studies mainly concern:

- Students with learning difficulties
- Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Roma students
- LGBT students
- Immigrant, refugees, asylum seekers students
- Disabled students
- Students with serious health problems
- Students from deprived family backgrounds

However, Categories related to Students with mental health difficulties, students belonging to religious minorities and students from remote areas with difficult school access they have no studies that can respond to the points mentioned.

Most of the relevant studies follow a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches and aim at either revealing best school practices for serving the needs of marginalized groups of students or at evaluating the effects of relevant school programmes.
According to their findings what seems to work in favour of marginalized groups are the following according to the school policy domain they fall:

<u>Teaching and learning</u>

- Teaching and learning should be greatly influenced by the cultural and socioeconomic background of the students.
- Teachers' freedom to be involved in subjects which were relevant to their interests regardless the fact if are precisely included in the curriculum or not.
- Provision of time for planning and training for differentiation, so that the school can create opportunities for teachers to develop skills and confidence as co-teachers.
- Experimentation on new collaborative experiences such as multidisciplinary meetings, group teaching and collaborative teaching in which the teachers engaged, challenge their beliefs and assumptions about special needs and move the school to a more inclusive culture.
- Implementation of individualized students' support programmes.
- Conceptualisation of therapy and education as similar and not disparate areas of work.
- Organization of projects in informal learning environments.

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Model of decision making (school culture)

- Close cooperation between educators and other professionals supporting vulnerable students.
- Encouragement for teachers' involvement in decision making.
- Adoption of a collaborative teacher model based on using the non-teaching time of a number of teachers to support other teachers and pupils with disabilities.
- Parents' involvement in the process of school decision making.
- The presence of the figure of the socio-cultural mediator at school can be decisive in the fight against prejudice and stereotypes at schools.
- Dissemination of the culture of foreign origin students through lectures, debates and exhibitions in conjunction with dissemination of the culture of the native students.
- Promotion of healthy eat habits at school lunches as a measure against childlrens' obesity.

On the other hand a significant number of studies have identified as a core barrier to inclusive school policies, the negative or poor attitudes of teaching staff towards the ideals of inclusive education and its effectiveness to produce visible positive outcomes for marginalized students.
However, all studies dealing with the evaluation of school level inclusive policies show positive results both in terms of marginalized students' learning outcomes as well as in terms of their adaptation and attitudes towards school environment.
For a full account of all national reports concerning this part you can see Appendix A.

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A8. International literature review concerning decision making for inclusion at school level

A review by Reichrath, de Witte &Winkens (2010) revealed that many different interventions have been implemented in general education for students with disabilities. Interventions range from: (1) macro-level interventions aimed at policy and programmes; (2) services and support interventions aimed at improving the general functioning of students with disabilities; (3) intervention for improving very specific skills such as reading; to (4) assistive technology interventions and adjustments. However, the majority of interventions are successful in improving academic performance rather than participation in the school life and inclusion.

Another recent review considered the ways in which elementary and secondary principals envision and act to foster inclusion within a school community (Cobb, 2015). Out of the 19 studies considered, inclusive programme delivery, staff collaboration, and parental engagement proved to be the important core domains of special education. In order to promote inclusion, principals take on seven key roles namely: visionary, partner, coach, conflict resolver, advocate, interpreter, and organiser. The identification of these roles serves a multi-fold purpose: identification of work related stress, identification of skills needed, and learning experiences to benefit individuals aiming to become principals. (Cobb, 2015)

Moreover the review conducted by Ryans (2006) reveals that inclusive leadership is the new and promising way to work towards social justice in a school context. However, there are many obstacles to overcome such as: a reluctance to recognize exclusive practices already in place, placing the responsibility of organizations in the hands of individuals, cynicism towards empowerment etc.

One issue highlighted in international research is that the policies are not necessarily enforced as they have been designed. Another issue highlighted is that the individuals in charge of practicing inclusion have to share the same perception of inclusion and embrace it. Also, that the main shift in perception has to happen from a traditional view to one of collaboration. Indeed it is stressed that there exists an importance of shared obligation for inclusion of school personnel, administrators, policy-makers, parents and peers. Furthermore, that inclusion should be over and beyond the physical dimension but rather relate to the way the system is organized in order to give all students access to learning while acknowledging diversity. Inclusion will have to entail the sharing of professional knowledge by all staff members–administration, general education teachers, special education teachers, therapists. The effort needed in order to create inclusive schools that afford relevant education to all children, including those with disabilities should be a continuous dynamic process and should be considered one of the significant goals of the educational system. It is important to create new and improved learning environments in which all children can optimally be cared for (Shani & Koss, 2015).

Another issue highlighted through various papers is that of intercultural education. According to Leeman (2003) intercultural education has a purpose which is to prepare studentents to live in an ethnically and culturallydiverse society.

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As it is needed to comply with current trends with education, also connect with how teachers define their problems, needs and interests, it is difficult for school management teams achieve comprehensive intercultural education. Sometimes difficult subjects such as anti-racism are dropped. In order for intercultural education to work, the educational objectives have to be clearly monitored and linked to the development of a safe, democratic school. Emphasis is placed on the appropriateness of the school climate as intercultural diversity may give rise to important dilemmas pertaining to fundamental values such as the "right to autonomy", the "right to freedom of choice" and "freedom of expression" (Leeman, 2003).

According to Ballard (2013), there needs to be a change in the ideas that determine policy and practice in order to achieve sustainable inclusion in education. 'Sustainable inclusion in education may only be achieved through a social and political environment that is focused on the idea of an inclusive society in which equity and social justice are the predominant goals and notions of caring and interdependence take precedence over selfishness, materialism and market competition' (Ballaer, 2013, p.772).

Inclusive schools should develop relationships of love, care and acceptance between students and teachers. It is hard to feel isolated and marginalized if students are encircled by an environment of love and care then it will be difficult for them to be isolated and marginalized. The existence of a climate of acceptance decreases exclusion and increases the inclusion of all in school processes (Angelides, Antoniou & Charalambous, 2010).

