



## **'It's the heart, stupid'. Emerging Priority Issues for Prevention of Early School Leaving: A Solution-Focused Approach**

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## ***‘It’s the heart, stupid’. Emerging Priority Issues for Prevention of Early School Leaving: A Solution-Focused Approach***

What key strategic issues are missing from leading policy documents on early school leaving prevention ?

- ❖ Field, S., Kuczera, M., & Pont, B. (2007). *No more failures: Ten steps to equity in education*. Paris: OECD
- ❖ OECD (2010) *Overcoming School Failure: Policies that work*
- ❖ Commission staff working document (2009) *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2009*

What key issues are also missing – at a strategic level – across European countries though with isolated good practice?

## What is missing ?

- ❖ A systemic strategy of emotional support for potential early school leavers – at national, regional, local and school levels
- ❖ Emotional support services at child, family, teacher and school level
- ❖ Outreach dimension to emotional support team to engage with family support issues
- ❖ Early intervention and prevention strategies for emotional support for those at risk of early school leaving
- ❖ Need to bridge a traditional divide between Departments of Education and Health

## Methodological Issues

- ❖ Not enough qualitative research on experience of the education system (Cohen 2006).
- ❖ Emotions difficult to measure (Cohen 2006; Downes 2007; Desjardins 2008).
- ❖ Need to increase focus on protective and not just risk factors
- ❖ Need to neutralise supporting conditions for risk factors that “cause” early school leaving (Downes 2006, 2007).

## ❖ International Research

❖ Downes (2011, forthcoming): *A Systems Level Focus on Access to Education for Traditionally Marginalised Groups in Europe: Comparing Strategies, Policy and Practice in Twelve European Countries*. [Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, England, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Scotland, Slovenia] 223 interviews

Senior Management Formal 3<sup>rd</sup> level: 60 interviews

Senior Management Formal 2<sup>nd</sup> level: 26 interviews

Non-formal: 49 interviews

Prison: 26 interviews

Government Officials: 27 interviews

❖ Child-centred surveys in Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Areas of Dublin, Ireland (Downes 2004, 2004a; Downes, Maunsell & Ivers 2006; Downes & Maunsell 2007; Downes & Gilligan (Eds.) (2007) Ivers, McLoughlin & Downes 2010)

Questionnaires returned:

18 Primary Schools: 862; 9 Secondary Schools: 677

Total: 1,539 Focus Groups 57

Consultations with Community groups: 99

## **THEME 1**

**Conflict resolution strategies for teachers and professional development to promote the social support role of teachers**

## **THEME 2**

**Bullying prevention strategies in school**

## **THEME 3**

**Emotional trauma (bereavement, rape, sexual abuse, bullying, family break up, sleep related problems) – supports needed to prevent early school leaving**

## **THEME 4**

**Alternatives to suspension**

## **THEME 5**

**Prevention of substance abuse**

# THEME 1

## Conflict resolution strategies for teachers and professional development to promote the social support role of teachers

- In the EU Commission public consultation 'Schools for the 21st century', classroom management strategies were raised as an issue needing to be better addressed by teacher initial education (see also Commission staff working document 2008)

Downes (2011): Lithuania: The secondary education system in Lithuania according to the school management:

*"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)*

Downes (2011): Slovenia: *You see that he needs help, he needs a hand..., a talk...however... If there were any one to talk to. ... A single teacher may retain a pupil in school and this often happens” (Ivančič et al., 2010).*

\*Professional development of teachers regarding student discipline and special needs students are both, in particular, central to early school leaving prevention.

OECD (2009) 'classroom discipline, aggregated to the school level, is a core element of instructional quality. In PISA, it is positively related to the school's mean student achievement in many participating countries (Klieme and Rakoczy, 2003). Also, it has been shown that – unlike other features of classroom instruction – there is a high level of agreement about this indicator among teachers, students and observers (Clausen, 2002)'.

