



European Education and Training Expert Panel

Issue paper - Inclusion and citizenship

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1. Introduction

The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)¹ is based on common objectives and supports the improvement of the education and training systems of the European Union's Member States through common tools, mutual learning and the exchange of good practice via the open method of coordination. The value of this cooperation is widely recognised.

Since the adoption of ET 2020 in 2009, European societies and economies have been undergoing fast and extensive transformations that affect the way people live and work – and the way they learn. Consequently, there is a need to strengthen the relevance and impact of European cooperation by better understanding global trends and their implications for EU education and training policies.

As the current strategic framework comes to an end in 2020, the European Commission – Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture – is carrying out wide consultations as part of the preparations for its successor. The European Education and Training Expert Panel has been convened in order to make a strategic contribution by reflecting on the concept of 'embracing change', as well as discussing in what ways new trends are likely to influence education and training in the future, and how they could be addressed through European cooperation over the next decade.

The Panel – composed of 18 international experts² – was asked to focus on six thematic blocks, namely: demographic change; inclusion and citizenship; technological change and the future of work; digitalisation of society; environmental challenges; and investment, reform and governance. These were selected by the Commission from a pool of analyses of long-term strategic trends.

For each block, the Panel was invited to address the following scoping questions.

- Which are the major societal developments that will have an impact on how education and training are delivered in Europe in the medium to long term? How can European cooperation best respond to these challenges?
- What should be the strategic objectives of European cooperation in education and training for the next decade? Which should be the priority areas and themes?

The Panel carried out its work between October 2018 and January 2019.

This issue paper reflects the Panel's debates. It first illustrates the trends, challenges and opportunities for education and training that are associated with inclusion and citizenship over the coming decade. It suggests issues that could be addressed through European cooperation, and offers a number of concluding remarks.

The information and views set out in this issue paper are those of the Expert Panel members and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.

¹ Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), OJEC 2009/C 119/02 ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528(01)&from=EN))

² The members of the Expert Panel were: Hermann J. Abs, Emmanuel Boudard, Etienne Denoël, Paul Downes, Malcolm Fisk, Silvija Karklina, Eva Klemenčič, Per Kornhall, Sandra Kučina Softić, Carla Morais, Rob Mudde, Serena Pastore, Andrius Plečkaitis, Anna Rabajczyk, Hanne Shapiro, Teresa Sordé-Martí, Gabriela Teodorescu and Raimo Vuorinen.

2. Key challenges and opportunities

Europe's population is becoming more socially and culturally diverse, which, coupled with increasing trends of socioeconomic inequality, will have a profound effect on the future of education and training at all levels. Modern societies and political systems rely on the inclusion and active participation of all those who are connected to their institutions. Therefore, in education the concept of citizenship is broader than the legal rights and responsibilities within a national or European framework. The educational aim of citizenship in Europe comprises 'participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy'.³ Democracy in this context is understood as a core process of governance and society in general. It comprises the open deliberation of multiple causes and perspectives regarding the current challenges of societies; and it leads to decision-making based on alternative solutions while, at the same time, incorporating transparency and an equal chance of influencing for all citizens. Against the backdrop of human rights and democracy, the Council of the European Union has defined citizenship competency as one of the eight key competences for the future development of European education systems.⁴ To respond to the challenges and opportunities arising from these developments, it will be important to take a holistic view of inclusion, encompassing inclusion for diversity, the social and health aspects of educational inclusion and the role of a citizenship education based on common values, democracy and the rule of law.

2.1 Increased diversity in the European population

Overall, national populations in the EU are becoming more diverse. This is due to the increased mobility of EU citizens, as well as the arrival of third-country nationals (including refugees and asylum seekers), and there is no indication that these mobility flows will decrease in the near future. This trend should be taken into consideration when discussing impacts on education and training systems across Europe. Notably, for the EU-28 as a whole, the foreign population is younger than the national population: the median age of the national population in the EU-28 is 43, while for non-nationals living in the EU is 28.⁵ The Expert Panel estimates that the key issue here will be to address the diversity of educational needs while ensuring equity, equality and efficiency for all.