What kind of skills and commitments do educational leaders need to be able to lead inclusive schools? Sharing and analyzing the pedagogy and curriculum from nationally renowned scholars might help in the preparation of others intending to become inclusive school leaders. Some leaders might resist or may not have seen a different way. However, by supporting future leaders, it is possible to help them see themselves as agents of change. Also, it is possible to inspire them to 'imagine, create, and maintain a bold new educational system where all students rightfully belong' (Theoharis&Causton-Theoharis, 2008, p.242).

Below we review some selected studies examining school level decision making processes and models as well as the use of tools to support decision making with regards to marginalized groups of students.

A Case Study of a Highly Effective, Inclusive Elementary School

The following investigation takes the case of a highly effective inclusive elementary school, revealing several key practices that were important in meeting the needs of all students in this school (McLeskey, Waldron & Redd, 2014). Creekside Elementary School, US (CES; a pseudonym) was selected using critical case sampling. Key parameters were inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms and academic performance for students with disabilities or those who struggle in core content areas that were well above district and state averages.

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Qualitative case study methods were used in this investigation to examine the critical features of CES, leading to 22 individual interviews with teachers and administrators. The approach took a three step approach. Initial interviews with open ended questions to derive the themes of the second round of interviews, and intermediate observations of the inclusion program applied in the classroom setting. Several methods were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the themes that emerged such as triangulation across observations and interviews, prolonged observation and engagement within the observed settings, peer debriefing of data analysis and feedback loop with school actors for validity of the emerged themes.

This investigation examined the key qualities that supported high student achievement in an inclusive elementary school. The major themes that emerged related to student support and instructional quality. These themes addressed teacher perspectives and beliefs about meeting the needs of all students, how these beliefs were enacted in classrooms, and how teachers improved their skills to meet the needs of all students.

The principal at Creekside, Ms. Richards pointed out that the program started out and continues to grow with the sole goal of meeting all kids' needs. As such it is a highly data driven process that is tied up with curriculum and overall expectation, supported by teachers, administrators and school staff. As such data **are used to inform all decisions**, and because of data processing being the core of the program there is emphasis on high-quality instruction, supported by a highly collaborative environment and continues school staff education, leading to targeted and measurable outcomes at all steps.

A Case Study of Principal Leadership in an Effective Inclusive School

An investigation examined the role of the principal in school change, in Hawk's Nest Elementary, Florida (a pseudonym) (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2010). The school enrolls approximately 460 students and has 27 teachers. With a mix of ethnic backgrounds, family income difficulties, and an 18% share of students with a disability, the school demonstrates a highly inclusive environment.
Qualitative methods were used to conduct a case study of one principal who had a record of success in leading school change efforts and developing a model inclusive program. The principal who participated in this investigation, Tom Smith (a pseudonym), was chosen using purposeful sampling. This case study took place during one school year and combined ethnographic methods (interviews and observations) with a phenomenological lens (observation) to study the lived experience of principal Tom Smith's point of view and gain an understanding of how one principal conceptualizes, negotiates, and enacts his role in today's era of high-stakes accountability.

Evidence suggested that Tom believes his role is to provide a setting that is supportive of teachers and that helps them to do their best possible work. Central to Tom Smith's believes is an **ethic of care**, evident as he "personally invests and works closely with his teachers."

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Tom seeks to build and sustain relationships as well as create a community that embraces these values. As in other case studies Tom strives for a reasonable balance between mandated standards and school-developed goals, thus he and his faculty work collaboratively to develop their own standards and measures of accountability. As such a data driven process plays a key role in identifying and acting upon less than expected learning outcomes as well as marginalization issues within the school setting. Furthermore ties and partnerships with the local community are an extension of Tom's vision to building strong classroom communities, developing solid citizens, and making steady academic progress with community groups.

Part of Tom's leadership responsibilities is to ensure that his teachers are engaged in high-quality, job-embedded professional development as he views professional development as a vehicle for promoting individual and collective growth among teachers around topics that are important to his staff. This is closely tied to leadership delegation where Tom seeks to create natural opportunities for teachers to lead projects as part professional development activities.

School change that results in inclusive programs, which improve outcomes for all students, is characterized by components similar to those addressed by Tom Smith at Hawk's Nest Elementary. Principals continue to be responsible for organizing and managing their schools, however they also must assume a range of other roles to meet accountability demands, provide support for teachers, and meet a broad range of student needs. This suggests a revisit in the preparation of principals in inclusion strategies for changing school culture and developing learning communities within schools.

Improving Support Service Decision-Making: consumer feedback regarding updates to VISTA

The following study takes into account the feedback of 73 educational team members who used an updated version of the Vermont Interdependent Services Team Approach (VISTA) to assist them in planning educationally necessary support services for 11 students with multiple disabilities in general education classes (Giangreco, Edelman, Nelson, Young & Kiefer- O'Donnell, 1999).

VISTA, is a team planning process for making individual decisions about educationally necessary support services (e.g., physical therapy, speech/language pathology, psychological services) for students with disabilities. It is based on a series of guiding principles and includes a set of systematic steps to assist teams with their decision making. It is purposely not standardized so that teams are encouraged to apply its principles and procedures in contextually individualised ways.

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VISTA as a process faces certain limitations. These revolve around requirements such as team meetings to discuss each individual student's case, which by default collides with team member schedules and heavy daily routines. Additional restrictions arise as new members of a VISTA group need to be mentored into the process, and thirdly concerns have been voiced as to the nature and validity of parent and educator input in the decision making process over that of support service personnel.