Key results observed in TALIS (OECD 2009) include that:

- One teacher in four in most countries loses at least 30% of the lesson time, and some lose more than half, in disruptions and administrative tasks – and this is closely associated with classroom disciplinary climate, which varies more among individual teachers than among schools

## **An emotionally supportive school climate matters for Early School Leaving prevention**

- ❖ US and Australian adolescents cite a sense of isolation and lack of personally meaningful relationships at school as significant contributors to academic failure and to their decisions to drop out of school (Institute for Education and Transformation 1992; Wehlage & Rutter 1986; Hodgson 2007; McIntyre-Mills 2010)
- ❖ Power (2006), Meier (1992) and Kuperminc et al. (1997) cite personalized, caring relationships with teachers as a prerequisite for high school-level reform - to avoid students becoming 'eased out' Smyth & Hattam (2004) of school

Downes, Maunsell & Ivers (2006):

- Approximately 74% of pupils at primary level (6th class) state that they **are** treated fairly by teachers in school
- Approximately 55% of students at secondary level (first year) state that they **are** treated fairly by teachers in school-
- Approximately 15% of pupils at primary level (6th class) state that they **are not** treated fairly by teachers in school-
- Approximately 25% of students at secondary level (first year) state that they **are not** treated fairly by teachers in school

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\*These differences between 6th class primary and 1st year secondary are statistically significant i.e., there is a statistically significant increase in perception of being treated unfairly by teachers in secondary school compared to primary school.

**No sunlight !**

**Downes and Maunsell (2007)**

**Responses from students who perceived that they were not treated fairly by teachers include the following:**

*“No some think they own the school”*

*“The students aren’t treated fairly, I don’t know why, they just don’t and it’s very clear”*

*“No they pick on certain students”*

*“Fairly by some but teachers that hated another family member they think you’re like them when you’re not”*

*“Most of them are very, very nice but there is just 1 or 2 that I don’t like one bit”*

*“Mainly yes but 1 or 2 can be discouraging towards me. I am a good student and do my work mostly so they shouldn’t have a reason to be unfair”*

*“No some teachers would talk to you harshly & then act so sweet in front of your parents”*

*“No they pick on certain students”*

*“No, because some teachers are bullies towards the students”*

*“I’m leaving after the Junior [Certificate] because I hate it”*

*Would change “the way the teachers treat the students”*

*“I can’t wait to leave, I would leave tomorrow if I had the choice because I get picked on by a teacher”*

## THEME 2

### • Bullying prevention strategies in school

-In the EU Commission public consultation '*Schools for the 21st century*', tackling bullying, violence and intolerance in schools was an emerging theme (see also Commission staff working document 2008). Teachers and principals consistently underestimate levels of school bullying (Tattum 1997; Downes 2004, see also Young, Glogowska & Lockyer 2007 on related divergences).

-Downes (2011): Estonia: *The majority of those who have dropped out of or left their previous school are lower secondary students. They had conflicts with teachers or other problems and could not continue in their old school.* (Tamm & Saar, 2010)

*Lower secondary students are younger than 17 years old. They are referred to us by the Department of Education; we cannot admit such students without the Department's approval. They could not cope in their old school. (...) Some schools (in particular those that have a social worker) refer their problematic students to us. The main problem is bullying. This year we have two such students and they are doing well. Our students are older and bullies cannot dominate* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

## Downes (2004):

“There were lots bullied in the class” (4th class, F, 10),

“I don’t know but lots” (4th class, F, 10),

“I don’t think anybody has been bullied” (4th class, F, 10)

“None in my class have been bullied” (4th class, F, 10).

“I’d have guards to guard me to stop anyone starting on me” (4th class, M, 10)

“I would put cameras on the walls so they would know who is bullying” (4th class, M, 10)

“bullies, blow up the school” (5th class, M, 11)

“I would make all the school a bully-free zone” (6th class, M, 12)

“If I had the power I would change the bullies out of the school” (4th class, F, 10)

“I would change all the bullies in my school to geeks” (6th class, F, 12)

“One of the biggest problems” in the school is bullying (5th class, M, FG) but “you don’t wanna be a rat” (5th class, M, 11)

“If their hair is different or if they’re smaller they would get called names get more people on yard duty” (5th class, M, 11)

“I would be absent because sometimes I get bullied” (5th class, M, 11)

“No-one will end up in school if they keep getting bullied” (6th class, M, 12)

“Yes I was absent I was being bullied” (5th class, M, 11)

“One of my friend is being bullied. They can go to a teacher...If I didn’t go to school it would probably be because someone was bullying me” (6th class, F, 12)

“If there was no bullies around” (5th class, M, 11)