The integration of those with a migrant background is an issue at the heart of inclusion: these learners may need specific types of support, particularly in linguistic and social terms. They are also more likely to be of school or tertiary education age, rather than older adult learners. If the EU acts effectively, these migrant populations can be considered as an asset, bringing new opportunities and talents to increase the competitiveness and excellence of our educational and training systems.

In terms of what this means for education, thought needs to be given to how school and higher education systems can be reconfigured in order to take account of inclusion. The social inclusion of future generations will depend on the capacity of present educational and training systems to provide high-quality education to all students while also recognising their particular identities and

³ Hoskins, B., Abs, H., Han, C., Kerr, D., Veugelers, W. (2012). Contextual Analysis Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union. Brussels: Commissioned by the European Commission, Europe for Citizens Programme. p. 17.

⁴ The Council of the European Union (2018). Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning. (2018/C 189/01)

⁵ Eurostat 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics

backgrounds. A sense of belonging is important in schools (but also in higher education institutions). Most students participate in academic and non-academic activities at school, through which they develop relations with teachers and other students, as well as come to identify with and value schooling outcomes. Disengagement from school should be tackled, as it is often correlated with lower quality of life and lower social mobility.

In addition to increased cultural diversity, the Expert Panel addressed the role of education in relation to religions and religious education for inclusion and citizenship. At present, there are cross-national differences in whether and how the ideals of religions in society are dealt with in citizenship education in schools: in some countries the relation of state and religion(s) is not part of the citizenship curriculum, while in others it is integrated. Overall, it is important to discuss the contribution of religious communities as part of societies in citizenship education. This would help education systems to be consistent with values such as equality and appreciation of diversity and, at the same time, to fight discrimination and extremism.

2.2 Marginalised learners

For decades, Europe has seen enduring social and educational inequalities, as a result of which certain groups of students are found in a particularly vulnerable situation. Students from a socioeconomically marginalised background, marginalised minority group students and migrants, and students with disabilities need support that targets their specific situation. Although there is no internationally agreed definition of inclusive education, the European Parliament sees diversity as ‘an asset which helps prepare individuals for life and active citizenship in increasingly complex, demanding, multicultural and integrated societies’.⁶ The Council of the European Union has also adopted conclusions on inclusion in diversity to achieve a high-quality education for all.⁷

One of the major challenges throughout Europe is early school leaving (ESL). In 2015, 64 million people, more than quarter of the EU population aged 25–64, left initial education with at most lower secondary education qualifications.⁸ Furthermore, around 70 million Europeans are estimated to struggle with basic reading and writing, calculation and the use of digital tools in everyday life.⁹ Without these skills, they are at higher risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. However, it is also to be recognised that the impact of ESL may differ across Member States, depending also on varying labour market opportunities.¹⁰

There is a range of issues that are associated with ESL, such as a fragile socioeconomic situation, family issues and health issues, including mental health problems. Diverse forms of segregation, streaming within schools or early tracked systems lead to disparate education quality levels, embedding general low expectations towards particular groups (i.e. Roma or migrants). European education systems have so far failed to equip adequately these groups to succeed and therefore to prevent ESL and, with it, the risks of alienation and subsequent social exclusion. While there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution, there have been significant EU developments that tackle ESL; for instance, the development of a whole school approach, which includes multidisciplinary teams in and around

⁶ European Parliament (2017). *Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities*, p. 7.

⁷ Council of the EU Conclusions (2017). *Inclusion in Diversity to Achieve a High Quality Education for All* (2017/C 62/02)

⁸ Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2016_484_R_0001

⁹ European Commission DG Employment, Affairs and Inclusion: Upskilling Pathways <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1224>

¹⁰ Van Alphen, S. (2012). The Benefit of Educational Inclusiveness for Early School Leavers in the European Labour Market. *European Journal of Education*, 47, 596–612.

schools, or the proposals for a European Toolkit for Schools¹¹ available online. In 2015, the Council of the European Union adopted conclusions on reducing ESL and promoting success in school.¹²

Emotional-relational aspects are considered by the Expert Panel to be among the neglected dimensions of current approaches to ESL prevention. In addition, the pressure that children come under and the effects that this can have on their mental health should also be considered. International research over the past decade increasingly highlights trauma, mental health (depression, social anxiety) and isolation associated with ESL.¹³ These issues are also recognised for VET. For career education counselling and guidance, in Finland, for example, it is compulsory for these issues are addressed. The overall objective of guidance and counselling is to promote students' personal growth and development so that they can further develop their study skills and social skills as well as acquire knowledge and skills necessary in further life.¹⁴

