

# A multidimensional approach to preventing early school leaving and reintegrating NEET youth: Outreach and multiprofessional teams for area wide strategic cooperation

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1. Distinguish community and individual outreach from information

2. Emotional-Relation turn for ELET

\* Transfer public health model of differentiated need to education and employment



3. Multidisciplinary teams in and around schools/VET

4. Mental health and school/VET climate

5. Integrating ELET and Bullying Prevention Strategy

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## Need more flexible and imaginative engagement with marginalised and alienated groups

- In 2015, 64 million, more than quarter of EU population age 25-64 left initial education with at most lower secondary education qualification (Council Recc 2016 Upskilling Pathways)
- Need to bring services closer to the community to engage so-called 'harder to reach' groups
- There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to engaging people with complex needs, such as through prepackaged programmes



## Assertive Outreach (Downes 2017, EPALE): Beyond Information to Abstract Other

- leaflets, websites, posters and other forms of information will **not** suffice to engage 'hard-to-reach' groups.
- Need to **question the communicative approach itself**, rather than blame the individuals who do not become enchanted by such 'information'.



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).



## Assertive Outreach: Beyond information processing to construction of meaning (Bruner 1990) for concrete other

- Information-based communication approaches focus on the *what* question. But need to focus on the *why*, the *how* and *who* questions:
- The **where** question asks about the location from which the early school leaver is engaged with.
- The **how** question asks about the way the person is being communicated with.
- The **who** question not only asks about the specific needs of the person being reached out to, but also asks who is the person communicating to that early school leaver.



**Staff from target groups**

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

# Universal Strategies

- **Preventing Grade Retention and Postponing Tracking (OECD 2007, 2010)**
- Manage school choice so as to contain the risks to equity.
- In upper secondary education, provide attractive alternatives, remove dead ends and prevent dropout.
- Offer second chances to gain from education.
- Identify and provide systematic help to those who fall behind at school and reduce year repetition.
- Strengthen the links between school and home to help disadvantaged parents help their children to learn.
- Respond to diversity and provide for the successful inclusion of migrants and minorities within mainstream education
- **Preventing Child Poverty and its Impact on Mental Health (Kessler 2009, Annie E. Casey Foundation 2009, WHO 2003)**
- **Social and Emotional Education (children, teachers)**





## The Emotional-Relational Turn for ESL and Inclusive Systems

The OECD's *10 Steps to Equity in Education* (2007, 2010) omitted a key range of dimensions with regard to prevention of early school leaving, namely, emotional-relational aspects (Downes 2010, 2011, 2017).



## The Emotional-Relational Turn for ESL and Inclusive

**Systems** : Bridging health and education (Downes & Gilligan 2007, Downes & Maunsell 2007)

Simply reframing school dropout as a health issue has the potential to bring new players into the effort — parents, health institutions, young people, civil rights groups — and to encourage public officials to think of the dropout problem as central to community health and as a long-term solution beneficial to population health (Freudenberg and Ruglis 2007)

