

IMPROVING EDUCATION PARTICIPATION

Policy and Practice Pointers for Enrolling All Children
and Adolescents in School and Preventing Dropout



UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work in the region visit: www.unicef.org/ceecis.

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

ISBN: 978-92-806-4867-6

February 2017

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF.

The designations employed in this publication and the presentation of the material do not imply on the part of UNICEF the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country or territory or of its authorities or the delimitations of its frontiers.

Extracts from this publication may be freely reproduced with due acknowledgement using the following reference: UNICEF (2017). *Improving Education Participation. Policy and Practice Pointers for Enrolling All Children and Adolescents in School and Preventing Dropout. UNICEF Series on Education Participation and Dropout Prevention, Volume 2*. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Editor: Stephen Boyle

Layout and design consultants: Petra Balenović, Camilla Thuve Etnan

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Note to the reader: how to use this handbook	5
Organisation of the handbook	5
Navigating the illustrative examples	5
Self-assessment tool for education participation improvement and dropout prevention	6
Section 1 Introduction	7
1.1 Context	7
1.2 About this handbook	8
1.3 A note on use of terminology	10
Section 2 Education exclusion and dropout risk factors	12
2.1 Risk factors for non-enrolment, non-attendance and dropout	12
2.2 Points at which children are most likely not to enter or to drop out of school	15
Section 3 Effective policy and programme development for improving education participation and preventing dropout	16
3.1 Components	16
3.2 Policy development process	22
Section 4 Ten areas of policy and practice development for improving education participation and preventing dropout	24
Area 1: Starting early: inclusive early childhood education provision	26
1. Universalisation of pre-primary education	27
2. Interim measures to facilitate children's transition to primary education	28
3. Improving access of disadvantaged children	29
4. Parental involvement in pre-primary education	31
5. Early identification and early intervention in pre-primary education	32
Area 2: Enrolling on time in primary school	34
1. Clear definition of the school entry age	34
2. Information dissemination about timely school enrolment	35
3. Identification mechanisms for children at risk of not entering primary school on time	36
Area 3: Reducing financial barriers for students and schools	38
1. Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs)	38
2. Scholarships	40
3. School meals, school transport and textbook schemes	41
4. Directing education funding to students and schools that need it most	42
Area 4: Improving school transitions	45
1. Preparation, induction and learning-support strategies for transitioning students	46
2. Supporting parents throughout education transitions	49
3. Multi-service planning for improved school transitions	50
4. Structural reforms for improved transition to secondary education	51

5. Comprehensive education and career guidance policies	53
6. Flexible, quality education and career guidance delivery	54
Area 5: Second-chance education and catch-up programmes	57
1. Mapping existing second-chance education provision and legislation	58
2. Second-chance education specificities and success factors	58
3. Catch-up and accelerated-learning programmes	59
4. Re-engagement programmes	61
5. Alternative pathways and second-chance education programmes	62
6. Accreditation, assessment, certification, validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning	63
Area 6: Engaging parents, families and communities	65
1. Building effective relationships with parents	65
2. School engagement with parents of children out of school or at risk of dropping out	70
3. Community involvement in dropout prevention and response	72
Area 7: Engaging students and supporting their wellbeing	75
1. Student emotional wellbeing support	75
2. Constructive relationships between education staff and students	79
3. Student sense of belonging to the school	80
Area 8: Strengthening cross-sector coordination	83
1. Protocols for the referral of children out of school	83
2. Case Management	86
3. Integrated social-inclusion programmes	88
Area 9: Developing school-based dropout prevention and response interventions	90
1. Managing and curbing school absenteeism	90
2. School-based dropout early warning systems	94
3. Embedding dropout prevention in every aspect of school work and planning	96
4. Building school staff capacities	97
Area 10: Providing comprehensive individual learning support	99
1. Setting up school systems that provide equitable learning opportunities for all students	99
2. Individualised learning strategies	102
3. Second-language learning support	103
4. Literacy and numeracy support	105
5. Equipping students with “non-cognitive” skills	106
Section 5 Concluding note	108
Annex 1 Self-assessment tool for education participation improvement and dropout prevention	109
Annex 2 List of illustrative examples for the 10 policy and practice areas	115
Annex 3 List of illustrative examples for the eight thematic threads	120
Annex 4 References	124
Annex 5 Endnotes	140