While mental health and socio-emotional needs have been highlighted above as risk factors for ESL, these issues may also arise as a consequence of leaving school early,¹⁵ either directly or indirectly, through factors such as negative self-concept, substance abuse and addiction. A detailed review of the international literature on bullying victimisation amongst children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) found that they have increased risk of victimisation in both mainstream and special settings.¹⁶ It is a concern that a large number of EU Member States do not have in place national school bullying and violence prevention strategies and that most EU Member States do not have common or linked strategies for ESL and bullying prevention. In addition, very few countries address prevention of homophobic bullying in schools in a strategic manner, and homophobic bullying also lacks a strategic focus in many EU Member States.

As a response to these concerns, one of the key issues raised by the members of the Expert Panel is that of improving the relational and physical spaces in schools. This focuses on reconfiguring spaces in and around schools to provide safe spaces and relational spaces of belonging as a whole school approach, and to restructure multidisciplinary team services so they are flexibly available both on school sites and in accessible community locations. This also includes opening school spaces to parents and as community lifelong learning centres.¹⁷ Diametric oppositional spatial systems divide into us versus them, 'good' students versus 'bad' students, rigid 'above/below' hierarchies¹⁸. Such diametric splits in communication can lead to student fear of asking teachers questions. A contrasting

¹¹ <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/toolkitsforschools.htm>

¹² Council conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school (2015/C 417/05) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52015XG1215%2803%29>

¹³ Quiroga, C. V., Janosz, M. & Bisset, S. (2013). Early Adolescent Depression Symptoms and School Dropout: Mediating Processes Involving Self-Reported Academic Competence and Achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105, 2, 552–560.

¹⁴ Finnish National Agency for Education. (2014). Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014.

<https://www.ellibs.com/fi/book/9789521362590/national-core-curriculum-for-basic-education-2014>

¹⁵ Kaplan, D.D., Damphousse, J.R. & Kaplan, H.B. (1994). Mental Health Implications of Not Graduating from High School. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 62, 105–123

¹⁶ McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Vaughn, R. P. (2010). *Responding to Bullying among Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities*. London: Anti-Bullying Alliance.

¹⁷ For example, at least 80 % of schools in The Hague and Gijon municipalities open their doors after school hours for lifelong learning classes. Downes, P. (2014). *Towards a Differentiated, Holistic and Systemic Approach to Parental Involvement in Europe for Early School Leaving Prevention*. European Union, European Regional Development Fund, Urbact Secretariat, Paris.

¹⁸ Lévi-Strauss, C. (1973). *Structural Anthropology*: Vol. 2. Trans. M. Layton, 1977. Allen Lane: Penguin Books; Downes, P. (2013). Developing a Framework and Agenda for Students' Voices in the School System across Europe: From Diametric to Concentric Relational Spaces for Early School Leaving Prevention. *European Journal of Education*, 48, 3, 346–362.

concentric space is one in which both concentric poles are in assumed connection with each other around a common centre, offering a web of connectivity for inclusion.

Another concern is that of expanding system capacity. A greater number of places in the more academic schools would help minimise such selection pressures. Besides, more flexible pathways for students to move between VET and academic learning trajectories could overcome splits into parallel tracks.¹⁹ Similarly, university capacities and flexible entry pathways need to be expanded to accommodate mass third-level education rather than treating university as the preserve of the gifted minority. Relational space issues are also relevant to changing institutional cultures to reflect and celebrate minority cultural identities and provide increased accessibility for working-class students. There is also a need to distinguish different levels of need, such as group-based supports at the moderate-risk selected prevention level and more intensive individual support. Children and adults with complex needs require intensive multidisciplinary team supports. With regard to higher education, a 12-country European study on access to higher education for socio-economically excluded groups found that there is a large-scale absence of national committees to promote access to higher education.²⁰ Encouraging students experiencing poverty and without a family tradition of third-level attainment to enrol in tertiary education needs to distinguish how university is different from school. Links between universities and adult non-formal education organisations offer much potential for development, including fostering access to higher education pathways over time.