A *Supplement* to VISTA was developed to augment the information and procedures included in the VISTA manual in an effort to be responsive to consumer feedback. The first step was to establish **the core teams. They consist of the parents, classroom teacher, and special educator**. As such the core teams have fewer team members and the option to get input from support service personnel without necessitating their presence at a VISTA meeting. Fewer meetings take place for shorter intervals and those who spend more time with the students with disabilities are in the core of the decision making process. Following the above more emphasis was placed on knowledge transfer in strengthening team members' awareness and analysis of needs and thus recognizing the potential contributions and involvement of support services.

A posttest-only design was used in this evaluation of the updates. Overall study participants (97%) indicated that the updated version of VISTA provided significant opportunities for input from core team members, special educators, parents, and teachers while retaining a high level of involvement from related service providers. Additionally, they indicated that it puts more decision authority in the hands of consumers (e.g., classroom teachers, parents) than earlier versions of VISTA and their ratings indicated that they perceived VISTA as practical. However training levels and editing of the VISTA manual were suggested by participants when asked to provide their feedback indicating more work needs to be done in the future.

In conclusion this study shows that while the clarification of underlying values which influence planning and decision-making (e.g. inclusion, collaboration, individualisation) is essential to effective team functioning, so too is setting the necessary guidelines that set the operational basis of such processes.

Making Sense of Social Justice Leadership: A Case Study of a Principal's Experiences to Create a More Inclusive School

The following qualitative case study examined an elementary school principal in an urban setting (De Matthews, 2015). It focuses on how she managed to lead to a more inclusive school albeit the high-poverty environment. It is focused on social justice leadership as practiced by the principal and the intricacies of including its principles in school practices.

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A qualitative case study method was utilized to provide an in-depth analysis of the sensemaking and social justice leadership practice. The school had a high percentage African-American students enrolled and increased access to the general-education classroom for students with disabilities over the course of the principal's tenure. Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews with the principal, short interviews with teachers and staff, school observations focused on the principal engaged in leadership actions, and documents collected from the school and district. The focus of the study was in the understanding and monitoring the principal's sensemaking of inclusion and its fluctuations, the actions to create a more inclusive school, challenges, successes, and failures that arose within the school and community

Principal Lee, the focus of this study, acted based on the belief that "Inclusion means students getting access to the general-education curriculum and all the rights and experiences of their peers", identifying school culture as the key to accommodate inclusion. In that, consistency against adversity is critical especially in overcoming social barriers and status quo resistance, a task principal Lee had to tackle, sometimes coming from teachers themselves. She also had to handle her lack of expertise which has led to the hire of a consultant who could bring in more tangible expertise filling in her gaps where needed. In terms of taking action she believed that ineffective planning and instruction was a marginalizing force for all students, but particularly for students with disabilities.

The primary tool for creating a more inclusive and high-performing school was **professional learning communities (PLC)**, which included: (a) weekly grade-level meetings to discuss students, problem-solve, and share ideas⁄strategies; (b) bi-weekly grade-level professional development sessions directed by teacher surveys or from administrator observations; and (c) weekly special education–team meetings focused on auditing Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) quality, discussion placement options for students, and problem-solving logistical or instructional challenges to meeting the needs of students.

Principal Lee and her consultant took numerous steps to build capacity, address deficit perspectives of faculty, and create structures that would better support all students, with evident differences in the performance of students with disabilities and marginalized young African-American male students. She was able to recognize inequality, restructure school resources around tackling it and reshape the school structure towards inclusiveness and social justice. However two years following the study she was asked to resign. The reason being that although social justice is required for inclusion, it cannot be the only agent of change. Other factors required in the equation such as professional development of staff were not adequately considered and played a negatively detrimental role in long term sustainability of principal Lee's sensemaking based changes.

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School leadership and equity: Dutch experiences

The following study was focused on the ethnic diversity issues of three urban primary schools in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the respective school leaders and their response to the changing socioeconomic environment (Leeman, 2007).

The immigrant to Dutch decent of the schools in this study was, Droom in Amsterdam 25% to 75%, Reis in Amsterdam 78% immigrant (half Moroccan) and 22% Dutch, Bloem in Rotterdam almost 50/50 immigrant/Dutch. The three schools chosen have an ethnoculturally diverse student population and were identified as having an interculturally inclusive profile.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the principal of each of the schools in their office setting. All principals were male of Dutch descent. Interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and sent for approval to the principals. Relevant policy documents were collected and analysed, short conversations were conducted with two parents and with four teachers in one of the schools. A variety of observational data were collected to complete the data such as signs to visitors (languages), and cultural artefacts present in the schools.
The three schools have a diverse (cultural, religious and socioeconomic background) student population and as such they see it as their task to recognize difference and foster equal opportunities for success at school. Two of the principals actively strive for a good balance in ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic background. The other emphasizes community relations and therefore opts for a student population that mirrors the ethnic diversity of the school's local surroundings. The mixed composition of the student population is reflected on all schools' policy and strategy, both official and unofficial. The three principals have developed their own policies towards an inclusive environment, using external and internal strategies to achieve the ideal composition and to offer children safety and good quality education. External policy such as marketing a profile and the gate-keeping methods of the principals are also important. At the same time measures have been put in place to bond groups of parents and children to the school, focusing on the pedagogic approach, the curriculum, social safety and the composition of the team. However managing diversity and communality is not an easy task, as there is still very little shared knowledge.

A crucially restrictive factor is **the scarcity of teachers from minority cultures**. The schools have virtually no group teachers from an ethnic minority background, unlike in positions such as cultural intermediary, assistant and subject specialist. The principals interviewed favor a mixed community in their schools, however their stories show that distributive justice alone is insufficient to engage with the cultural complexity of today.