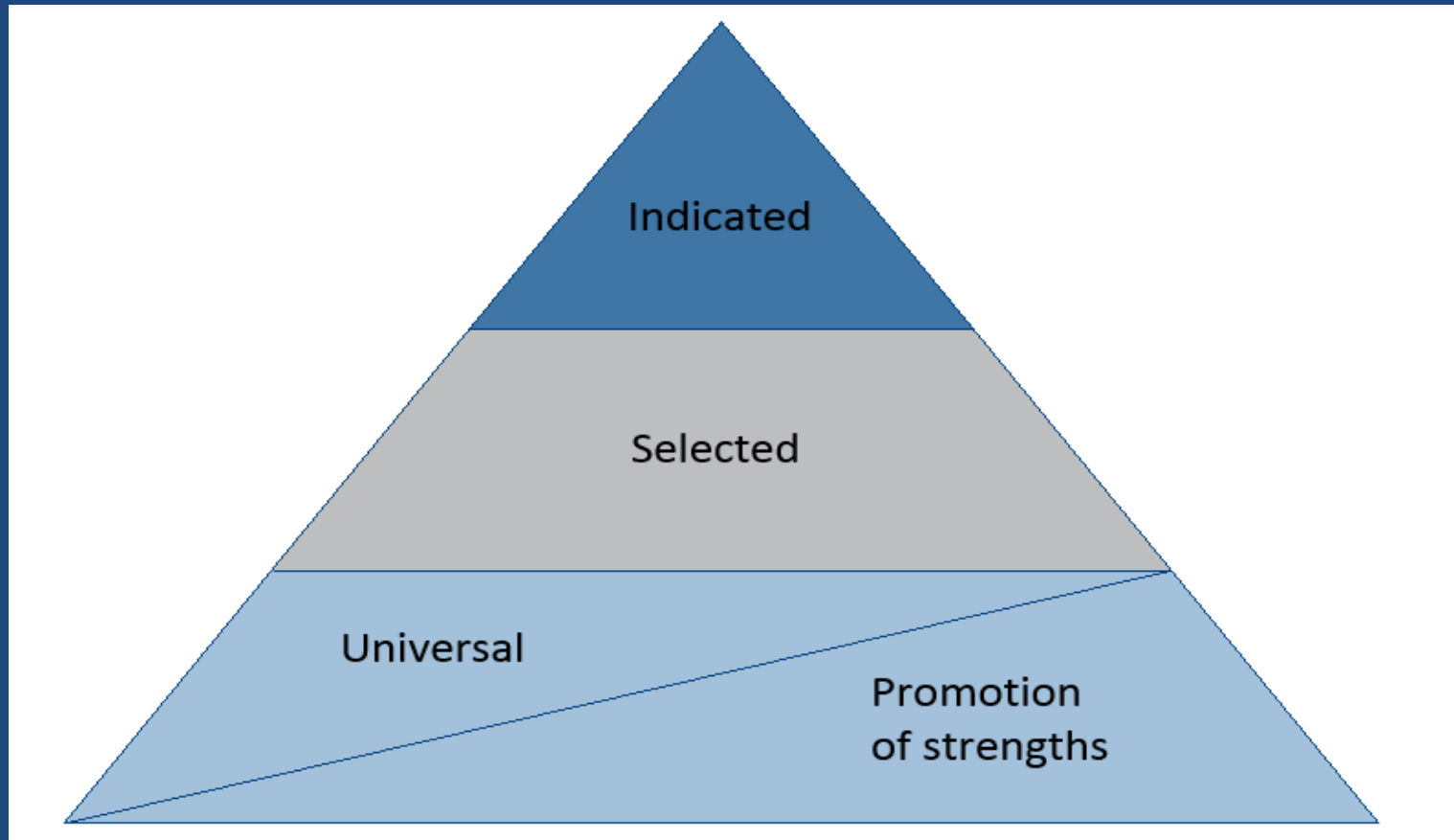


# Differentiated Strategies in Place - for Meeting Individual Needs at Different Levels of Need/Risk for Transition

Universal – *All*

Selected – *Some, Groups, Moderate Risk*

Indicated – *Individual, Intensive, Chronic Need*



## The Emotional-Relational Turn for ESL and Inclusive Systems: Selected and Indicated Prevention

Even apart from poverty related depression, emotional distress contributes to early school leaving: **LONELINESS**: Frostad et al. 2015 – intention to drop out



Quiroga et al. (2013) 493 high-risk French-speaking adolescents living in Montreal

\*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.