List of Figures

Figure 1 Non-enrolment, non-attendance and dropout factors	12
Figure 2 Detailed non-enrolment, non-attendance and dropout factors	13
Figure 3 The three-tier approach: universal, targeted and individual interventions	21

List of Boxes

Box 1 Policies and programmes: the experience of Serbia	17
Box 2 National surveys of early school leavers, the Netherlands	17
Box 3 Long-term commitment to reduce Early School Leaving: the experience of the Netherlands	18
Box 4 Early School Leaving Strategy in Bulgaria	18
Box 5 Early School Leaving Strategy in Romania	19
Box 6 Learning at the centre of education reform in Estonia	19
Box 7 Cross-sectoral approach to Early School Leaving in Ireland	20
Box 8 The 'Golden Triangle' of the Dutch approach to Early School Leaving	20
Box 9 Data collection system for Early School Leaving: the experience of the Netherlands	22

List of Tables

Table 1 Thematic threads and coding system	6
Table 2 Risk points in the education system for never entering or dropping out of school	15
Table 3 Areas of policy and practice development and thematic threads	25
Table 4 Mapping template to review second-chance provision and legislation	58
Table 5 Self-assessment tool for education participation improvement and dropout prevention	110



Acknowledgements

This handbook was developed by UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (UNICEF RO CEE/CIS) to support countries and stakeholders currently developing policies, strategies and initiatives at national, district, community and school levels to prevent and respond to the issue of out-of-school children and dropout.

Laetitia Antonowicz (UNICEF Consultant) researched and authored the document under the supervision of Philippe Testot-Ferry at UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS.

Special thanks go to Deepa Grover (UNICEF Regional Office), Sheena Bell (UNICEF Regional Office), Paula Federica Hunt (UNICEF Consultant), Frank Van Cappelle (UNICEF Consultant), Christopher Talbot (UNICEF Consultant), Tanja Rankovic (UNICEF Serbia) and Aferdita Spahiu (UNICEF Kosovo UN1244), who provided comments and technical and editorial inputs.

Additional thanks go to Liudmila Lefter (UNICEF Moldova), Chynara Kumenova (UNICEF Kyrgyzstan), Nora Shabani (UNICEF Istanbul), Armine Ter-Ghevondyan (UNICEF Armenia), Parviz Abduvahobov (UNICEF Tajikistan), Marko Tomic (Centre for Youth Integration, Serbia) and the Centre for Education Policy (Serbia) for their inputs on country-specific examples.



Note to the reader: how to use this handbook?

The aim of this handbook is to present some policy options, practices and strategies to help ministries, local agencies and services and schools strengthen their approaches to enrolling all children in school and preventing dropout. The handbook has been designed so that the reader can easily navigate across sections and themes using hyperlinks.

Organisation of the handbook

This handbook comprises nine sections:

- [Section 1:](#) Introduction (context and rationale for the handbook)
- [Section 2:](#) Education exclusion and dropout risk factors
- [Section 3:](#) Effective policy and programme development for improving education participation and preventing dropout
- [Section 4:](#) Ten areas of policy and practice development for improving education participation and preventing dropout
- [Section 5:](#) Concluding note
- [Annex 1:](#) Self-assessment tool for education participation improvement and dropout prevention
- [Annex 2:](#) List of illustrative examples for the 10 policy and practice areas
- [Annex 3:](#) List of illustrative examples for the eight thematic threads
- [Annex 4:](#) References

Hyperlinks (marked in [green](#)) ease navigation across the various sections.