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Leadership for successful inclusive schools: A study of principal behaviours

According to Guzman (1997) who conducted an in-depth qualitative study with schoolprincipals, the following recommendations should be pursued so as to promote successful inclusive practices at schools:

(1) Pre-service and in-service programmes for principals should highlightand underscore the acquisition of knowledge and skills in conflict resolution, staffing management, problem solving, collaborative decision making, student discipline, parent relationships, and inclusive practices.
(2) Principals of inclusive schools should be evaluated for demonstration of skills in conflict resolution, staffing management, problem solving, collaborative decision making, student discipline, and parent relationships.
(3) Principals of inclusive schools should be required to have a personal plan of professional development that includes issues associated with inclusion.
(4) Principals of inclusive schools should be required to guide their staff in a collaborative process of developing a building philosophy of inclusive practices.
(5) Districts should develop definitions of successful inclusive schools and should collaboratively develop district philosophies of inclusive practices.
(6) Superintendents (supervisors) should reinforce, reward, and support principals who create successful inclusive schools.
(7) Principals of successful inclusive schools should be utilized in providing mentorship for the principals of less successful schools.
(8) A survey instrument should be developed to assess the success of schools in the implementation of inclusive practices.
(9) A survey of randomly-selected elementary schools should be conducted to determine the degree of success with inclusive practices and to refine the findings from this study further.
(10) Researchers in the areas of special education and educational leadership should collaborate to conduct research in the area of inclusive schools'

(Guzman, 1997 p.448).

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Part B: Needs analysis-Results from the questionnaires

B1. Methodological aspects of the quantitative study of needs analysis

In each country a sample of about 100 persons were randomly selected according to the sampling scheme presented in table B.1 below. Only in Cyprus, due to its smaller school system, the sample was agreed to consist of 60-70 persons.

Table B.1: The sampling scheme per country

	Principals/Deputy principals	Teachers	Policy makers/Inspectors-Advisors
Primary	30	15	5
Secondary	30	15	5
Total (assuming a sample of 100 people)	60	30	10

In all countries a common questionnaire (translated to the national language) was administered. This questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part includes seven questions asking for demographic information (role, gender, years of experience in positions of educational administration, school level and type of school). The last question of this part asks participants to mention how often they do participate in the decision making process concerning various aspects of school life (see q.A8). The purpose of this question is to explore which are the usual issues for which decisions are taken at school level in the participating countries.
In the second part of the questionnaire respondents are asked to express their level of agreement/disagreement, using a five point Likert scale to a series of statements exploring their opinions about marginalized groups of students (see q.B1).
The third part of the questionnaire (part C) focuses on aspects of school life that respondents think that should be taken mostly into account when making decisions for marginalized groups of students. Specifically, in the first question of this part (see q.C1), the participants are asked to mention the five most important aspects of school life among a list of sixteen such aspects that a school leader should consider when making decisions addressing the needs of marginalized groups. The second question of this same part using a five point Likert type scale (ranging from "Not important at all up to "Extremely important") asks the participants to express their views about the importance they attribute to ten different prerequisites for the successful design and implementation of inclusion school based programs (see q.C2). Qustion C.3 that follows has exactly the same logic with q.C2 except that it explores the views of the interviewees for the appropriate conditions that have to apply to school unit so as to increase the chances for a successful school based inclusive education project/policy.

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Finally the last question of this part and the whole questionnaire, using again a five point Likert type scale (ranging from "Not useful at all" up to "Extremely useful") explores the participants' views about the usefulness of fourteen different features that could be incorporated in the design of a toolkit that would help school leaders and teachers in making inclusive decisions at their own level (see q.4). The results from this question will be used, so as to see, which are the features that school leaders consider as the most useful for being included in the proposed toolkit. In Appendix B.1, the complete questionnaire is presented. The final form of the questionnaire was concluded after it has been administered during a pilot phase to a small number of persons and major problems were identified and discussed among the consortium. Moreover, the questionnaire has been designed on the basis of one informal interview with a school leader in each participating country. Specifically all the issues that emerged through these informal interviews were incorporated in the questions included in the final questionnaire.

The questions included in these informal interviews were as follows:

1. Describe a typical school day
2. What are the key challenges you face as a school leader?
3. What kind of decisions do you make every day?
4. When making a decision, what factors do you consider?
5. When making a decision and you try to be inclusive what factors do you consider?
6. The importance of decision making being inclusive
7. What groups of students do you have in your school that are considered marginalised?
8. What challenges do you face when making decisions and particularly in an effort to consider all groups of students?
9. What kind of support do you need to make more inclusive decisions?
10. What form of training /professional development would be useful?

Apart from the questionnaire, the responses were also very helpful in designing both the interview and the focus group protocols which were additionally used for the needs analysis phase of the project. The complete questionnaire is shown in Appendix B.1.

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B2. Results from the analysis of the questionnaires

Overarching description of the data

The distribution of the respondents according to their role in the current post is quite close to that which was mutually agreed at the partnership level (60% principals, 30% teachers, 10% Inspectors /Advisors /Policy makers). In Cyprus, the vast majority of the respondents come from Primary Education. This decision was taken on the basis that the Ministry of Education in Cyprus intends to develop and pilot the toolkit in Primary Education. Regarding the gender point of view, women generally prevail reflecting the overall trend in education.

Furthermore, most respondents as well as school units are located in urban areas while the majority of the respondents have less than 25 years of educational administration with the average time being around 10 years. Finally, almost all schools belong to the public sector.

Decision making participation at school level

In all countries, aspects of most frequent decision making are those related to **student monitoring/discipline**, **student behavior problems**, and **health and safety issues**. The overall finding is that school discipline seems to be time consuming in terms of decision making at school level.
However, there is not an overall trend regarding teacher needs and professional development. In Cyprus and Ireland the above mentioned parameters seem to extract more time from the respondents where almost half of them reported that they participate in relevant decision making meetings 3-4 times a week. In the other three countries the average responses where around 3-4 times a year with Greece and Portugal being the most extreme cases bordering between 3-4 times and once a year. Moreover, these two countries exhibit great variation in their responses which leads to the conclusion that in quite a few schools the issues of professional development is almost never touched upon.

