

Towards a differentiated, holistic and systemic approach to engaging socio-economically excluded groups

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- **Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe – Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education*, by Ecorys UK (Day, Mozuraityte, Redgrave & McCoshan 2014). Published by the European Commission, Directorate-General Education and Culture(DG EAC).
- *Edwards, A. & Downes, P. (2013). *Alliances for Inclusion: Developing Cross-sector Synergies and Inter-Professional Collaboration in and around Education*. EU Commission NESET (Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training). Foreword to report by Jan Truszczyński, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture.
- *Downes, P. (2011). *Community Based Lifelong Learning Centres: Developing a European Strategy Informed by International Evidence and Research*. Research paper for European Commission, NESET.
- *Downes, P. (2011). *Multi/Interdisciplinary Teams for Early School Leaving Prevention: Developing a European Strategy Informed by International Evidence and Research*. Research paper for European Commission, NESET (Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training).

A Systemic Approach

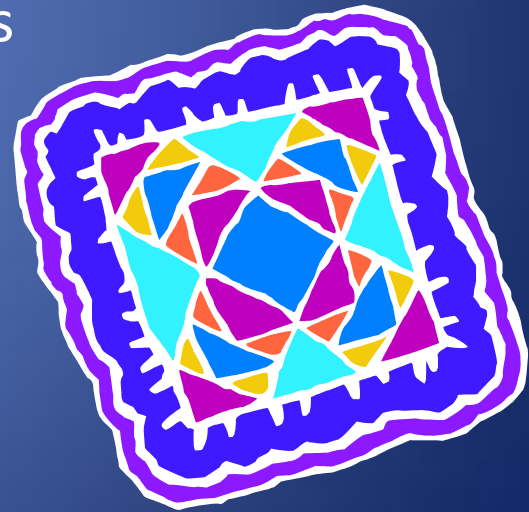
- BEYOND *AD HOC* APPROACHES
- BEYOND PILOT PROJECTS
- BEYOND WEBER'S (1962) TRADITIONAL AND CHARISMATIC AUTHORITY TO RATIONAL AUTHORITY
- STRUCTURAL INDICATORS OF A SYSTEM FOR TRANSPARENCY: YES/NO ANSWERS BY ANALOGY WITH UN RIGHT TO HEALTH (DOWNES 2014)

A Differentiated Approach – Not 1 Size Fits All

‘Beyond a patchwork’ (EUNEC 2013) approach of 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 *Differentiated* Approach

Clarity on which levels the education service is targeting: Three widely recognized prevention approaches in public health.

* ***Universal*** prevention applies to educational and community-wide systems for all learners – including reform to mainstream schools

- ***Selective*** prevention targets specialized group systems for students at risk of early school leaving/early school leavers with strong potential for reentry to education

(Microlycee, France: Ecorys 2013 – colocation, common management structure/headship, specialist teachers but interaction with mainstream staff, same progression routes)

- ***Indicated*** prevention engages in specialized, individualized systems for students with high risk of early school leaving/chronic need/multiple risk factors

(Fairbridge, Middlesbrough, Ecorys 2013 – learn by doing, fishing, canoeing, cooking, outdoor activities for learning – expensive)

– **ALL 3 levels need to be focused on in a national strategic approach**

A Holistic Approach – Addresses Why People are Reluctant to Reengage with Education and Training

- RECOGNISE A RANGE OF NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL NOT JUST ACADEMIC
- MENTAL HEALTH
- SLEEP
- RELATIONS WITH TEACHERS
- RELATIONS WITH PEERS
- ASSUMED CONNECTION WITH THE INDIVIDUAL
- RELEVANCE
- EMOTIONS - RELATIONSHIPS

A Holistic approach

Poverty impacts on mental health - mental health impacts on early school leaving

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

A *Holistic* approach

Early interventions that aim at enhancing student mental health and sense of mastery could be instrumental in preventing premature school exit, as they are likely to increase educational engagement (Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006; Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

- Quiroga et al. (2013) based on a high-risk longitudinal sample (2000–2006) of French-speaking adolescents living in Montreal
- recruited from two suburban secondary schools ranked by the Ministry of Education of Quebec (MEQ) in the three lowest deciles of socioeconomic status (SES) according to mother's education and parental employment.

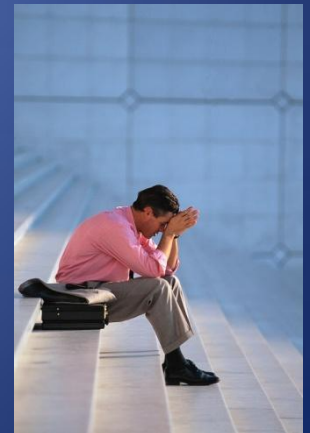
* 493 participants (228 girls and 265 boys).