“”Yes because I am bullied” (5th class, M, 11)

**❖ Anti-bullying approaches can be built into cooperative strategies and emotional expression across the curriculum, as well as requiring a community level focus (Downes 2009)**

## THEME 3

**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 on early school leaving (2010): Case studies of those who left school early due to trauma factors of rape, bereavement, sexual abuse

Downes (2011) Norway: 11 percent of the same group in SP3 stated that family related problems were a problem for participating in educational activity. We asked our informant how he thought public policy in this area could contribute to offering guidance services that go beyond the subjects taught at the institutions. Our informant responded:

*Many students have mentally related problems and students have a high suicide rate. For many, being a student is a lonely affair. It goes without saying that the healthcare services must be equipped with a professional staff (Stensen & Ure, 2010).*

Downes (2011): Bulgaria: *The College does not have a specialized unit that provides emotional support to the students. There is a Career Development Center at SWU, which also renders its services to students from the Technical College. SWU has no institutionalized forms of providing emotional support to students (e.g. a specialized unit, psychologists) (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).*

Wider referral processes – reach withdrawn kids (Doll 1996; Downes 2004): Downes (2004) ‘being ignored because your head is down working is like a slap in the face’

Downes & Maunsell (2007):

*“Why do you think some people are dying ? Because there is no one to talk to”*

- *“we should do more personal development”*

- *“girls slit their wrists”*

- *“girls take tablets and slice their wrists”*

- *“girls sleeping around to hurt themselves, other ways instead of slitting wrists”*

❖ Taras & Potts-Datema (2005) note that most children need at least 9 hours of restful sleep each night and conclude that:

❖ ‘The preponderance of literature that recognises the detrimental effects of sleep disorders is astounding and perhaps not fully appreciated among many primary care providers, school health professionals and educators’.

❖ Other research has shown that adolescents require at least 8.5 hours of sleep per night and more appropriately 9.25 hours of sleep (Carskadon et al., 1980). A review by Blunden et al (2001) of 13 articles demonstrated that reduced attention, memory, intelligence and increased problematic behaviour resulted from sleep-related obstructive breathing. Other international studies have shown a relationship between insufficient sleep and lowered academic performance (Allen, 1992; Kowalski & Allen, 1995; Schuller, 1994; Wolfson & Carskadon, 1996, 1998).

<b>“At what time do you usually go to sleep on a weekday?” (Downes &amp; Maunsell, 2007)</b>	<b>Before Midnight</b>	<b>Midnight</b>	<b>After midnight</b>	<b>Varies/NA</b>
<b>School A %</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>School B %</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>School C %</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>School D %</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>School E %</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>School F %</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>School G %</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>4%</b>

## Reasons for sleep loss – age 11-12:

### Thinking related:

*“Sometimes, because I think a lot of something.”*

*“Because you are thinking about something.*

*“Always because I’m always thinking about things”*

### Worry/stress/fear related:

*“Sometimes I have problems sleeping because I am worried...”*

*“All my stress”*

### Bereavement related:

*“... sometimes its cause I think about my nanny who is in heaven”*

*“ I do sometimes if there is something on my mind like people in hospital. Or people who have passed away”*

### Physical related:

*“Yes because I’m hungry.”*

*“Sometimes I have insomnia and can’t sleep till 2 o clock. I hardly do any exercise and all my energy is stored in my body.”*

Downes & Maunsell (2007)

## THEME 4

### Alternatives to suspension

- Downes (2011): Lithuania: *According to management and the teacher interviewed approximately 10 percent of students are expelled from school in each year. The reasons are usually behaviour problems, bullying, harassment, aggressiveness i.e. non-academic reasons prevail. The teacher mentioned that there were no expelled students for not attending classes. The statistics, according to the management can be collected but this will not solve the problem (Taljunaite et al 2010)*
- Downes (2011): Slovenia: *Parents report to the school the reason of absence and the school just keeps evidence. As a result the number of pupils expelled from school because of not excused absence from classes decreased considerably. None was expelled in this school year... In fact we try with the non-punishment policy, as it used to happen in the past that a pupil was punished with unexcused hours of absence but he was not the key person who contributed to that, but all others including the parents who had forgotten to provide written excuse to the class teacher. And it happened that a potentially good electrician, mechanic etc. was suspended/expelled from the school and that was not good (Ivančič et al., 2010).*