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

# ***A Holistic* approach**

**Mental health focus (Yes/No)**

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

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



**The downward spiral of mental disorders and educational attainment: a systematic review on early school leaving Pascale Esch, Valéry Bocquet, Charles Pull, Sophie Couffignal, Torsten Lehnert, Marc Graas, Laurence Fond-Harmant and Marc Ansseau. BMC Psychiatry 2014 14:237**

When adjusted for socio-demographic factors, mood disorders (e.g. depression) were significantly related to school dropout

Among anxiety disorders, after controlling for potentially confounding factors, social phobia was a strong predictor of poor educational outcomes

...as indicated by early school leavers themselves, were feeling too nervous in class and being anxious to speak in public, both representing symptoms of social phobia

# *A Holistic* approach

## Mental health focus

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

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

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



- **Multidisciplinary teams in and around Schools/VET: Chronic need and trauma indicated prevention level**

The *Alliances for Inclusion* report (Edwards & Downes 2013) 16 examples cross-sectoral work 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 child’ and family (Edwards & Downes 2013)**

**- Direct delivery multidisciplinary teams – not committee sitting** (emotional counsellors/therapists, social services, youth services, outreach care workers, psychologists, nurses, speech & language therapists)

### **Overcome Territories**

- Local rivalries across agencies especially in a recession – to claim resources and credit for gains

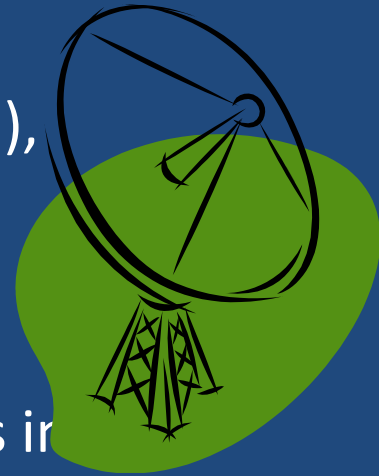


## Multidisciplinary Teams in and around Schools Well-Recognised in EU Council/Commission Policy Documents

The EU Council Conclusions (2017) on *Inclusion in Diversity to achieve a High Quality Education For All* give such examples of multiprofessional teams as including, 'social services, youth services, outreach care workers, psychologists, nurses, speech and language therapists...'

See also Council Conclusions on early school leaving (2015), School Policy WG on ESL (2015) and Thematic Working Group ESL (2013).

Family centres are designed to bundle services for families in local community (Eurochild 2011). Eurochild (2011) argue for such family support centres to be universally available



## **Multidisciplinary team 1 stop shop to Overcome Diametric Splits/System Fragmentation– Family Support Centres and Early Childhood Centres**

Eurochild report (2011) Nordrhein-Westfalen state programme *Familienzentrum* has been launched by the government in order to develop up to 3,000 children's day-care facilities into family centres by the year 2012.

Between 2006 and 2012 approx. 3,000 of the total 9,000 child care centres in the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) are being developed into certified “Familienzentren” (family centres).

Family centres are designed to bundle services for families in the local community. (Eurochild 2011)

Eurochild (2011) argue for such family support centres to be universally available



**Holistic Systemic Issues:** Percentage of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students who Agree/Disagree with the Following Statements: School Belonging and Feeling Like an Outsider (PISA 2012) (OECD 2012)

Countries	I feel like I belong at school, % Agree (S.E)	I feel like an outsider (or left out of things at school), % Disagree (S.E)
Austria	82 (1.6)	89.9 (1.1)
Belgium	63.5 (1.6)	88.4 (1.0)
Czech Republic	73.6 (1.9)	80.5 (1.6)
Denmark	69.3 (1.6)	90.3 (1.0)
Estonia	78.2 (1.8)	90.0 (1.3)
Finland	80.5 (1.1)	89.2 (1.0)
France	38 (1.7)	73.2 (1.8)
Germany	83.8 (1.6)	89.7 (1.4)
Greece	87.8 (1.2)	83.9 (1.4)
Hungary	83.5 (1.1)	85.6 (1.6)
Ireland	76.7 (1.5)	91.6 (1.0)
Italy	75 (0.9)	89.3 (0.6)
United Kingdom	74.9 (1.5)	86.9 (1.1)
OECD Average	78.1 (0.3)	86.2 (0.2)

# **Beyond Authoritarian Teaching and Discriminatory Bullying as Diametric Spatial Systems – Assumed Separation, Splitting and Mirror Image Us/Them Hierarchies**

Teacher discriminatory bullying of students in a sample of 1352 immigrant and Roma students as part of a wider sample of 8817 students across 10 European countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain) (Elamé 2013).

