

Structural indicators for good practice as part of a holistic and systemic approach for prevention of early leaving in VET

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A *Systemic* Approach to Evaluation and Transparency: Structural Indicators

- 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)

- SIs offer a *system* focus not simply an individual focus – 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)

A Holistic Approach – Not 1 Size Fits All

- * *A Holistic Approach – Addresses Why People are Reluctant to engage with Education and Training*
- * Different *kinds* of need for early leavers from education and training (ELET)
- * Different *levels* of need for ELET: Long-term unemployed complex needs
- Not 1 ELET problem: ELET is a behaviour with a wide range of underlying motivations
- Beyond System Fragmentation: Clarity on which Prevention Levels the Service is Targeting

The three widely recognized prevention approaches in public health are:

UNIVERSAL, SELECTED and **INDICATED** prevention (Burkhart 2004; Reinke et al., 2009).



A *Holistic* Approach requires a *Differentiated* Approach

- * ***Universal*** prevention (ALL) applies to educational and community-wide systems for all VET learners
- ***Selective*** prevention (SOME – GROUPS) targets specialized group systems for learners at risk of early school leaving/early school leavers with strong potential for reentry to VET
(see also Microlycee, France: Ecorys 2013 – colocation, common management structure/headship, specialist teachers but interaction with mainstream staff, same progression routes)
- ***Indicated*** prevention (INDIVIDUAL- INTENSIVE) engages in specialized, individualized systems for learners with high risk of early school leaving or ELET/chronic need/multiple risk factors
(Fairbridge, Middlesborough, Ecorys 2013 – learn by doing, fishing, canoeing, cooking, outdoor activities for learning – expensive)

– **ALL 3 prevention levels need to be focused on in a national strategic approach: Structural Indicators here mainly on INDICATED prevention level though also other levels**

***Focus here is on LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED and VET for structural indicators in the context of the Youth Guarantee**

***Specific focus to illustrate SIs is on SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL dimensions more than cognitive**

SI - Outreach beyond information approaches (Yes/No)

The need for more proactive outreach strategies to marginalized groups than simply information based ones



Outreach to marginalised groups is a strong feature of Citizienne, Flanders:

- **Within communities**

- *one can not expect all participants to come into a classroom

- * 'home delivered' educational activities .

- *efforts in providing education within the communities, decentralised all over Brussels (in mosques, sports clubs, pubs, etc.) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010 in Downes 2014).

The Sociale School Heverlee Centrum voor Volwassenenonderwijs vzw (SSH-CVO) also uses printed press (programme brochure, local newspaper, flyers, adverts, documents, etc.) and online tools (such as a website) to increase the access to their educational provision. Although this type of advertisement reaches the most people, a recent evaluation research by the SSH-CVO has shown the effects of this strategy are rather minimal (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010 in Downes 2014).

SI - Staff from target groups (Yes/No)

**See Swedish Unga In across 6 sites for 'marketers'
from ethnic minority groups for VET**

-SI -Bridges/Colocation Nonformal and Formal Education (Yes/No)

An Cosán, Dublin (Downes 2014)

-The starting point is courses on Personal Development and Communication Skills, Basic Literacy and Numeracy.

-Caters for ethnic minorities who need to improve their English language skills, confidence or parenting skills.

-A second series of courses reflect the needs of the local community for training in leadership e.g. training for community drug workers and community development.

Steps to
Progression



A *Differentiated* approach: Steps to Progression

The third series of courses allow people to access further education.

The fourth series of courses have, as their immediate goal, retraining or formalising skills for employment

An Cosán supports participants 'to plot out a career path' (Downes 2014)



***A Holistic* approach**

SI -Mental health focus (Yes/No)

Poverty impacts on mental health - mental health impacts on early school leaving with consequences for ELET

- Mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, disruptive behaviour disorders, eating disorders, or post-traumatic stress disorder, can negatively impact on school success, as well as general well-being (Kessler 2009; World Health Organization 2003)

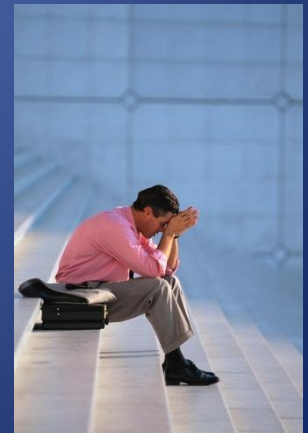
A *Holistic* approach
SI -Mental health focus (Yes/No)

Quiroga et al. (2013) based on a high-risk longitudinal sample (2000–2006) of French-speaking adolescents living in Montreal

* 493 participants (228 girls and 265 boys).