Downes (2011) Russia: A multidisciplinary team plays a key role in devising alternative strategies to suspension in this example from a Russian school:

*The school doesn't practice expulsion or suspension of students. Instead, the psychological support service team regularly conducts preventive meetings and conversations with students who have discipline or study problems. Each school has a Preventive Council aimed at dealing with 'problem' students...The psychologist and social teacher conduct conversations and meetings with adult students in case their discipline or studying practices are improper. Use of preventive measures as an alternative to expulsion shows that the school staff aims to keep as many students at risk of early leaving at school as possible, which proves how much they are indeed interested in students and care for them (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits, 2010).*

## Downes & Maunsell (2007):

-*"Suspension is stupid, just gives them a break"*

-*"If you swing on a chair that's enough for a suspension"*

-*"I was one of the boys who got suspended, cos being very cheeky"*

-*"About 8 out of 17 suspended, she suspended 7 people in one day"*

- *Worst thing about school "getting suspended"*

-*"He says if you do that boy you'll be out of the school in a second and you'll never come back"*

-*"He threatens you, I'll suspend you, I'll expel you and you'll never come back"*

-*"Get suspended for taking a sup of water"*

One service provider suggests that: *"suspension used a lot, need to put something in place if suspended, not much endeavour to keep them in school"*.

-*"Need suspension only for serious things"*

- *"getting sent home for 3 days isn't punishment"*

- *"sit outside the door for hours"*

-*"Teachers leave you in corridor"*

*-“Suspended for phone ringing in class and for talking”*

*-“Suspended for not doing homework”*

*-“Three bookings and then detention, bookings for very little i.e. talking or being a minute late”*

*-“Suspended for 3 days if you don’t do detention”*

*-“3 suspended, 2 for fighting, the other for being late, messing”*

Priority needs of some of the schools emphasised:

*-“Individual discipline programme for disruptive boys”*

*-“Teacher to work with children with challenging behaviour in small groups above quota”*

*-“Permanent in-school counselling service”*

The Irish post-primary figure of 5% for suspension, applied to the total population of 332,407 students equates to well over 16,000 students suspended from post-primary schools in 2005/6 (ERC/NEWB 2010).

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## **Early school leaving is a mental health issue !**

- 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 as 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.
- This effect was also evident when controls were applied for psychological mental health as measured at 7th grade. The significant damaging effect of dropping out of school was also evident even when controls were applied for gender, father's occupational status, and ethnicity
- Though early school leaving can have different effects across countries (Van Alphen 2009)

## THEME 5

### Prevention of substance abuse

A focus on substance abuse related issues is a key dimension to prevention of early school leaving (Downes 2003; EMCDDA 2003, 2003a) and yet it is given little emphasis across the different examples from schools across the national reports in Downes (2010). One exception is the Russian national report which observes the following important approach:

The main goal of the psychological support service is to provide favorable conditions for all students, build up trustworthy relationships between them and the school and provide psychological help for those students who lack it in their families.

*“They often come here with their spirit broken. They are offended at the world and intimidated, so it’s very important for us to help them form a strong, stable and harmonious personality, who is fully aware of his/her desires and ambitions. We want to bring up a person who understands that s/he is not alone in the world and that there will be many problems on his/her life path so we teach them to be ready for those problems and be able to overcome them”.* (Kozlovskiy, Kokhlova & Viets 2010)

❖ Need for strategies to challenge fatalism which is a risk factor for drug use and other self-harming behaviour, including a fatalism associated with early school leaving (Kalichman et al. 2000, Downes 2003; Ivers, McLoughlin & Downes 2010)

❖ O'Connell & Sheikh (2009) explored non-academic (non-cognitive) factors in early school leaving and found strong correlations with smoking and with lack of daily school preparation for early school leaving in a sample of over 25,000 8th grade US students from over 1,000 schools

## THEMES 1-5: A COMMON SOLUTION

### Emotional support services as part of a multidisciplinary team

Downes (2011): Slovenia: The school has established a school counselling service which is funded by the Ministry of Education and Sport and regulated by the law on Organisation and Financing of Education, article 66, item 3 (Official Gazette, 98/2005, 07.11.2005). This is typical for Slovenian education system. Main tasks include:

- various prevention activities related to drug abuse, aggressive behaviour; workshops on questions regarding sexuality,
- workshops on independent learning and learning how to learn,
- counselling on personal and social development,
- dealing with social issues of pupils and with other problems related to learning, discipline etc.,
- preparation of adjusted programmes for pupils with special needs and monitoring of progression, counselling and provision of help when needed (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Downes (2011) Estonia.