# Classroom Climate and Discriminatory Bullying as Diametric

## Oppositional space and Diametric Mirror Image Hierarchy

Elamé's (2013) 10 country European study regarding 'the fundamental importance' of teacher influence on discriminatory bullying

-Those immigrant and Roma students who think the teacher exhibits similar behaviour towards 'native' and immigrant and Roma children in the class are those bullied least in the last 3 months.

In contrast, 'those who declare that their teacher favours native children over immigrant/Roma students are more vulnerable to suffer some form of bullying.

Specifically less than half (48 %) of the 123 [immigrant/Roma] children [across the 10 countries] who sense bias in the teachers' attitudes towards native classmates declare to have never been subjected to violence' (Elamé, 2013).

# Discrimination Creates US/THEM Diametric Space of Mirror Image Hierarchy

- Greek study (Kapari and Stavrou, 2010) of 114 secondary school students (58 female, 56 male) drawn from three Greek public middle schools.
- In schools with high levels of bullying, students consider their treatment by adults to be unequal, the rules to be unfair, and student participation in decision-making to be very limited.



## Diametric Spatial Systems as GOOD/BAD Identity Splitting and Mirror Image Hierarchies

A school principal from 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)



## Authoritarian Teaching as Diametric Spatial System (Above/Below)

WHO (2012) Modifications that appear to have merit include:

- establishing a caring atmosphere that promotes autonomy;
- providing positive feedback;
- **not publicly humiliating students who perform poorly;**

Cefai & Cooper (2010), Malta review of qualitative research: 'the autocratic and rigid behaviour management approach adopted by many teachers in their response to misbehaviour. Their blaming and punitive approach was seen in many cases as leading to an exacerbation of the problem...It looks...that perceived victimisation by teachers was more prevalent and had more impact than victimisation and bullying by peers'



# Authoritarian Teaching as Diametric Spatial System (Above/Below)

**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”

## Authoritarian Teaching as Diametric Spatial System (Above/Below)

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)



# Students Voices to Challenge Hierarchical Diametric Splits as System Blockages in Communication

\*In Iceland, Brigisdottir (2013) highlights a process of communication with those dropping out from school, whereby the students are interviewed individually by an education Ministry official to find out why they are leaving school early.

\*Yet this dialogue with students arguably comes too late in the process and needs systematic expression at a range of earlier stages as part of a Europe-wide prevention focus (Downes 2013)

EU Commission Thematic Working Group on early school leaving report (2013):

“Ensure children and young people are at the centre of all policies aimed at reducing ESL. Ensure their voices are taken into account when developing and implementing such policies.”

# Students' Voices – A Clear Gap in the EU Council and Commission Documents (2011) on Early School Leaving Prevention



## A *Holistic* approach

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

### 4 'Quick Wins' - Inexpensive

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

Reframing the problem through a focus on solutions:

- Issues previously treated separately, such as early school leaving and bullying prevention, can be addressed through common system responses for inclusive systems. (Downes & Cefai 2016)



## School Climate, Teasing, Bullying

In a sample of 276 high schools, Cornell et al. (2013) found that risk of early school leaving increases if a student experiences an atmosphere of teasing and bullying even if s/he is not personally bullied.

Cornell et al. (2013) “ Notably, the increased dropout count that was associated with Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying was quite similar to the increases that were associated with FRPM [i.e., poverty] and academic failure”.