A *Holistic* approach

Quiroga et al. (2013) Results show that depression scores were negatively correlated with self-perceived academic competence but not with self-reported academic achievement –

*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; student negative self-beliefs are in turn related to lower self-reported academic performance and predict a higher risk of dropping out. These findings emphasize that the connection between early depression and leaving school without qualifications is mostly indirect, as it is accounted for by achievement-related self-perceptions.

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



A Holistic approach

Even apart from poverty related depression, emotional distress contributes to early school leaving:

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).

A meta-analysis of 28 longitudinal studies found that bullying doubled the risk for depression an average of 7 years later, even after controlling for numerous other risk factors (Ttofi, Farrington, Lösel, & Loeber, 2011).

A Holistic approach

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 evident even when controls were applied for gender, occupational status, and ethnicity



A *Holistic* approach

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

Wider referral processes – reach withdrawn kids

-Evidence suggests that the emotional support needs of withdrawn students, who are at risk of early school leaving, may be missed by teachers compared with those students displaying and externalising problems through aggression (Doll 1996; Downes 2004).

A *Holistic* approach

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”*

A Holistic approach

Sleep aspects linked to academic achievement, mental health

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 reduced academic performance (Allen, 1992; Kowalski & Allen, 1992; Miller, 1994; Wolfson & Carskadon, 1996, 1998).



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

A *Holistic* approach

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)

A positive school climate can be created at classroom and school levels. In the classroom, teachers must be adequately prepared and motivated to meet students' needs through sensitive and responsive pedagogical interactions (Danielsen et al 2010).

Strategies and approaches to achieve a positive developmental atmosphere in schools are recommended for pre- and in-service teacher training (Jourdan et al. 2008).

No sunlight ! (Downes & Maunsell 2007)



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

“No some[teachers] think they own the school”

A Holistic approach

Downes' (2004) student centered research in Ballyfermot, Dublin, 12 focus groups and 173 questionnaire responses from secondary students:

“Have anger management courses for teachers” (female, focus group):

“The teachers shouting at you. That makes me really, really down” (Age 13, F)

“If the teachers didn't roar at you” (Age 13, F)

“Have an equal teaching system and sack ignorant snobby teachers...very harsh teachers usually make me stay out of school” (Age 16, M)

A Holistic approach

School Climate, Teasing, Bullying

Cornell et al. (2013) A one standard deviation increase in school-level poverty was associated with a 16.7% increase in dropout rates, holding all other variables constant.

Notably, one standard deviation increases in student and teacher-reported Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying were associated with 16.5% and 10.8% increases in dropout counts, respectively, holding all other variables constant.



A Holistic approach

A basic conclusion from our study is that the Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying in high schools deserves serious consideration by educators in addressing the problem of dropout. In a sample of 276 high schools, the level of teasing and bullying reported by both ninth-grade students and teachers was predictive of cumulative dropout counts over 4 years after the cohort reached 12th grade.



Key Holistic Principles for Engaging Marginalised Groups

Assumed Connection: Start where the person is at

‘The emotional bridge to relevance’ (Glasser 1969)

Build on strengths of the learner

Developing mediating spaces for engagement: Attention to location

Cultural competence and communication skills of teaching staff

Student voices being central



4 'Quick Wins' - Inexpensive

- Build in a social aspect – meet new friends (LLL2010 sp3)
- Staff and students eat together/drink tea together (Ecorys 2013, Youth School Lithuania; Youthreach, Harmonstown, Dublin 2013)
- Staff exchange between education sites – more than isolated individuals (Ecorys 2013)
- Festivals, Slovenia (Downes, 2014)

A *Differentiated* approach – Further features

- BEYOND INFORMATION APPROACHES FOR OUTREACH
- STAKEHOLDERS FROM TARGET GROUP, COMMUNITY LEADERS
- COMMUNITY LLL CENTRES – TERRITORY, LOCATION
- NONFORMAL AS BRIDGE TO FORMAL
- MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS (NOT FRAGMENTED AGENCIES)

A *Differentiated* approach

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

(Downes 2014)

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

- **Within communities**

According to the staff interviewees, it is critical to ensure various learning opportunities as close as possible to the adults. Both interviewees accentuate that one can not expect all participants to come into a classroom. The educational activities should be 'home delivered'. Therefore the organisation makes efforts in providing education within the communities, decentralised all over Brussels (in mosques, sports clubs, pubs, etc.) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).