Affirmative action measures to ensure access to higher education for socioeconomically marginalised groups and marginalised minority groups requires much further development across Europe, as the potential to close the gap has been shown in some countries. Transparent criteria based on socioeconomic and other (i.e. on the basis of ethnicity or national origin) marginalisation can be achieved, as can transparent processes for flexible entry routes, such as the Irish HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) scheme of reserved places at university level for socioeconomically excluded groups or the Comprehensive Plan for the Roma People in Catalonia, which reserves one seat in each BA offered at Catalan universities for Roma students. There are also examples of how such policies have been used to close the gap in access to higher education between Roma and non-Roma populations.²¹ The rationale is not only to narrow the gap but also to generate a more democratic society as well as improve access of these groups to education, social services and healthcare. There is also robust evidence on how inclusion in a wide sense has clear benefits in terms of learning processes and building more democratic societies.²² Considering all of these challenges, there is a real need for a joined-up strategy between education, social affairs and health services provision. Most countries split these areas and offer no opportunity for cooperation. However, Portugal and Slovenia already have some tradition of cooperation in these areas.

¹⁹ Cedefop (2016). Leaving education early: putting vocational education and training centre stage. Volume I: investigating causes and extent, Volume II: evaluating policy impact, & Selfreflection Tool. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 57.

²⁰ Downes, P. (2014). *Access to Education in Europe: A Framework and Agenda for System Change*. Dordrecht, Springer Verlag; Croxford, L., & Raffe, D. (2013). Differentiation and social segregation of UK higher education, 1996–2010. *Oxford Review of Education*, 39 (2), 172–192.

²¹ http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/gallup_romania_english.pdf

²² Bowen, W. G. & Bok, D. (2016). *The Shape of the River: Long-term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions*, Vol. 96. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

2.3 Citizenship education based on competences for democratic citizenship

Citizenship education is a crucial tool in promoting citizenship and inclusion in Europe. Overall, education and training should be an engine for the development of common competences for democratic citizenship in Europe as a basis of social mobility, identity and responsibility at global and local levels. The members of the Expert Panel consider the Reference framework of competences for democratic culture²³ to be an important starting point for the further development of citizenship education in Europe during the coming decade. Citizenship education needs to integrate a range of competency dimensions: notably, knowledge and critical understanding; skills for active participation; common attitudes and values; and a reflective identity and a sense of belonging. Identity and values are not possessions that privilege Europeans above non-Europeans. They comprise commitment and responsibility in relation to a heritage and towards a global future. One of the major challenges to citizenship is alienation from political institutions and populist discourses in contemporary politics, which are based on mobilising fear and promoting simplistic answers to complex questions. These challenges cannot be faced primarily by focusing on identities and values; conceptual knowledge in relation to politics, analytical competences and skills are also needed in order to counter disinformation, conspiracy narratives and the distortion of reality via oversimplification.

The IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)²⁴ is a valuable tool for measuring progress towards ensuring that young people are initially prepared to take on their role as citizens at the age of 14. Overall, citizens in most EU Member States tend to score on average at least moderately on the knowledge scale (competency level B²⁵); however, the Expert Panel deems that this level will probably be insufficient to address the above-mentioned challenges (only students at competency level A are able to imagine more than one cause of a problem and to deal with two arguments). Therefore, further actions are needed to devise future strategies in education which take on board these new challenges and involve more explicitly the concepts of complexity, hybridity, plurality and solidarity. In this respect, the ICCS and the Eurydice Report on citizenship education²⁶ provide an overview on structures and competency levels in Europe; however, further studies assessing the effectiveness of specific educational methods and developing new approaches to current challenges are needed. These studies could offer a more in-depth analysis and a country- or region-specific focus.

At the same time, the challenges addressed in the five other issue papers affect citizenship education. Regarding *investment, reform and governance*, citizenship education has to deal with how these can contribute to increase political support for democracy and the rule of law. Regarding *the digitalisation of society*, citizenship education has to deal with the challenge of enabling students to participate in digital technologies while reflecting on the manipulative potential of these technologies. Regarding *demographic changes*, citizenship education has to invent new formats in order to bridge the intergenerational gap of interests that may occur in European societies. Regarding *environmental challenges*, citizenship education has to implement common values that are not limited to the EU, but valid on a global scale. Education for sustainable development and global citizenship are intertwined. Regarding the area of *technology and the future of work*, citizenship education has to deal with the ethical questions around human responsibility and decision-making in view of artificial intelligence.