*depression symptoms at the beginning of secondary school are related to higher dropout mainly by being associated with pessimistic views about the likelihood to reach desired school outcomes

Quiroga et al. (2013) “interventions that target student mental health and negative self-perceptions are likely to improve dropout prevention”.



A *Holistic* approach

SI -Mental health focus (Yes/No)

Even apart from poverty related depression, emotional distress contributes to dropout:

A troubling number of adolescents showing serious emotional distress and depression symptoms are at risk for school failure and dropout (Quiroga, Janosz, Lyons, & Morin, 2012; Thompson, Moody, & Eggert, 1994; Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, & Sumi, 2005).

Emotional trauma (bereavement, rape, sexual abuse, bullying, family break up, sleep related problems) – supports needed to prevent early school leaving (Irish Parliament and Senate Report 2010)
– Relevant also for ELET

A *Holistic* approach

SI -Mental health focus (Yes/No)

**Early school leaving is a mental health policy issue
impacting on aspects of ELET**

Kaplan et al's (1994) North American study of 4,141 young people tested in 7th grade and once again as young adults which found a significant damaging effect of dropping out of high school on mental health functioning

- measured by a 10-item self-derogation scale, a 9-item anxiety scale, a 6-item depression scale and a 6-item scale designed to measure coping.



A *Holistic* approach
**SI- An implemented strategy to
promote Relational, Social
Dimensions (Yes/No)**

4 'Quick Wins' - Inexpensive

- Build in a social aspect – meet new friends (LLL2010 sp3)
- Staff and students eat together/drink tea together (Ecorys 2013)
- Staff exchange between education sites – more than isolated individuals (Ecorys 2013)
- Festivals (Downes 2014)

A *Holistic* approach

SI- An implemented strategy to promote Relational, Social Dimensions (Yes/No)

A school principal from the Estonian national report:

“schools can create circumstances where unwanted students feel that they have to leave... and they do...” (Tamm & Saar 2010, in Downes 2011).

The secondary education system in Lithuania according to a school management representative: *“The attitudes towards students have to change and then they will feel better at schools. [...] at the moment students are selected under the criteria „good“ and „bad“ and those who get the „bad“ label do not want to stay at such school – they leave it”* (Taljunaite et al 2010, in Downes 2011)

-SI: Multidisciplinary teams not fragmented agencies (Yes/No)

The *Alliances for Inclusion* report (Edwards & Downes 2013) :
-16 examples from 10 European countries.

-Policy focus needed to go beyond multiple agencies -Need to minimise fragmentation across diverse services 'passing on bits of' the young person

-the multi-faceted nature of risk requires a multi-faceted response that needs to go beyond referrals to disparate services

A Systemic Approach

**Sensitive to local territory issues in
community-based location (Yes/No)**

**Beyond System Fragmentation:
Anticipating Territoriality and 'Not Not
Doing' Services**

Territories

- Local rivalries across agencies especially in a recession – to claim resources and credit for gains
- Physical location of community service needs to be in a neutral community space (Downes & Maunsell 2007) for high risk groups
- No more than two agencies to limit fragmentation and provide shared goals focus – restructure agencies for greater focus (Downes 2013a)



**A *Systemic* Approach –
Monitoring structural features
of a system**

**Structural Indicators of
Progressive Practice (EU,
national, regional and
institutional levels)**

- Outreach beyond information approaches (Yes/No)**
- Bridges/Colocation Nonformal and Formal Education (Yes/No)**
 - Staff from target groups (Yes/No)**
- Mental health focus (Yes/No)**
 - Strategy to distinguish universal, selected and indicated prevention (Yes/No)**

- Multidisciplinary teams
not fragmented agencies
(Yes/No)**
- Sensitive to local territory
issues in community-based
location (Yes/No)**
- Holistic initial assessment
(Yes/No)**
- An implemented strategy to
promote Relational, Social
Dimensions (Yes/No)**

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