Navigating the illustrative examples

[Section 4](#) of this handbook investigates *10 areas of policy and practice* for education participation improvement and dropout prevention. The 10 areas are:









- [Area 1](#) Starting early: inclusive early childhood education provision
- [Area 2](#) Enrolling on time in primary school
- [Area 3](#) Reducing financial barriers for students and schools
- [Area 4](#) Improving school transitions
- [Area 5](#) Second-chance education and catch up programmes
- [Area 6](#) Engaging parents, families and communities
- [Area 7](#) Engaging students and supporting their wellbeing
- [Area 8](#) Strengthening cross-sector collaboration
- [Area 9](#) Developing and implementing school-based dropout prevention and response interventions
- [Area 10](#) Providing comprehensive individual learning support

Each area provides policy and programme pointers which are *illustrated by examples of practices*. This handbook gathers more than 130 illustrative examples from Europe and Central Asia and beyond.

Each illustrative example has been coded according to its theme so that readers can also navigate the handbook following *thematic threads* which cut across all 10 areas of policy and practice.

The eight thematic threads are presented below, alongside the coding system used to identify them.

Table 1 Thematic threads and coding system

Thematic threads		Coding
Thread 1	Migrants and refugees	MIG 
Thread 2	Children with disabilities	CWD 
Thread 3	Ethnic and linguistic minorities	ETH 
Thread 4	Gender	GEN 
Thread 5	Capacity building of education staff	CAP 
Thread 6	Parental involvement	PAR 
Thread 7	Early childhood/preschool education	ECE 
Thread 8	Cross-sector collaboration	CRO 

The reader can find at the end of this handbook *summary lists of illustrative examples*, organised by policy and practice area ([Annex 2](#)) and by thematic thread ([Annex 3](#)).

Self-assessment tool for education participation improvement and dropout prevention

As this handbook is intended to support planning at national and local levels, a self-assessment tool is presented at the end of the document ([Annex 1](#)) to enable ministries, local governments and services and schools to assess their current situation and to identify areas for improvement regarding policies and practices on enrolment support and dropout prevention. The tool draws from the policy and practice pointers of the handbook. It is organised around three sections:

- Part 1:** Legislation and regulations.
- Part 2:** Effectiveness of policies and of the policy planning process (which criteria are drawn from [Section 3](#) of the handbook).
- Part 3:** Content of policies and interventions (which criteria are drawn from the 10 policy and practice areas of [Section 4](#) of the handbook).

Each part contains several criteria, which can be assessed using a simple scoring system. The scoring will provide indicative areas for policy and practice strengthening. When engaging in policy and practice strengthening, policy-makers and education practitioners can refer to the policy and practice pointers and illustrative examples presented in the handbook for suggestions, ideas and lessons learned from a range of programmes and initiatives across and beyond Europe and Central Asia.

Section 1 | Introduction

1.1 Context

In Europe and Central Asia, despite increasing education enrolment rates, millions of children are out of pre-primary, primary and secondary school.

Some children never enter school; others enter late, which constrains their learning opportunities; while others drop out before completing lower- or upper-secondary education. Children from traditionally marginalised ethnic and linguistic minorities, children with developmental delays, children with disabilities or chronic illnesses, working children, children from migrant and undocumented or stateless families, children from the poorest social and economic backgrounds – whether in urban or very remote rural areas – teenage parents and children in conflict with the law are more likely to be out-of-school or at risk of dropping out than their peers. Boys and girls are both affected although differently depending on age groups, and cultural and economic contexts.

Education is a fundamental right. It is also the foundation for children to grow, develop and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to develop their full potential and live as productive members of society. In recent years, substantial evidence has increasingly demonstrated the benefits and social and economic returns of pre-primary, primary, lower- and upper-secondary education on both individuals and societies. Positive outcomes include:

- Economic returns for individuals, families and society.
- Better health outcomes for individuals and their families, including their children.
- Greater gender equality.
- Greater social cohesion and safer communities (e.g. lower criminality rates).
- Lower burden on social welfare, health and justice budgets (UNICEF, 2013c; Voncken, 2013a).

UNICEF believes that each and every child should enrol timely, learn at school and stay in school until completion of at least compulsory education. To support this ambitious agenda, UNICEF has engaged at local, national, regional and international levels to promote the inclusion, retention and success of all children in education from preschool to secondary education. In Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNICEF launched the Out-of-School Children and Adolescents Initiative in 2011 to actively support countries addressing issues pertaining to non-enrolment, non-attendance and dropout in preschool, primary, and lower- and upper-secondary education. This document stems from work and initiatives done in the region with national and local governments, NGOs, communities and schools in order for no children to be left out of education.