There is a consensus on the time allotted to community and parental involvement which is generally around 3-4 times a year. Class scheduling is very important in Cyprus where more than 80% of the respondents participate in related activities either 3-4 times a week or 3-4 times a month. On the other end, Portugal does not seem to spend so much time on class scheduling, usually 3-4 times a year. Finally, school canteens and engaging a specialist have not drawn much of school life time in all countries.

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Decision making for marginalized groups

First of all, it should be noted that the majority of respondents in all countries **strongly disagree with the statement: "Marginalized groups of students constitute a burden for the school"**. For the success of inclusive school projects respondents consider aspects such as: **parental involvement**, **experts' involvement**, **time allocation for individualized work** and **support from the local community and from supervising education authorities** essential for the success of inclusive school projects.
The overall trend here is that all respondents feel strongly in favor of all statements regarding inclusive education with the aforementioned exception. It can be stated that the respondents' opinion reflects their perception of what inclusive education means. The meaning of inclusion seems to be highly connected to individualized support of marginalized groups in teachers' understanding.

Important aspects of school life in decision making for marginalized students

Engaging a specialist (with the exception of Ireland) and **teachers' professional development** are the most important features of school life that should be taken into account in the decision making process for marginalized students. **Parental involvement** is deemed as quite important in Cyprus, Greece and Ireland whereas in Portugal and Romania **community involvement** is viewed as the more important factor.

Designing and implementing inclusion programs

The majority of respondents stated that the most important factors for the successful design and implementation of inclusion programs are: **availability of time**, **addressing the needs of all students**, **administrative procedures**, **parental involvement**, **school staff skills** and **access to practical knowledge** that shows what works and what not. On the other side, the least important factor reported was the fit with inspectors' (or supervising authorities') expectations. Furthermore, in compliance with previous findings, responses in Portugal and Romania also viewed **community involvement** as an important aspect for the successful implementation of the program.

Successful school-based inclusive education projects/policies

In order to have successful school based inclusive education projects/policies, the features considered extremely important by the majority of respondents in most countries are: **teachers' in-service training**, **close monitoring and evaluation**, **strategy for promotion to parents**, **local communities and other stakeholders**, **providing the teaching staff with incentives for participating** and **adequate financing**.

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Also, about half of the participants reported the following features as very important for the implementation of school-based inclusive education/policies: **easy and accessible ways to get opinions/ideas of best practices**, **gradual implementation of a project** and **participative design process** (all members of school and local community take part).

Useful support for the leader

With the exception of training in inclusion, itself a broad theme, there is a wide range of answers in this question without dominant trends. In Greece and Cyprus a guide on how to integrate migrants is viewed as very important whereas in Portugal the most important item is the existence of an online platform that provides information on places for excursions (Romania, views this favorably as well). Practical tips on how to resolve conflicts is considered very important in Cyprus, Greece and Romania but not so much in Ireland. Finally, the existence of a code of good practices to be implemented in schools is quite important in all countries but Ireland.

Final conclusions

The questionnaire has gathered interesting data regarding teachers' opinion in Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Ireland and Portugal in the issue of inclusive education. Student monitoring and discipline takes a lot of teachers' time maybe in the expense of attending their needs and development which are considered very important features. Overall, in-service training emerges as the absolute prerequisite for successful completion of inclusive education programs whereas parental and, to a lesser extent, community involvement contribute as well. However, it is worth mentioning that teachers' opinions of their own needs for inclusive education do not always correspond fully to what works for inclusive education. Their opinion may reflect their day-to-day school difficulties that should be seriously taken into consideration if we hope to arrive in a useful and practical toolkit. Simple and practical advice for discipline issues that concerns marginalized groups should be taken into consideration.

All the national reports on the analysis of the questionnaires are presented in detail in Appendix B.2.

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Part C: Needs analysis-Results from the interviews

C.1 Methodological aspects of the qualitative study of needs analysis: The case of the interviews

In each country five semi-structured interviews with school principals and/or assistant school principals were conducted. Therefore in total 25 school leaders were interviewed. The selection of these school leaders (sampling) was made with special care for providing maximum differentiation in terms of: a) school level, b) educational strand (academic, technical, other), c) area of the school unit, d) gender and years of experience in positions of educational administration and policy making.
All the interviews were taken either in person or through skype or telephone, and they were tape recorded. All questions and especially the probing ones were addressed in a non directing neutral way.
The interview protocol consists of three parts. The first part includes some demographic information about the sample (i.e. gender, role in school, school level, years of experience as school leader, and years of teaching experience). The second part consists of some questions concerning the existing conditions in the school unit the interviewed school leaders currently serve. Specifically, initially school leaders were asked to describe the school unit they currently serve in terms of the following dimensions:

- Students' socio-economic background
- Students' academic level/performance
- Relationships between teaching staff
- Teachers-students relationships
- Level of parents' involvement in school life
- Groups of marginalized students (dominant)
- How the specific school is differentiated from others? (special features of the specific school)

Then, in the second part, the interviewed school leaders were asked about the aspects of school life for which decisions are usually taken at school level as well as about how these decisions are usually taken.

Subsequently, the protocol focuses more on decision making for marginalized groups of students asking the school leaders whether they already take any special measures/initiatives for any kind of marginalized group of students in their schools and if not why.

Finally, the third part of the interview protocol explores the interviewees' opinions about decision making for marginalized groups of students.

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Specifically the participants were asked: a) how important they do consider addressing the problems of marginalized groups of students in their schools compared to their other duties/responsibilities, b) what specific measures they could take for facilitating the integration of these students into school life and c) which arem, according to their experience, the most important challenges (difficulties) when designing and/or implementing school-based inclusive and fair education projects/initiatives and d) what are the measures they would take for maximizing the chances a fair/inclusive project/initiative they would initiate at their schools to succeed.

The last question called the participating school leaders to imagine that they could ask from someone to prepare a specific digital toolkit that would help them in making inclusive decisions at the school level. They were then asked what features they would like to include this toolkit. The objective of this last question is to probe the interviewees to propose as many features as they can think of so as the envisaged toolkit to facilitate inclusive decision making at school level. The complete interview protocol is shown in Appendix C.1.