The weaknesses of informational type approaches have already been recognised in psychology internationally with regard to drug prevention strategies (Morgan 2001)

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).

Cultural competence and staff from stakeholder groups (Downes 2014)

Lieberman et al (2011) note that,
'The shortage of infant mental
health providers from minority
groups has a particularly negative
impact on immigrant and minority
children and families, who need
interventions that are provided in
their native language by
practitioners who understand their
cultural values and childrearing
practices'

*A **Differentiated** approach*

Co-location of non-formal and formal education

An Cosán, Dublin (Downes 2014)

It caters for wide variety of courses and people. There is the option of progression through levels of courses for participants. The starting point is courses on Personal Development and Communication Skills, Basic Literacy and Numeracy. An Cosán 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.



A *Differentiated* approach

The third series of courses are most important as they allow people to access further education. These courses include those run under the Young Women's Programmes. Some of their past students have gone on to third level colleges and universities, gaining certificates, diplomas and degrees.

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' and to access the programmes that they need to achieve this (Dooley et al., 2010, Downes 2014).



This community centre adopts both a lifelong and life-wide focus.

A *Differentiated* approach

Overcoming System Blockages: Beyond Intergenerational Splits in Policy to Lifewide Community Lifelong Centres to Engage Ethnic Minorities such as Roma

Balkan Sunflowers NGO in Fushë Kosova, early school leaving rates over the two years of the Learning Centre operation decreased dramatically, from 120 in 2007-2008 to 14 in 2009-2010. Primary school enrolment has more than tripled in Gracanica since the Centre's opening in 2004 from 25 to 85 children.

According to figures from Balkan Sunflowers NGO in Fushë Kosova, early school leaving rates over the two years of the Learning Centre operation decreased dramatically, from 120 in 2007-2008 to 14 in 2009-2010. Primary school enrolment has more than tripled in Gracanica since the Centre's opening in 2004 from 25 to 85 children. (Downes 2014)



Balkan Sunflowers

Volunteers for Social Reconstruction

None of the children attending Gracanica Learning Centre dropped out of primary school in 2010, while only one child in Plemetina dropped out of school that year. 75% of all registered Roma children in Plemetina attend the Learning Centre, while girls' school attendance has increased and there are currently 58 girls in primary school

- **Local community lifelong learning centre**
 - **Life-wide**
- **School as site of community education**

A *Differentiated* approach

**‘Beyond a patchwork’ (EUNEC 2013) approach of System
Fragmentation: From Multiple Agencies to Cohesive Multidisciplinary
Teams**



A *Differentiated* approach

The *Alliances for Inclusion* report (Edwards & Downes 2013) reviewed the enabling conditions for the effectiveness of multidisciplinary teams and crosssectoral approaches for early school leaving prevention, building on 16 examples from 10 European countries.

- A policy focus is needed to go beyond multiple agencies -Need to minimise fragmentation across diverse services 'passing on bits of' the young person (Edwards & Downes 2013)
- the multi-faceted nature of risk requires a multi-faceted response that needs to go beyond referrals to disparate services
- For genuine interprofessional collaboration for early school leaving prevention, for example, between schools and multidisciplinary teams of outreach care workers, therapists/counsellors, nurses, speech and language therapists, social workers, occupational therapists, policy-led co-location is not sufficient. Efforts are needed to support inter-professional collaborations and overcome resistance. It is not enough just to designate a desk for these services in schools.

A *Differentiated* approach

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 counsellor, 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, with relevance for the needs of potential early school leavers in the context of multidisciplinary teams (Downes 2004; Downes et al., 2006; Downes & Maunsell 2007; Mellin et al 2011).

A *Differentiated* approach

A multidisciplinary team plays a key role in devising alternative strategies to suspension in this example from a Russian school:

The school does not 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...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 (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A Systemic Approach

**‘Beyond a patchwork’ (EUNEC 2013) approach
of System Fragmentation: Anticipating
Territoriality and ‘Not Not Doing’ Services**

Territories

- Local rivalries across municipalities and schools an obstacle to sharing of good practice
- Local rivalries across agencies especially in a recession – to claim resources and credit for gains
- Tensions between schools and community, including community professionals
- Physical location of community service needs to be in a neutral community space (Downes & Maunsell 2007)
- If possible, no more than two agencies to limit fragmentation and provide shared goals focus – restructure agencies for greater focus (Downes 2013b)



A Systemic Approach –
Structural features of a system
Structural Indicators of
Progressive Practice

- 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)

A Systemic Approach – Structural
features of a system
Structural Indicators of
Progressive Practice

- 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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