1.1.1 Global Out-of-School Children Initiative

UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) have jointly led the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative since 2010. Under this framework, national and regional studies were conducted. The Initiative also resulted in a Global Out-of-School Children report published in 2015 (UIS and UNICEF, 2015a, [link](#)).

In Europe and Central Asia, four national studies were published: in Kyrgyzstan (UNICEF and UIS, 2012a, [link](#)), Romania (UNICEF and UIS 2012b, [link](#)), Tajikistan (UNICEF and UIS, 2013a, [link](#)) and Turkey ([link](#)). Turkey also conducted a study on upper-secondary dropout. A regional report synthesises findings on out-of-school children from the region and outlines the profiles of children out of school (UNICEF, 2013, [link](#)).

1.1.2 UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Education Agenda

UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States organised a Regional Education Ministerial Conference in Istanbul in December 2013, where a Call for Action [Education Equity Now: Including All Children in Quality Learning](#) (UNICEF, 2013c) was endorsed by 17 ministries from the region, development partners and NGOs. The Call for Action is now guiding the work of UNICEF in education in the region to ensure that:

- Every child is in school.
- Every child is learning.
- Every child is enrolling timely and learning early.
- Every child is supported by effective and efficient governance (UNICEF, 2013c).

This handbook contributes to UNICEF efforts to ensure that every child can realise his or her right to education in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

1.2 About this handbook

1.2.1 UNICEF series on education participation and dropout prevention

This handbook is the second volume of the UNICEF series on education participation and dropout prevention, which aims to equip and inspire decision-makers and practitioners working in the field of education exclusion and dropout with guidance and ideas to both improve the data and information on education exclusion, and then to act on it to ensure that all children are in school and learning.

Volume 1, *Monitoring Education Participation: Framework for Monitoring Children and Adolescents who are Out of School or At Risk of Dropping Out* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016), developed jointly by UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, presents a framework for monitoring education participation and children at risk of dropping out. The *Framework* provides practical steps to help countries develop or improve their national systems to monitor children and adolescents who are out of school or at risk of dropping out. One of the objectives of this *Framework* is to help countries to develop and implement improved evidence-based policies and strategies to prevent education exclusion. The *Framework's* main focus is the development of a monitoring system for reliably identifying out-of-school children and children at risk of exclusion, and to provide the evidence base needed for analysing the causes of exclusion and informing policies and interventions. It does not, however, explore in detail policy and practice options to prevent and respond to the issue of out-of-school children and dropout.

Volume 2, *Improving Education Participation: Policy and Practice Pointers for Enrolling All Children and Adolescents in School and Preventing Dropout* (this handbook), complements the *Framework* by addressing policy measures and interventions aiming to improve education access and retention. It provides concrete options for policy, strategy and practice development in education inclusion and dropout prevention. The focus areas of the handbook have been selected based on the experience stemming from UNICEF's regional initiative on out-of-school children and adolescents, and based on the content of the above-mentioned Call for Action [Education Equity Now: Including All Children in Quality Learning](#) (UNICEF, 2013c). This handbook also provides a strong basis for the implementation of UNICEF Regional Theory of Change in the education sector.

This series on education participation and dropout prevention is complemented by:

- Two position papers on the right to education of children who are the most excluded in the region: Roma children (UNICEF, 2011a) and children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2012a). These position papers present a rights-based legislative and policy framework for developing inclusive education policies.

- The 14 [UNICEF Inclusive Education booklets and webinars](#) titled *A Rights-Based Approach to Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities* (UNICEF, 2015a), which explore in greater depth some of the policy and practice pointers identified in this publication relating to inclusive education.

1.2.2 Objectives

The aim of this handbook is to present some policy options, practices and strategies to help countries strengthen their approaches to enrolling all children in school and preventing dropout. It does not address the structural education and social welfare systems reforms that would contribute to better identification of out-of-school children and increased education attainment due to their country-specific nature. Neither does it address issues of public financing, macro-economics and ways to increase the fiscal space for education (such as debt exchange for education [UNESCO and R4D, 2015]).