C.2 Results from the interviews

Twenty four interviewees (five from each country except from Ireland from which four interviewees come) took part in this phase of the needs analysis study. Specifically, Tables C.1 and C.2 below show the distribution of the interviewees' samples per country.

Table C.1: The composition of the samples per country

	Cyprus	Romania	Greece	Ireland	Portugal	**Total**
Primary (Principals/Deputy principals)	3	3	2	0	3	**11**
Secondary (Principals/Deputy principals)	0	2	3	4	2	**11**
Inspectors-advisors	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Policy makers	1	0	0	0	0	**1**

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Table C.2: Demographics of the samples per country

	Cyprus	Romania	Greece	Ireland	Portugal
Male/Female	2/3	3/2	3/2	2/2	2/3
Yrs of experience as school leader (average)	5.2	9.8	3.4	8.0	10.8
Yrs of teaching experience (average)	26.5	23.2	22.2	20.7	18.4

C.2.1 Description of the school conditions

- **How would you describe the school unit you currently serve as a school leader?**

The interviewees serve at schools with schools coming from varying socio-economic conditions. In the vast majority of the cases school leaders reported a very good climate within the school community as well as warm and supportive relationships of their schools with the students' parents. The most prominent groups of marginalized students in their schools are students with learning difficulties and foreign students in Cyprus, students from families that have been definitely influenced by the harsh immigrant students (mostly of second generation) or students with learning difficulties. All participating school leaders mention that they make continuous efforts to include all the marginalized students in their schools.

- **Aspects of school life for which decisions are usually taken at school level**

Despite the fact that the level of school autonomy varies in some participating countries, it seems that school based decisions in all cases correspond to similar issues, such as the internal relationships within the school units, the school-parents relationships, instructional and curriculum planning, as well as catering for all the marginalized groups of students. School events and school based projects seem also to absorb a significant part of school leaders' energy.

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-How decisions are usually taken at school level?

All important decisions are mainly taken at the level of the teachers' council which seems to be the central decision making body in all countries. Issues for discussion at this level can be introduced by either school principals or from groups or individual teachers. Some interviewees reported that usually consensus through informal discussions is seeked before an issue is formally introduced at the school council. In general decision making in most cases is based on the application of the democratic participation principle.

-Do you already take any special measures/initiatives for any kind of marginalized group of students in your school?

All school leaders reported a series of specific measures/initiative they have already undertaken for supporting the marginalized groups of students in their schools. The most interesting of these measures are as follows:

- "Muslims", may be exempted from visiting the Orthodox Church. In addition, they take care of providing other food choices to Muslims when they go on a field trip.
- Classes with children on wheelchairs are based on the ground floor of the school.
- The school pays for the excursion expenses of children with financial issues.
- Schools ask for parents' input via an SMS school system and also for students' input through a box they have to submit their suggestions.
- Organization of the school breaks in a way that no child walks alone.
- Teachers encourage students to design sociograms and put messages in bottles.
- Conduct of special seminars for parents in order to provide advice on how to help and support their children.
- Incorporation of health education subjects in every day teaching.
- Creation of a "Social Grocery" where all students leave food in order for a family in need to take it every end of the month.
- Establishment of special school based commission for preventing and combating discrimination and promoting interculturalism or attributing special roles to individual teachers such as Guidance Counselors, Pastoral carers, etc.
- Operation of an inclusion class (to support children with learning difficulties) or reception classes (for immigrant and foreign students).
- Organization of interesting extra-curricular activities and projects for making marginalized students to like school more (making school life more attractive).

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C.2.2 Opinions about decision making for marginalized groups of students

-How important do you consider addressing the problems of marginalized groups of students in your school compared to your other duties/responsibilities?

All participants stated that addressing marginalised groups of students (irrespectively of their size) constitutes one of their most important responsibilities and they dedicate a fair amount of time every day. All school leaders seem to have realized that addressing the problems of marginalized groups of students is for the benefit of the whole school community and not only for the benefit of these specific students. According to the interviewees the lack of interest for the marginalized students can portray a poor educational system entrenched in narrow views and poor ideology. The long term effect of such a system can be high absenteeism, mental well -being issues, poor academic performance and possible school drop- out.

-What could you do, taking decisions at your level for helping this/these marginalized groups of students at your school?

A large number of suggestions were expressed by the participating school leaders the most interesting of which are the following:

- Parents should become more involved in their children's education
- Involve students more in the process of decision making
- Enhance collaborative learning
- Teachers must know very well the family conditions of all students
- Engagement of different experts, such as social workers to examine the family context and school psychologists to prevent some situations
- Teachers to dedicate some of their free time in school to help students with a low achievement rate
- Organization of school based training courses for teachers on methods for dealing with marginalized students
- Application of role play scenarios for increasing empathy for marginalized students

On the other hand though some school leaders reported certain impediments in implementing such suggestions, the most important of which are: a) the lack of knowledge on legal issues, b) bureaucracy and c) social prejudices especially on the parents' parent.

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-Based on your experience, which ones do you think are the most important challenges (difficulties) when designing and/or implementing school-based inclusive and fair education projects/initiatives?

According to participating school leaders the most important challenges when designing and/or implementing school-based inclusive and fair education projects/initiatives are the following:
a) Teachers are not sensitised enough in order to promote inclusive education practices both in the classes and school
b) Lack of adequate school time for dealing with the problems marginalized students are facing during their school life
c) Lack of suitable teachers' training
d) Lack of specialized staff within schools
e) Lack of adequate financial resources
f) The administrative procedures are usually very complex
g) The legal framework is not always clear
h) The education system is usually directed towards excellence and this might cause additional pressure to teachers in order to have more excellent students and marginalising students with difficulties
i) There is a culture of poor relationships between school authorities and parents. Moreover there are a lot of cases that parents press school authorities to remove marginalized groups of students from the school so as not to influence negatively the academic progress of their own children. On the other hand though some parents of students with difficulties are not easily convinced for the need their children to receive a special treatment.