²³ Council of Europe (2018). Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. Strasbourg: CoE.

²⁴ <https://iccs.iea.nl/home.html>

²⁵ European Commission (2018). European Education and Training Monitor 2018. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 12.

²⁶ European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2017). Citizenship Education at School in Europe – 2017: Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

3. Looking towards 2030: priority areas of action

The following key themes for future European cooperation over the coming decade emerged.

Building citizenship education on common values:

- Align citizenship education with the European reference framework for democratic culture and the European reference framework of key competences for lifelong learning.
- Develop a code of conduct/guidelines for dealing with controversial issues in citizenship education.
- Ensure that teachers are trained and prepared effectively and, where appropriate, other members of the community are involved.
- The issue of religion in citizenship education should be further examined.
- Promote national strategies for bullying prevention (e.g. a whole school approach involving family supports and addressing discriminatory bullying).

Encouraging inclusive teaching methods:

- Base educational practices and policies on research and examples that have achieved social impact. Design interventions to support inclusion based on research evidence to overcome educational myths which risk limiting achievement of disadvantaged groups.
- Educational systems should guarantee both diversity recognition and high-quality learning to all students, regardless of family background, ethnicity, religion, etc.

Creating inclusive community learning spaces:

- Reconfigure the way schools and community services are organised, both for physical and relational spaces, to create community outreach lifelong learning spaces for all.
- Bridge health, education and social services, including opportunities for school and community spaces to be gateways to accessing multidisciplinary teams for complex needs.
- Focus strategic development on emotional-relational supports, including positive school climate, conflict resolution skills for teachers and emotional counselling services.
- Promote educational actions that involve the meaningful participation of families and communities in schools, both in decision-making processes and in the classroom.
- Promote university access for marginalised groups through affirmative action for flexible entry routes.

3.1 Building citizenship education on common values to counter exclusionary perspectives

Diversity in Europe is increasing, although it should be stressed that diversity and the rising share of non-nationals in EU countries is not a problem in itself; rather, the issue is a mind-set that can provide no other positive identification than that which is based on homogeneous national narratives. It is therefore important to emphasise that we all have hybrid identities and at least potentially belong to multiple communities. Citizenship education should appreciate this, with the objective of developing the basis for a more aspirational new common identity that is committed to strengthening Europe's contribution to a sustainable global future.

The members of the Expert Panel suggest that national assessment and curricula in citizenship education be strengthened with the European Reference Framework for Democratic Culture (RFDC)²⁷ and the European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.²⁸ The RFDC promotes citizenship education through conceptual knowledge, critical analysis and reflection on various perspectives. Furthermore, the framework puts forward a dynamic and hybrid notion of identity. The framework also builds on participation and encourages students to deal with controversies in a cooperative manner.

Another recommendation provided by the Expert Panel is to focus on teacher training and preparation for citizenship education. Evidence from Germany²⁹ shows that teachers with a political or social science background implement more adequate teaching strategies in terms of citizenship education. At the same time, a major share of citizenship education is provided by teachers without specific preparation. In this situation, a specific European contribution could consist of developing a code of conduct or guidelines for citizenship education. This could contribute to a European consensus on how to implement citizenship education, including how to deal with controversial issues. Alternatively, an Erasmus project could be devoted to the development of a European certificate for citizenship education at masters level. A further means of providing subsidiary support for citizenship education based on common values includes setting up a European support institution for the promotion of professional citizenship education. National support institutions for that purpose exist only in a few Member States. Based on the experience with these heterogeneous institutions, the EU could provide a clearing house for European citizenship education.

The debates of the Expert Panel have been inconclusive on the best method of integrating European history into citizenship education. One idea was to organise group visits to European heritage sites with students from diverse backgrounds. At the same time, the Expert Panel is aware that this would need thoughtful preparation, intense backing and post-processing; otherwise there is a danger of intensifying stereotypes. These debates may also be interpreted as an example that our evidence base concerning concrete approaches in citizenship education is often not sufficient.