The main objectives of the handbook are to:

- Provide policy and intervention pointers in the area of education inclusion and dropout prevention and response.
- Share international practices in the area of education access, retention and dropout prevention.
- Capitalise on the promising dropout prevention and response practices and experiences in Europe and Central Asia.

1.2.3 Target audience

This handbook primarily targets those who are discussing, designing and implementing policies, strategies, programmes and interventions to reduce the number of out-of-school children and to prevent and respond to dropout. The main target audiences are ministry officials at central and local levels, local self-government representatives, local services, members of policy teams, advisors and consultants in governments and development organisations, education agencies and research institutes, project managers and officers in international organisations, NGOs and civil society organisations, youth and community centres and schools. The manual also targets those who want to learn more about successful approaches in prevention and response to out-of-school children in the Europe and Central Asia region and beyond.

Geographically this handbook primarily addresses audiences from Europe and Central Asia. The strategies presented here may, however, be of relevance to stakeholders in other regions in the world as source literature.

1.2.4 Scope

Following this Introduction ([Section 1](#)) is a background section on factors affecting the access of children and young people to education ([Section 2](#)). [Section 3](#) presents dimensions of and criteria for effective policy and programming development in the area of education participation improvement and dropout prevention. [Section 4](#) explores 10 policy and practice areas, presenting pointers and rich and diverse illustrative examples from Europe and Central Asia and beyond. [Section 5](#) is a concluding note.

The Annexes include:

- A Self-Assessment Tool for education participation improvement and dropout prevention. The tool enables countries to assess progress and identify gaps in policies and practices around education participation improvement and dropout prevention ([Annex 1](#)).
- An interactive list of illustrative examples organised by policy and practice areas ([Annex 2](#)).
- An interactive list of illustrative examples organised by thematic threads ([Annex 3](#)).
- A list of References ([Annex 4](#)).

1.2.5 How to use the handbook

To understand how to make the most of the interactive feature of the handbook, please refer to the [Note to the reader](#) at the beginning of the document.

1.3 A note on use of terminology

For the purpose of this handbook, the terms below are broadly defined to fit most country contexts.

For more details on defining out-of-school children and related terms such as dropout for legislation as well as data collection purposes, please refer to the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016).

Out-of-school children is used in this handbook to talk about children of pre-primary or compulsory school age who are not enrolled in and/or are not attending school. These are children:

- Who have never entered school or any kind of recognised education provision (e.g. home schooling); while some would have only “delayed” their entrance in Grade 1, for instance, others will never enter the education system.
- Who have dropped out from school before completion of compulsory education.

Dropping out refers to the process of a pupil abandoning his or her studies before completion of a cycle of education, whether compulsory or not.

Children at risk of dropping out are those children enrolled in any compulsory or post-compulsory provision but who are displaying risk factors or signs indicating that they might drop out, such as a high level of absenteeism.

The term **early school leaving** is used when pupils leave education and training with only lower-secondary education or less and who are no longer in education and training. This includes young people who leave education after failing their final upper-secondary exams. This terminology is particularly used within the European Union.

School absenteeism is a generic term referring to pupils missing classes. Pupils can be absent for “legitimate” or “non-legitimate” reasons, i.e. school absences can be excused and authorised by the school or unexcused and unauthorised. The latter case is referred to as school **truancy**.

Chronic truancy, which is defined as “a threshold for truancy at which point a student is considered at increased risk of leaving school early, is a strong sign of disengagement from school and among the surest signs that a student is about to drop out” (UNICEF and UIS, 2016).

Tardiness is the fact of arriving late in school in the morning or after the lunch break.

School refusal describes “the disorder of a child who refuses to go to school on a regular basis or has problems staying in school” (Anxiety and Depression Association of America, n.d.).

Educational neglect is the term usually used to define parental failure to enrol children in school, to ensure that they receive appropriate educational provision and to ensure that they attend school regularly. Education neglect can also involve inattention to barriers to learning and development or disability.

