Self-reflection tool for policy makers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of policies put in place

Cedefop Policy Learning Forum: VET as a Solution to Leaving Education Early

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Self-reflection structural indicators tool

- Not one early leaving problem from VET
- Not one size fits all –magic bullet cause – solution
- Focus on systems and system responsiveness to individual needs - not simply a focus on individual
- System supports can make a big difference !
- Developed in dialogue with Cedefop expert group as first step towards a comprehensive systemic approach

Self-reflection tool for policy makers

• Systemic focus of Structural Indicators – including focus on system *blockage* (Downes 2014) to go beyond Bronfenbrenner (1979)

• Downes, P., Nairz-Wirth, E., Rusinaite, V. (2017). *Structural Indicators for Developing Inclusive Systems in and around Schools in Europe.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

* Cedefop Structural Indicators Toolkit is VET Specific
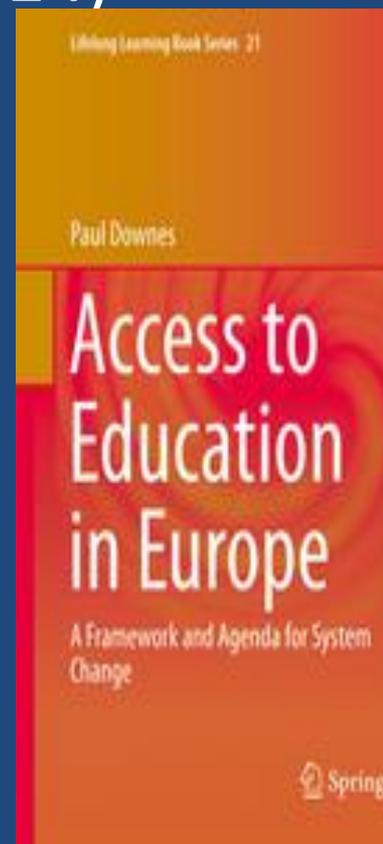
- STRUCTURAL INDICATORS OF A SYSTEM FOR TRANSPARENCY: YES/NO ANSWERS BY ANALOGY WITH UN RIGHT TO HEALTH (DOWNES 2014)

- Structural indicators (SIs): Generally framed as potentially verifiable yes/no answers, they address whether or not key structures, mechanisms or principles are in place in a system.

- As relatively enduring features or key conditions of a system, they are, however, potentially malleable.

- They offer a scrutiny of State or institutional effort (Downes 2014, see also UN Rapporteur 2005, 2006)

Structural Indicators – Factual, potentially verifiable responses

- Structural Indicators: A future framework for the OECD and EU Commission to consider (Downes 2014)

- Go beyond the quantitative/qualitative distinction as they are factual, being generally framed as potentially verifiable yes/no answers

- – a policy relevant focus

- Structural indicators (SI); yes and no-questions, something that can be changed (laws, spaces, roles and responsibilities, key guiding principles, potentially malleable dimensions to an education, training and/or community system)

- Address whether or not key structures, roles, mechanisms or principles are in place in a system – like an X-ray

- Used here for self-evaluation purposes to guide policymakers and practitioners

- Offer strategic direction as to *what* issues are addressed at system level, while also offering flexibility at local or national level as to *how* to address these issues.

- NB – combines central strategic direction with local autonomy
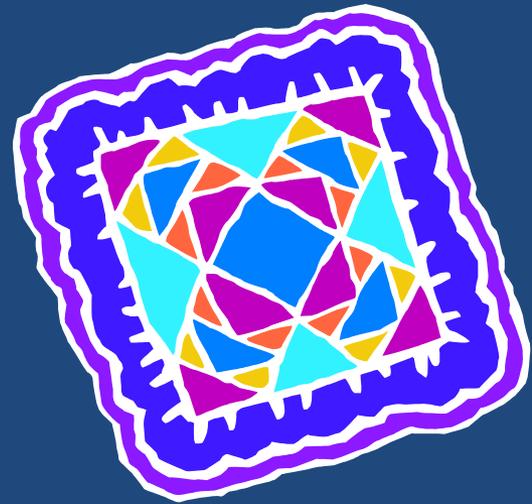
Examples of structural indicators that can operate on diverse levels in education include:

- curriculum aspects (i.e., presence or otherwise of a subject on the national school curriculum),

- institutional admission criteria for entry to a school or university,

- roles in institutions,

- guiding principles,

- existence of physical spaces in schools such as parents' rooms, etc.

- legislation, such as offering a statutory right to secondary education.

- Goes beyond a discourse reliant on sharing models of good practice to seek to identify key structural conditions for good practice rather than seeking to naively transfer a good practice from one complex context to another.

- The key structural conditions of good practice are the dimensions for transferability.

- They can be used in complementary fashion with outcome indicators to evaluate factors contributing to or hindering attainment of outcomes.

- Structural indicators clarify if an issue is being addressed strategically or not.

- As a user-friendly tool to guide practitioners and policy-makers, it can provide a condensed, action-guiding framework that synthesises a wide range of policy documents and research.