It is also important to discuss whether religion has a role to play in citizenship education. Member States could compare practices and discuss standards concerning religion in citizenship education. Current curriculum studies show that the human right of religious freedom (including the right to have no religion) is not taught in all schools within the EU, and the position of religious communities within state and society is not guaranteed to be included. This situation allows religious communities to define religious freedom themselves (for instance, as the freedom to join a religion but not as the freedom to leave a religion). The Expert Panel recommends that these aspects should not only be included in citizenship education but also form part of dialogue with religious communities and that their contribution to society as a whole, education for democracy and the rule of law should be sought.

Furthermore, the involvement of communities and families in European schools opens up new ways of increasing the democracy of education and training systems in terms of embracing the wide diversity that exists.³⁰ Families and communities can serve as a complement to the existing workforce of teachers and other professionals. Enhancing the role of volunteers in school, in support to teaching,

<https://rm.coe.int/prems-008318-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-1-8573-co/16807bc66c>

²⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>

²⁹ Abs, H. J. & Hahn-Laudenberg, K. (2017). *Das politische Mindset von 14-Jährigen. Ergebnisse der International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016*. Münster: Waxmann.

³⁰ Gómez, A. & Munté, A. Sordé, T.(2014). Transforming Schools through Minority Males' Participation: Overcoming Cultural Stereotypes and Preventing Violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 29, 11, 2002–2020.

could also contribute to increasing inclusion and fostering social cohesion, as long as the role of volunteers does not encroach into the professional activities of teachers.

Schools are the first public institutions future citizens have to deal with, and so they can be considered as micro-models of society. Therefore, schools should implement all we expect from regular state institutions at an exemplary standard. As part of this, additional effort is needed to ban violence and discrimination from schools. It should also be noted that discriminatory bullying by teachers with regard to minority ethnic groups has been highlighted across many European country contexts and requires direct intervention at initial teacher education level.³¹ At the same time, teachers can be victims of violence and discrimination in school.³² At present, we know too little about how to turn such occurrences into effective formal and informal learning opportunities for citizenship education.

3.2 Encouraging inclusive teaching methods based on research

It is the opinion of the Expert Panel that given the abundance of research and good practice on the integration of students of a migrant background, priority should be given to mainstreaming existing good practice, especially in relation to role of community actions and the community dimension. There are a number of examples of inclusive education informed by research which have been shown to have had a social impact. This is illustrated by one school in Spain in particular,³³ which has very high levels of migrants and students from a disadvantaged economic background, but which has outperformed elite schools. This is not an isolated case: such improvements are due to the implementation of successful educational actions that have increased student attainment, coexistence and social cohesion, and which are transferable across different contexts.³⁴

However, although countries are showing the political will³⁵ to implement inclusive educational policies, they are facing challenges around implementation. There is therefore a clear need to increase education systems' capacity to provide high-quality education for all learners and to develop ways to ensure effective implementation. There has also been much debate by the Expert Panel about teachers' workloads. Therefore, any additional initiatives or changes to existing systems need to avoid increasing workload. Nevertheless, teacher training should be updated and developed in line with recent scientific developments in the field; for example, in Finland³⁶ and the Spanish region of Valencia.³⁷ Members of the Expert Panel stressed the importance of considering 'educational myths' around inclusion. Leading journals have discussed the spread of neuro-myths among teachers and their adverse effects on educational practice. These can be identified as barriers to improving students' achievement, especially in the case of the most marginalised students. In the coming decade, it will be key to debunk certain long-established and widespread myths and to replace these with evidence backed up by science. For example, evidence shows that family background is correlated to student performance, but correlation is very often confused with causation, condemning these students and families to school failure and furthering a self-fulfilling prophecy.

³¹ Elamé, E. (2013). *Discriminatory bullying: A new intercultural dialogue*. Berlin: Springer Verlag.