Dysfunctional families are defined as families with conflict, misbehaviour, potential child neglect or abuse, or addictions – particularly substance abuse.

Pastoral care refers to school support for the personal and social wellbeing of students – covering health and social issues as well as behaviour management and emotional support.

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life: norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, organisational practices and the physical environment of the school (National School Climate Center, n.d.).

Special educational needs often has a legal definition in each country. We use “special educational needs” in this handbook to refer to students “with barriers to learning and development” (Mitchell 2014), regardless of the nature of these barriers. It should be noted that the term special educational needs includes children with disabilities but is not exclusive of children with disabilities.

We use **special education** to refer to education that is provided to students with special educational needs, usually in classrooms, schools and education institutions where these children are taught separately from other children.

The terminology of **inclusion** and **inclusive education** varies across and within countries. In this handbook, we will use the term “inclusive education” broadly, to encompass educational provision that seeks to remove all sorts of barriers to educational access, participation, attainment, retention and completion for each and every child.

The working definition of **inclusive education** in this handbook is “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the state to educate all children” (UNESCO, 2005).

Note that country-specific examples, however, may refer to the terminology in use in the country.

Formal learning, non-formal learning and informal learning. We use combined definitions from UNESCO and UIS (2012) and Yang (2015) as follows:

Formal learning/education takes place in a recognised education or training institution. It is intentional and structured and leads to a recognised qualification.

Non-formal learning/education is provided by an education or training institution. It is intentional and structured and typically does not lead to a recognised qualification.

Informal learning is intentional or deliberate but not institutionalised and little structured. It results from daily life activities related to work, volunteering, family or leisure.¹

Early childhood education is used here in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education and refers to early childhood programmes with an “intentional education component” (UNESCO and UIS, 2012). **Pre-primary education** refers to programmes for children from three to the start of primary education and **early childhood development** refers to programmes for children from zero to two (UNESCO and UIS, 2012). Note that country-specific examples might use “preschool” or “early childhood education programmes” when referring to pre-primary education.

¹ The ISCED distinguishes informal learning from “incidental” or “random” learning which are not organised or structured and “involve communication not designed to bring about learning” (such as meetings, radio programmes not designed for education purposes) (UNESCO and UIS, 2012).

Section 2 | Education exclusion and dropout risk factors

This section briefly describes the factors affecting education participation and dropout. After presenting the risk factors for non-enrolment, non-attendance and dropout, the section describes the points at which children are most at risk not to enter education or to drop out of school.

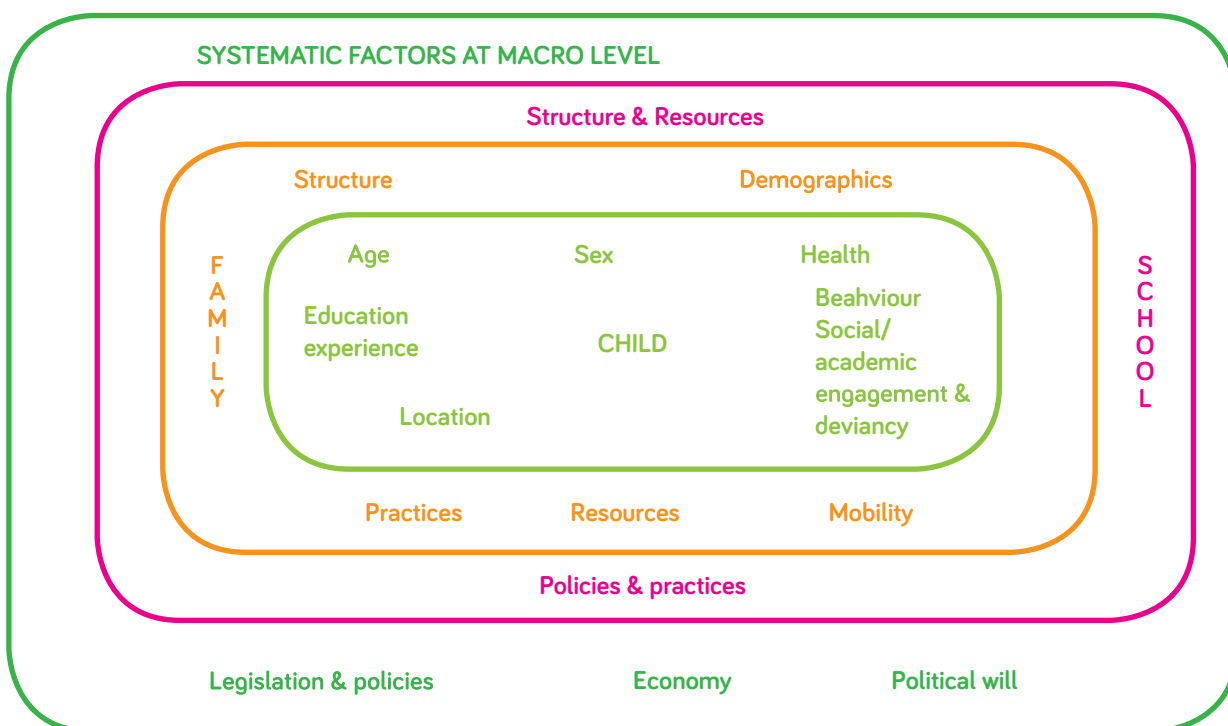
2.1 Risk factors for non-enrolment, non-attendance and dropout