- Bridge research and practice

- This approach to structural indicators, building on the UN framework, differs from an earlier approach of the Commission to structural indicators outlined in its 2003 Communication, which treats structural features of society as quantitative statistical indicators,

- The current approach is much more resonant with the *Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe* in the Eurydice Background Reports to the Education and Training Monitor 2015 and 2016.

Key Areas Selected by Cedefop Expert Group: Informed by Cedefop Report, Other International Research and EU Policy Documents

* Identification of learners at risk of early leaving
* Identification and Monitoring of early leavers
* Flexible learning pathways
* Improving the image of VET and its attractiveness
* Second chance measures
* Motivating young people to re-discover their interest in learning
* Comprehensive support to young people with complex needs (case management)
* Guiding young people to make the right choices
* Providing professional counselling to address barriers to learning
* One-to-one support for young people through coaching or mentoring
* Tailoring learning pathways to young people's interests and learning styles

Key Areas Selected by Cedefop Expert Group: Informed by Cedefop Report and Other International Research (continued...)

*Helping learners understand the practical application of theoretical courses
* Developing employability skills
* Providing work-based learning and close-to-real simulations
*Involving the entire community in the prevention of early leaving from education and training
* Fostering inclusive and supportive work-based learning environments

Identification of learners at risk of early leaving
Do you have the following policies or measures in place to
tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

1. A large majority of VET providers have an early warning system in place to detect the early signs of learners at risk of early leaving.
   Yes/ No

Flexible learning pathways

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

6. A national strategy which provides opportunities for learners to change to a different type of institution if needed (for instance, from a VET school to another type of school or an entity providing apprenticeships). Yes/ No

8. Individualised support to learners in transition phases (between education and/or into employment) in the large majority of VET providers. Yes/No

Improving the image of VET and its attractiveness
Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

9. Concrete actions (at least once a year) to raise awareness about VET opportunities (e.g. campaigns, VET weeks, skills competitions, national awards, VET schools open days). Yes/No

Motivating young people to re-discover their interest in learning

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

11. Opportunity for a large majority of VET learners to engage in motivational activities (e.g. sports, arts, active citizenship). Yes/No

Comprehensive support to young people with complex needs (case management)

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

12. Multidisciplinary support team (e.g. social workers, health professionals, family support workers, youth workers, outreach care workers) available to a large majority of VET providers for at-risk students. This can include VET school staff and/or other professionals through cooperation with relevant external services. Yes/No

Providing professional emotional counselling to address barriers to learning

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

17. Counselling is universally available for all VET learners who seek it. Yes/ No

18. More intensive and targeted counselling is available to at-risk VET learners in a large majority of VET providers or through local health/social services. Yes/ No

One-to-one support for young people through coaching or mentoring

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

19. Coaching and mentoring schemes targeted at those most in need is available in a large majority of VET providers or through local youth/social services. Yes/No

Tailoring learning pathways to young people's interests and learning styles

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

21. Frequent one-on-one feedback/reflection meetings between VET staff and learners to review their individual learning plans and discuss issues related to their learning, etc. in a large majority of VET providers. Yes/ No

Tailoring learning pathways to young people's interests and learning styles

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

24. In the case of habitual absenteeism, a plan is written up with the learner on how to make up for lost learning in a large majority of VET providers. Yes/ No

25. Alternative arrangements to suspension/expulsion from school (where this practice exists) in a large majority of VET providers. This might include onsite support with multidisciplinary teams for example.   Yes/ No

Helping learners understand the practical application of theoretical courses

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

28. Active learning to make the teaching of theoretical content more engaging is used by a large majority of VET providers. Yes/No

Developing employability skills
Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

29. Targeted support to develop learners' basic skills in a large majority of VET providers. Yes/ No

30. Commitment in a large majority of VET providers to develop life skills, including communication skills, social and emotional skills, and conflict resolution skills in learners. Yes/No

Involving the entire community in the prevention of early leaving from education and training
Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

32. In a large majority of VET providers, clear processes are in place to invite learner feedback on the existence or not of a welcoming environment (both at the VET school and during apprenticeships or in-company training periods). Yes/No

Involving the entire community in the prevention of early leaving from education and training

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

35. Professional development is available for a large majority of VET staff on conflict resolution skills, bullying prevention and diversity awareness in a large majority of VET providers. Yes/ No

36. National outreach strategy to individual families at home to support learners with high levels of need (mental health issues, high non-attendance at school). Yes/ No

Fostering inclusive and supportive work-based learning environments

Do you have the following policies or measures in place to tackle early leaving in VET in your country?

38. A large majority of VET providers have produced a written code of expectations on the treatment of apprentices. Yes/ No

39. Standardisation of application procedures for apprentices to prevent discrimination is in place in the large majority of VET providers. Yes/ No

41. Written agreement between the education provider, the company and the learner specifying the programme, activities and working conditions (incl. working hours) in a large majority of VET providers. Yes/ No

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