-What measures would you take for maximizing the chances a fair/inclusive project/initiative you would initiate at your school to succeed?

When asked about what measures they would take to maximize the chances of success of an inclusive initiative, participants listed: professional development for teachers, participatory and interactive communication between parents and teachers, access to examples by practice, case studies and display of evidence, problem solving through scenarios, and involvement of the local community.

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-Imagine that could ask from someone to prepare a specific digital toolkit that would help you in making inclusive decisions at the school level. What features would you like to include this toolkit? (Propose as many features as you can think of so as the toolkit to facilitate inclusive decision making at school level)

School leaders proposed a number of features that they would like to see in a digital toolkit such as:

- A guide for environmental issues and immigrants
- Specific measures should be proposed for conflict resolution
- A checklist could be useful tool in order to acquire certain bullet points for some conditions (such as Down syndrome) or for some other cultures (such as Buddhists etc)
- Short tips to teachers regarding their teaching techniques and how to make them more inclusive
- Scientific data should be put in the toolkit in a simplified way to make it more convenient for the teachers to engage
- A variety of different decision making techniques and tips should be provided
- Codification of existing legislation that should be presented in brief and with legal jargon
- Examples of good practice
- Lists of useful links and telephone numbers of institutions and organizations that could offer help e.g. in case of family violence etc.
- Videos of lectures from academics or experts, material – e.g. movies that teachers could watch with students or development of animations etc.

Apart from the discrete features a digital toolkit should include, school leaders also experessed some very interesting ideas concerning the structure and the embedded functions such a toolkit should have. In relation to its structure it was mentioned that the toolkit should be developed in three levels: school, class and community. As for its functions, many school leaders refered to communication (either synchronous or asynchronous) amomg various stakeholders. However since most thought that sharing experiences and exchanging info in a forum could be dangerous, trust among the participants and continuous monitoring is imperative. Another idea for a possible function of the toolkit is the provision of a special space within it so that sensitive information about each student at risk within the school unit to be uploaded and displayed in a very easy way.

All the national reports on the analysis of the interviews are presented in detail in Appendix C.2.

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Part D: Needs analysis-Results from the focus groups

D.1 Methodological aspects of the qualitative study of needs analysis: The case of the focus groups

In each participating country one focus group session was conducted with 6-8 participants (principals, assistant principals and teachers). There has to be sufficient diversity amongst the participants of each focus group so as to encourage discussion. Therefore, it is proposed that each focus group to consist of: 1 or 2 school principals, 1 or 2 assistant principals, and 4-5 teachers. It would be advisable all participants to come from the same school level (primary or secondary schools), if of course this is possible for all partners.

Before the focus group session all participants completed short questionnaires including the following questions:

1. Gender
A. Male
B. Female

2. Role in school
A. Principal
B. Assistant principal
C. Teacher

3. School level
A. Primary
B. Lower secondary
C. Upper secondary

4. Years of experience as school leader (for principals and assistant principals only)

5. Years of teaching experience

The venue of the focus groups was decided by each partner on the basis of its particular circumstances. No session lasted more than one hour and a half (90 minutes).
Since the role of the moderator is very critical for the successful conduct of the focus groups, all partners selected experienced in this method persons to play this role.

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During the sessions the moderators had to:

- promote debate, perhaps by asking open questions,
- challenge participants, especially to draw out people's differences,
- tease out a diverse range of meanings on the topic under discussion,
- probe for details (using probing questions like "tell me more about this", "what made you reach this conclusion", etc),
- move things forward when the conversation was drifting or had reached a minor conclusion (saturation stage when no new things are said),
- keep the session focused,
- ensure everyone participates and gets a chance to speak,
- not to show too much approval, so as to avoid favouring particular participants,
- avoid giving personal opinions so as not to influence participants towards any particular position or opinion and above all
- make sure that all topics included in the discussion guide will be adequately covered by the end of the focus group session.

All the moderators had a clear idea about the project and its objectives.
Possibly the greatest anxiety for focus group facilitators is that individual members will say nothing during the focus group session (a situation known as group silences). So as to avoid this uncomfortable situation the physical arrangement of the group was such that the moderator was part of the group (for example sitting in a circle). All sessions were video or tape recorded after informed consent from all participants was taken.
The structure of the focus group guide is as similar as possible to the structure of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview protocol so that the outcomes from the three instruments to become more comparable.

The focus group guide consists of three parts. The first part corresponds to a warm up or focusing exercise on decision making and marginalized groups. While in group interviews the interviewer seeks answers, in focus groups the facilitator (moderator) seeks for group interaction. The focus group facilitator's questions are a 'focusing exercise'; an attempt to concentrate the group's attention and interaction on the particular topic. This is why in the beginning of a focus group session it is highly recommended that the facilitator addresses the group in an informal manner and provide an easy task that will break the ice among participants. Such tasks should constitute a natural introduction to the topic under discussion without being very threatening for the participants.
A frequently used example of such tasks is a ranking exercise (Bloor et al., 2002). In this case participants will be asked to rank different marginalized groups of students in terms of the urgency of the need to take action for them in the context of their schools.

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The marginalized groups in this warm up exercise are proposed to be the following:

- Immigrant, refugees, asylum seekers students
- Students belonging to religious minorities
- Roma students, Irish travellers
- Disabled students (physically handicapped)
- Students from deprived family backgrounds
- Students with learning difficulties
- Students from remote areas with difficult school access
- Students with serious health issues
- Students with mental health difficulties
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)

After this 'warm up' exercise the group proceeds with a brainstorming about decisions that are usually taken at school level, how these decisions may affect marginalized groups of students and what are the possible challenges with regards to these decisions.