The literature agrees that not enrolling in school or dropping out from school is usually a process rather than a decision following a single (or exceptional) event. This process is influenced by a range of factors that interact in complex and dynamic ways. These factors not only relate to individual and family circumstances but also strongly stem from the school environment and the education and social welfare system at macro level. Children being out of school is often the result of individual and family circumstances that structures and systems are unable to respond to or address appropriately.

For instance, when a child with special educational needs drops out of school, it is not because the child has special educational needs that she drops out. Rather, it is because her school and other local services are unequipped to support children with special educational needs adequately and to ensure their retention and success in school. Similarly, when a child reaching compulsory school age fails to enter primary school, it is due on the one hand to a parental decision not to enrol the child, and, on the other, to the system having failed to identify, reach and work with the family ahead of the start of the academic year.

Figure 1 summarises those factors at play in keeping children out of school and in the dropout process.

Figure 1 Non-enrolment, non-attendance and dropout factors



Source: Adapted from Lyche (2010) and UNICEF (2014a)

Figure 2, below, details the factors introduced above. Note that not all children presenting one or more of these characteristics or being affected by these school and systemic environmental factors will necessarily be out of school. Similarly, children not being exposed to those factors may drop out of school. It is critical in approaches aiming to improve education participation and to prevent dropout not to stigmatise or label children and their families, and to take into account the protective factors that contribute to young people's resilience.

Children's age and the status of the education cycle they are enrolled in (whether compulsory or not) play a significant role in the process of dropping out. As young people grow older and engage in non-compulsory education pathways, some factors become more prominent in the dropout process, such as school climate and relationships between students and teachers, availability of courses and education streams and sense of belonging to the school.

Figure 2 Detailed non-enrolment, non-attendance and dropout factors

CHILD

- Chronic or life threatening illness
- Disability and barriers to learning and development
- Overage compared to class peers
- Pregnancy, early marriage/marriage, parenthood
- Working children
- Conflict with the law
- HIV status or living with AIDS (particularly for those adolescent men who have sex with men, transgender people, adolescents who inject drugs and sex workers)
- Absence of documents (ID cards, birth certificates, residents permits, etc.)
- Frequent change of place of residence or school
- Distance to and from school
- Chronic absenteeism
- Expulsion from school
- Poor academic achievement
- Poor school behaviour
- Repitition
- No pre-primary education experience
- Mother tongue different from the language of instruction
- Bullied at school
- Low self-confidence

FAMILY

- Very poor, low socio-economic status households
- Marginalised ethnic and linguistic minorities
- Refugee, migrant families, families with high mobility
- Large-size families
- History of dropout amongst siblings
- Single parent households (or with one parent often absent or working abroad), grandparents-led households
- Socially vulnerable families or those with conflicts in the family, dysfunctional families