³² Longobardi, C., Badenes-Ribera, L., Fabris, M. A., Martinez, A., & McMahon, S. D. (2018). Prevalence of Student Violence against Teachers: A Meta-analysis. *Psychology of Violence*, Advance online publication

³³ The school is: <http://www.joaquimruyra.cat/> which is part of the Learning Communities project that is being developed in more than 3.000 around Europe and Latin America, <https://www.comunidadedeaprendizagem.com/>

³⁴ Flecha, R. (2014). *Successful educational actions for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe*. Springer.

³⁵ Cf. Council Conclusions on 'Inclusion in Diversity to achieve a High Quality Education For All' (2017/C 62/02).

³⁶ Jyrhämä, R., Kynäslahti, H., Krokfors, L., Byman, R., Maaranen, K., Toom, A., & Kansanen, P. (2008). The Appreciation and Realisation of Research-Based Teacher Education: Finnish Students' Experiences of Teacher Education. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 31, 1, 1–16.

³⁷ <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/toolkitsforschools/detail.cfm?n=5864>

There is also a debate around the practice of segregation by ability, or streaming, which is widespread in Europe, but can be damaging to those of lower ability. Alternatives would include more inclusive organisation of school classes to include all types of ability; for instance, via inclusive split classrooms, where students are split into two heterogeneous groups. The idea here is to use existing human resources in both the schools and communities to promote inclusionary practices that are much more effective, such as small heterogeneous interactive groups. In each of these, students interact in order to guarantee that all of them successfully accomplish the assigned task in order to move to the next group. One person, who can be a teacher, a family member or a volunteer, facilitates the interactions between the students. The benefits of interactive groups have been extensively proven, not only because this multiplies by four the amount of work completed, but also because it contributes to improving the school climate as well as the connections between schools and their students.³⁸

It is also a myth that it is more difficult for families with a minority background to be involved in schools. There have been studies on Roma communities that found that Roma families dislike mainstream schools as they do not recognise their culture or do not provide high-quality education to them. However, if schools address these issues, Roma communities become very positive.³⁹ The key is therefore to work with the school to achieve more inclusivity and high-quality education in dialogue with these families and to avoid any misconceptions based on low expectations. The most effective way to involve families and communities is to enable them to participate in school decision-making processes and educational activities (including in the classroom).⁴⁰

A voluntary EU quality label or standard for schools would acknowledge those schools that are performing well against a range of indicators linked to inclusion. This issue was included in a recent Erasmus+ call for proposals.⁴¹ This could help provide public recognition for schools in areas of high poverty and socioeconomic exclusion and could help morale, combined with a potential commitment to targeting additional resources for such schools and areas. Relevant considerations when developing a quality label would include the coordinating and awarding body; whether it is voluntary or compulsory; the unit of assessment (school, department, faculty, institution); levels of assessment; self-evaluation or external review; whether it is a one-off or subject to renewal; and its areas of focus.

3.3 Creating inclusive community learning spaces

A powerful way of combating exclusion is to try to reconfigure the way that schools are organised, aiming to create learning spaces for all users and beyond school hours. Evidence has shown that school suspensions and expulsion have profound consequences, with these students up to 10 times more likely to leave school early and more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system.⁴² In addition, for some children, school is a major protective factor: if they do not have home backgrounds that are supportive, the school environment is very important.

A spatial reconfiguration focus can include bundling services together in one accessible location as a one-stop shop and bringing health and education services together onto common sites for engaging

³⁸ Flecha, R., & Soler, M. (2013). Turning Difficulties into Possibilities: Engaging Roma Families and Students in School through Dialogic Learning. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 43, 4, 451–465.

³⁹ Claveria, J. V. & Alonso, J. G. (2003). Why Roma Do Not Like Mainstream Schools: Voices of a People without Territory. *Harvard Educational Review*, 73, 4, 559–590.

⁴⁰ Díez, J., Gatt, S. & Racionero, S. (2011). Placing Immigrant and Minority Family and Community Members at the School's Centre: The Role of Community Participation. *European Journal of Education*, 46, 2, 184–196.

⁴¹ Guidelines for Applicants. Call for proposals EACEA No 34/2015. Key Action 3: Support for policy reform - Initiatives for policy innovation European policy experimentations in the fields of Education, Training and Youth led by high-level public authorities.