*Some young learners (who have dropped out of their former school) come from problematic or disadvantaged families or have lost contact with their families and therefore lack elementary life skills, such as managing one's money, etc. They also need support to cope with personal problems – someone to talk to. Such support can be provided by teachers. All schools teach family studies but these are not enough. Such students need extra support and an opportunity to turn to somebody – the school head, a teacher, a psychologist, etc. – outside classes. Such conversations improve students' communication skills and the skill of solving problems. (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

Emotional needs for those at risk of early school leaving do not have to be at the clinical level of emotional disorders

Downes (2011) Lithuania:

<b>Students integrated into general schools</b> Beginning of the academic year				
	<b>2005- 2006</b>	<b>2006- 2007</b>	<b>2007- 2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>
Emotional behaviour and social disorders	886	1237	877	899

*No we do not have a psychologist at school. I think s/he is needed. Then it would be easier for us to understand why students behave the way they behave“.(Taljunaite et al 2010)*

## An outreach dimension to family support and emotional support

**There is a clear need for emotional support services emerging in Austria. This is the response of an Austrian Education Ministry official to this issue:**

***In another part of our research almost half of the respondents of ISCED 2 level participants stated that personal or emotional problems keep them from pursuing their education. Are there plans on a national level to introduce supportive offers in Austria? In your opinion, how could this situation be improved on a federal level?***

***This brings me back to the working group of federal government and federal provinces' governments and the plans concerning the lower secondary diploma. We have a strictly calculated size of pedagogical support because we said it's not working properly without...It is starting with the "visiting" education work, where we want to approach the target group proactively instead of waiting for them to come by themselves. There must be somebody here for them permanently and a certain amount of time should be calculated for this kind of care. (Rammel & Gottwald 2010)***

- ❖ Field et al's (2007, p.97) OECD study illustrates the Finnish approach of adopting a multidisciplinary team as part of a continuum of interventions in schools. These include professionals from outside the school, such as a psychologist and social worker, together with the school's counselor, the special needs teacher and classroom teacher.
- ❖ However, a major issue of the need for confidentiality has been highlighted in a range of student centred research in Ireland, in relation to the needs of potential early school leavers in the context of multidisciplinary teams (Downes 2004; Downes, Maunsell & Ivers 2006; Downes & Maunsell 2007).
- ❖ It is of concern as to whether the privacy needs of students are respected in a multidisciplinary team which directly includes class teachers and special needs teachers. This issue of trust and confidentiality is particularly relevant for students whose families and even communities have experienced much alienation from the school system in the past.
- ❖ Better if community based team working onsite in different schools

**Familiscope  
Community Based  
Psychology Service**

**Child A D.O.B. 2002**

*Pre Familiscope  
Intervention:  
2007- 2008  
Absent 89 days*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Post Familiscope  
Intervention:  
  
2008-  
2009: Absent 36  
days  
**2009-2010 to date:  
Absent 10 days***

**Child B D.O.B.  
2000**

*Pre Familiscope  
Intervention:  
2006 -2007  
Absent 121 days*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Post Familiscope  
Intervention:  
2007-  
2008: Absent  
38 days  
2008 –  
2009: Absent  
42 days  
**2009-2010 to date  
Absent 9 days***

**Child C D.O.B.  
1998**

*Pre Familiscope  
Intervention:  
2007 – 2008  
Absent 42 days  
2008 – 2009  
Absent 56 days*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Post Familiscope  
Intervention:  
  
**2009 -2010 to date:  
  
Absent 3 days***

**Child D**

*Pre Familiscope  
Intervention  
2006-2007: Absent  
72 days*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Post Familiscope  
Intervention:  
2007 – 2008:  
Absent 35 days  
2008-2009: Absent  
25 days  
**2009 -2010 to date:  
Absent 10 days***