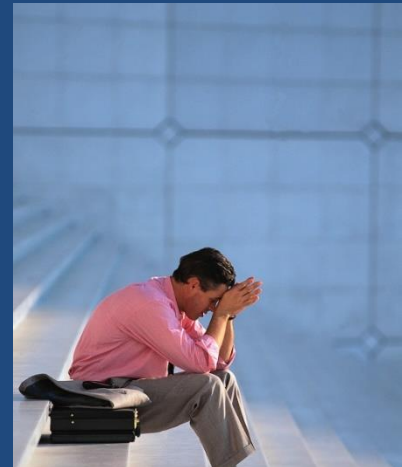


## Common system supports needed for bullying and early school leaving prevention (Downes & Cefai 2016)

A striking commonality of interests with regard to strategic approaches for bullying prevention in schools and early school leaving prevention:

- Direct and indirect effects of bullying on early school leaving relevant to perpetrators, victims
  - school absence,
  - negative interpersonal relations with peers and conflict with teachers,
  - low concentration in school, decreased academic performance,
  - negative school climate influences, lower school belonging, satisfaction, and pedagogical well-being, with the effects of bullying exacerbated for those already at risk of early school leaving.

- Common systems of supports (transition focus from primary to post-primary, multiprofessional teams for complex needs, language support needs, family support services and education of parents regarding their approaches to communication and supportive discipline with their children, outreach to families to provide supports, addressing academic difficulties).
- Common issues requiring an integrated strategic response, including the prevention of displacement effects of a problem from one domain to another, such as in suspension/expulsion which may make a bullying problem become an early school leaving problem.
- Common causal antecedents (negative school climate, behavioural difficulties, trauma)



- Teacher professional development and pre-service preparation focusing on developing teachers' relational competences for a promoting a positive school and classroom climate, including a focus on teachers' conflict resolution and diversity awareness competences
- Early warning systems.



# A Differentiated Approach to Involving Parents : Family Support Services for High Risk Chronic Need (Multidisciplinary teams Edwards & Downes 2013)

Systematic review by Lereya et al. (2013)  
involving 70 studies which concluded that both  
victims and bully/victims are more likely to be  
exposed to negative parenting behaviour,  
including abuse and neglect and maladaptive  
parenting.

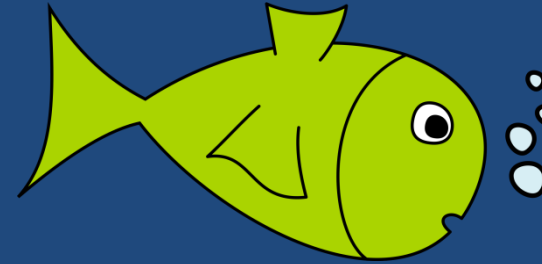


Need lead agency to coordinate  
Services for migrants (Downes 2015)

Community/Youth Arts/LLL as Gateway  
for Youth to Access Multidisciplinary  
Teams (Downes 2015a)



System Mismatch where at least one system needs reform:  
*Transition as Derivative Problem from a More Fundamental  
Problematic System Area of School Climate or Environment*



Fish out of Water – or Polluted River ?

Is the Transition the Problem or is it the School Environment ?

Systems framework of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1995) –  
overlooks system blockage (Downes 2014)



Authoritarian School Climate

Bullying Environment

Poor Working Conditions for VET Placements (Cedefop 2016)

# Key Governance Principles for Quality for Inclusive Systems

Inclusive Systems in and around Schools: Key Principles  
(Downes, Nairz-Wirth & Rusinaite 2017)

1. *System wide focus*
2. *Equality and Non-Discrimination*
3. *Children's Voices, Participation and Other Rights*
4. *Holistic approach*
5. *Parental Participation in School, including Marginalised Parents*
6. *Differentiated focus on different levels of need for prevention and early intervention*
7. *Building on strengths*
8. *Multidisciplinarity as a multifaceted response for students with complex needs*
9. *Representation and participation of marginalised groups*
10. *Lifelong learning*



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