The second part of the guide focuses on extracting the participants' opinions about the features the proposed toolkit should have. In this part, the participants were asked to express their opinions about the kind of information as well as the functions such a toolkit shoul have so as to be practical for school leaders.

Finally, the focus groups session concludes with the 'wrap up' phase. During this phase moderators should summarize the main conclusions drawn from the participants' answers and ask them to verify that these conclusions accurately reflect their way of thinking. Alternatively (and for less experienced moderators preferably) this "wrap up" work could be done at the end of each one of the four aforementioned parts. The complete focus group guide is shown in Appendix D.1.

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D.2 Results from the focus groups

Thirty one interviewees (six from each country except from Cyprus from which seven interviewees come) took part in this phase of the needs analysis study. Specifically, Tables D.1 and D.2 below show the composition of the samples per country.

Table D.1: The composition of the samples per country

	Cyprus	Romania	Greece	Ireland	Portugal	**Total**
Primary (Principals/Deputy principals)	3	0	3	0	2	**8**
Primary teachers	4	1	3	0	4	**12**
Secondary (Principals/Deputy principals)	0	3	0	3	0	**6**
Secondary teachers	0	2	0	3	0	**5**

Table D.2.2: Demographics of the samples per country

	Cyprus	Romania	Greece	Ireland	Portugal
Male/Female	1/6	3/3	1/5	4/2	1/5
Yrs of experience as school leader (average)	6.0	5.0	2.0	9.3	6.3
Yrs of teaching experience (average)	20.8	12.3	23.2	9.3	15.0

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D.2.1 Results for inclusive decision making at school level

Initially in the warm phase of the focus group sessions, most of the participants expressed the view that the list of the different categories of marginalized students, as defined in the iDecide project, covers a large part of the student population in every school and generally speaking covers nearly all the relevant groups. However participants added some extra categories such as sexually abused children, children who are accompanied by carer, children from single parent families, drug addicted parents, children with low self esteem, children who are not in their family home and may be in foster care, residential care or special care units, children with "problematic" behaviour or with trouble with law, children who pass a difficult situation in their life at the moment (divorce, serious illness in the family), or gifted-talented pupils.
The categories considered in most cases to be more seriously at risk were students with metal health difficulties, students with learning difficulties, disabled students and students with serious health issues, students from deprived families, students belonging to religious minorities, different race, or sexuality as well as Roma or Traveller students.

Then participants were asked to contribute to a brainstorming related to the decisions that are usually taken at school level and link them to marginalised groups. The most frequently areas of school based decision making that most participants cited are:

- Financial support of certain students
- Individualized teaching support and curricular adaptations
- Whether or not we as teacher apply for existing supportive services from the ministry (initial evaluation)
- Counselling support
- Language support within the school especially for immigrants
- Determination of teacher's responsibilities at the beginning or the year (such as discipline, safety issues)
- Class divisions
- School programme, division of subjects
- Students supervision during breaks
- School excursions and school celebrations
- Discipline
- Relation with parents' association
- Homework (amount and type)
- Teachers' continual professional development

The participants elaborated how the above decisions may affect marginalized groups. They were unanimous in stating that all these decisions have contiguous and in most cases direct and long lasting impact on the experiences of marginalised students in the education system.

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Moreover, the participants referred to specific examples that they "missed" valuable school time due to the fact that they did not know how to approach a child with hearing problems for instance or the ones who can speak native language but not as a first language.

Another aspect emerging from this part of the session is that in highly centralized systems participants described once again that the decisions which can be taken at school level are very limited (restricted school autonomy). They stressed that they experience a constant clash between their views on what needs to be done and the limitations posed by central government due either to restrictive legislation or the limited amount of human or financial resources available.

Among the most important challenges that schools face when attempting to implement inclusive policies at their level include: a) the lack of adequate financial resources, b) the lack of established communication channels between the school and other organizations and agencies that offer services to youth at risk, c) the lack of clear criteria or framework on when the school can take initiative and refer a case and most importantly the lack of legal coverage for the person taking this action (e.g. principal or teacher) and d) finally the lack of any protocols in place for the actions needed to be taken, making clear as the kind of jurisdiction the school has in such cases.

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D.2.2 Results for the preferred characteristics of the toolkit

All participants contributed very useful proposals about the final form they would like the toolkit to have so as to be helpful for school leaders and teachers in designing and implementing school based inclusive policies. In gereral participants stressed the need the on line toolkit to be: a) tailor made to the needs and challenges schools face into their everyday work (avoid general references) as well as to their conditions (e.g. time constraints of teachers) and b) flexible enough so as to be easily adapted to different kind of needs.
Specifically these proposals include:

- Clear definitions of the different categories of the marginalized groups of students
- Practical suggestions for the differention of teaching according to the needs of each group
- Practical suggestions about appropriate ways to handle these students
- Tips about the culture of some frequently met in schools religious or ethnic minorities
- Proposals for combating bullying
- Suggestions for overcoming the linguistic barrier with immigrant students
- Information about students at risk within a school unit
- Links to the websites of external agencies offering services to youth at risk
- Good practices (preferably in the form of videos) (e.g. list of ideas on project promoting inclusion with emphasis on projects that have worked well)
- Practical tools to enhance students' emotional intelligence and development of their personality as an indirect way to enhance their empathy, tolerance to diversity and thus ensure inclusion of marginalized groups
- Codified presentation of existing relevant legislation in each country
- Training material for those who would like to deepen their knowledge about marginalized students
- Communication info with experts
- Networking with other schools to exchange ideas and information
- FAQ section
- Information for local, regional or national events concerning marginalized students
- Make full use of social media
- Appear in the form of mobile phone application
- Q & A service from experts
- Contain students' experiences of marginalization at school

Finally, all participants made specific reference to the need the on line toolkit to be user friendly so as to be easily used by all school leaders and teachers.

All the national reports on the analysis of the focus groups are presented in detail in Appendix D.2.

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