<p><b>Child E D.O.B 2001</b>  <i>Pre Familiscope</i>  Intervention:  Mar 2008 – Oct  2008:  Absent 25 days in 4  month period (only  stats available)  *****</p> <p><i>Post Familiscope</i>  Intervention:  Oct 2008 – June  2009: Absent 15  days  <b><i>2009-2010 to date:</i></b>  <b><i>Absent 13 days</i></b></p>	<p><b>Child F D.O.B.  2002</b>  <i>Pre Familiscope</i>  Intervention:  2007-2008:  Absent 15 days  2008- 2009  Absent 28 days  *****</p> <p><i>Post Familiscope</i>  Intervention:    <b><i>2009/2010 to</i></b>  <b><i>date</i></b>  <b><i>Absent 1 day</i></b></p>	<p><b>Child G D.O.B.  2003</b>  <i>Pre Familiscope</i>  Intervention:  2008 – 2009  Absent 110 days    *****</p> <p><i>Post Familiscope</i>  Intervention:    <b><i>2009 – 2010 to date</i></b>    <b><i>Absent 16 days</i></b></p>	<p><b>Child H D.O.B.2004</b>  <i>Pre Familiscope</i>  Intervention:  Sept 2008 – Nov 2009    Absent 84 days    *****</p> <p><i>Post Familiscope</i>  Intervention:  <b><i>Dec 2009 - to date</i></b>    <b><i>Absent 5 days</i></b></p>
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# CONCLUSIONS

**Conflict resolution skills for teachers, Bullying prevention strategies, Emotional Trauma supports, Alternatives to suspension, Substance abuse prevention = A common solution-focused approach of multidisciplinary team, community based and working across schools**

- Emotional strategies to early school leaving have been neglected (see also Downes 2003, 2003a, 2007a, 2008, 2008a)

- Emotions generally neglected:

It is of concern that of the sixteen cross-curricular themes examined in 27 European countries by Maes et al (2001) at secondary school level (and cited in a Commission staff working document 2008, p.16), none of these engaged explicitly with emotional and personal awareness (see also Glasser 1969 on the 'emotional bridge to relevance' in school)

- This important institutional space for engaging with emotions has only been partly opened through Key Competences Framework at EU level which includes social and civic competences, and cultural awareness and expression. It needs to be expanded further beyond curriculum related issues to other dimensions of institutional culture.

- **RECOMMEND:** An EU Commission fund for multidisciplinary teams for emotional support and outreach to target potential early school leavers – community based teams working onsite in schools

## Service Delivery: Multidisciplinary team

Intervention Levels: Interventions at

- individual
- group
- family
- teacher
- whole school level.

## Key Guiding Principles

- Prevention and Early Intervention Approaches
- Developmental and Sustained, not ad hoc
- Holistic Strategies: Teams not individuals
- Multidisciplinary team based approaches: A both/and model of community based and school based
- A system level focus (Foster-Fishman & Behrens 2007) on the child, family, class, school, community
- Clear strategic direction of what the team based approach is seeking to achieve
- An identification that it was necessary to remove the social, economic-related, emotional and psychological barriers which existed in accessing & participating in education and community based support services to ensure the target group that these services were initiated for, could actually access and benefit from them
- The importance of child centered delivery
- The importance of supporting/up-skilling key adults consistently in the child's life—to move away from an 'expert' model—'to give the skills away' to the community

## **Outcome indicators from interventions of multidisciplinary team:**

- improved school attendance (outreach dimension and improved school climate)
- improved student motivation due to improved class climate
- improved student concentration as trauma related issues being supported
- improved sleep patterns influencing improved concentration and academic performance
- decrease in substance abuse influencing improved concentration and academic performance
- reduction and elimination of suspension and expulsion
- decrease in school bullying bringing improved school attendance, improved motivation for learning in school, less personal anxiety

- professional development of teachers' conflict resolution skills and social class and ethnicity diversity awareness
- improved engagement of parents with the school impacting on improving motivation of the student to learn
- a more democratic school climate improving school attendance and student motivation to learn
- increased tolerance of diversity and confidence for minority groups in the school institutional culture
- improved mental health and communication skills for students
- improved self-image, self-esteem, self-efficacy for learning: overcoming fatalism as a risk factor for early school leaving, substance abuse, other risk behaviours

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