⁴² American Academy of Paediatrics Policy Statement (2013)

those with complex needs. It can include schools as community lifelong learning centres and, with other services, as gateways to supports for those with more complex needs. Therefore, as discussed above, creating concentric spaces, which will bring people together, can create feelings of social and emotional belonging. Teachers have a powerful position in schools, and there is the risk that parents' skills and community members' potential are undermined by the idea that the teachers have the professional knowledge to develop children. There is therefore an imperative to encourage the inclusion of parents in the education process in a collaborative and egalitarian way, meaning that the beneficiaries are not only perceived as mere end users but also as subjects who can and want to decide about their own education and that of their offspring. Besides conceptual reconfiguration, spatial expansion is also desirable for developing critical and broad thinking, bearing in mind that education is much broader than schooling.

Examples of fostering inclusive learning include finding spaces that people trust, which could include libraries, cafes, pubs, community centres, and arts and youth work hubs, which would enable the provision of learning to be moved away from a restrictive school environment. Outreach and engagement can be a proactive way to reach the most marginalised groups, and ways to involve beneficiaries in the decision-making should be sought. For example, community learning centres can be a gateway to more complex referral systems. Such a model allows for a more flexible, accessible model, which aims to engage socioeconomically excluded groups.⁴³ It combines the strengths-based, welcoming and non-threatening approach of community lifelong learning centres⁴⁴ with co-located multidisciplinary teams built around helping those with high, complex needs. There are a range of other key features of a combined model as a one-stop shop. An outreach approach to parental and community involvement for schools and municipalities requires active efforts to engage with groups in contexts where they feel most comfortable and where their voice is heard.

Non-stigmatising early warning systems to flag risk can be part of a combined strategy for both ESL and bullying prevention. These common system supports include whole school approaches building a positive school climate, teachers' conflict resolution skills, emotional counselling supports and multidisciplinary teams for family support.⁴⁵ This brings new players into the mix, such as parents, health institutions, young people and civil rights groups, and to encourage public officials to think of ESL, for example, as central to community health and as a long-term solution beneficial to population health. In addition, the involvement of parents in the education process via the availability of the school sites during after-school hours for lifelong learning classes or reading groups (i.e. dialogic literary gatherings) is a productive way to engage marginalised and minority communities.⁴⁶ This also resonates with and expands upon the whole school approach concerns with school climate, trust, bullying prevention, multidisciplinary teams in and around schools and hearing children's voices.

⁴³An example is Familibase, Ballyfermot, Dublin, Ireland. Lifelong Learning Platform Briefing Paper (2018). Implementing a holistic approach to lifelong learning - Community Lifelong Learning Centres as a gateway to multidisciplinary support teams. Brussels: LLLP.

⁴⁴ Community lifelong learning centres tend to offer non-formal education, or a combination of non-formal and formal education.

⁴⁵ Downes, P. & Cefai, C. (2016). *How to tackle bullying and prevent school violence in Europe: Evidence and practices for strategies for inclusive and safe schools*. NESET II, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union/EU bookshop.

⁴⁶ Soler, M. (2015). Biographies of "invisible" people who transform their lives and enhance social transformations through Dialogic Gatherings. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(10), 839-842.

4. Concluding remarks

This Expert Panel has considered the key issues around citizenship and inclusion in the future of education. It has debated a wide range of themes that are linked to the objectives of creating an education system that promotes equity of access to high-quality teaching and which bolsters citizenship competencies based on common values while also respecting diversity in Europe. For decades, a wealth of research has been dedicated to identifying successful actions to make these principles a reality in practice. Future developments should take into consideration such advancements.

One common theme has been that of the importance of working together to achieve these aims. Efforts to combat radicalisation and populism are strengthened by different groups of the community working together. These include teachers as central figures, but also the students themselves, parents and other interested parties, representatives of religious communities and healthcare professionals. By combining forces and creating strong and meaningful links, there is a greater chance that education can make a profound contribution to the promotion of citizenship and the creation of a more inclusive education system and society in general.

Central themes for inclusion include bridging health and education needs and systems, addressing holistic emotional-relational needs and reconfiguring physical and relational spaces in and around schools.

If combined with a commitment to targeting additional support to schools in socially deprived areas, a European quality label could help provide public recognition for schools. Further, such a label could provide areas and levels of aspiration for the European schools of the future.