SCHOOL

- Weak attendance rules & policies and a weak absenteeism management system
- Weak academic and learning support for low achievers
- Lack of language of instruction learning support
- Weak pastoral care and emotional support for students
- School selection and repetition policies
- Poor school climate
- High incidence of violence or bullying
- High dropout rates
- Low level of student participation in school governance
- Weak parental engagement practices

SYSTEMATIC FACTORS AT MACRO LEVEL

- Limited respect for human rights, diversity and non-discrimination in and through education
- Weak social values around gender equality, social inclusion and non-discrimination
- Limited equity focus in education policies, strategies and funding
- Low education quality and limited education inclusion
- Education reforms that might have negative consequences on dropout (ex.: school optimization)
- Limited relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of cross-sector co-ordination and support mechanisms for children at risk of not enrolling in or dropping-out of education
- Migration, conflict, disasters and crisis.

Source: Adapted from Chávez Chávez et al. (1991), Lyche (2010); Antonowicz (2013a); and Antonowicz (2015a)

School and systemic factors are often neglected in understanding: (i) the reasons behind children not enrolling, not attending or dropping out from school; and, (ii) the barriers faced by schools when responding to these issues. In Europe and Central Asia, a number of policy reforms have contributed or might contribute to children being excluded from the education they are entitled to when adequate monitoring and support mechanisms are not in place, for instance:

- School network optimization reforms might result in children dropping out from school following the closure of local schools and when transport to bigger but more distant schools has not been adequately taken into account.
- Deinstitutionalisation reforms might result in children being frequently absent or dropping out from school when community-based services and regular school staff training are lacking to adequately respond to the various needs of children and their families in regular education.
- Per-capita funding reforms might insufficiently resource very small and remote schools, or schools with a high proportion of children with special educational needs or socio-economically disadvantaged children, when formulas do not sufficiently take into account the needs of children and neighbourhoods the schools are serving.
- Expansion of compulsory education to 18-year-olds, or Grade 12, might lead to dropout after Grade 9, or between Grades 10 and 12, when secondary-school provision is not sufficiently diversified, transport and boarding schools not available, and students and families not adequately prepared and informed to choose the right education path.

2.2 Points at which children are most likely not to enter or to drop out of school

Children are **at risk of not entering or of not remaining in education** at various points in their lives. There are five specific “risk points” when children might fail to enter the education system, or drop out. According to the United Kingdom Department for Education and Skills (2004), these main risk points are:

- Entrance in the school system:
 - When s/he reaches the compulsory school age and does not enter school.
 - When s/he arrives in a new country and does not enter school.
- School transfer.
- School withdrawal.
- School expulsion.
- Transition between education cycles.

Below are some illustrations of these risks based on real examples from the region.

Table 2 Risk points in the education system for never entering or dropping out of school

Risk points	Examples
Entrance in the school system	Parents decide to postpone by one year ² or more the entrance of their child in the first grade of compulsory education. A child arrives in a new country and fails to enter the education system. A child never enrolls in school, regardless of his/her age.
School transfers	A child supposed to transfer between two schools fails to attend his/her new school.
School withdrawal	A child is withdrawn from a school by his/her parents, usually because they are planning to migrate abroad, but does not re-enrol in another school abroad or in his/her country in case of returnees or if the planned migration does not happen. This situation has been observed in most countries in the region.
School transition	A child interrupts (or drops out from school for good) his/her education when transitioning between two education levels, whether compulsory or not, such as pre-primary to primary education, primary to lower-secondary and lower-secondary to upper-secondary education. While in some cases children are only temporarily interrupting their education, often for one academic year, in most cases a failed transition leads to dropout.
School expulsion	A child is expelled from a school and does not re-enrol or attend another school. Although rare, these cases have been observed in compulsory education and are common in non-compulsory education.

The identification of these key points is critical in the development of preventive and response measures and adequate and effective mechanisms to mitigate the associated risks and minimise the chance of children missing out on their education.

The diversity of factors at play in education exclusion and the process of dropping out requires complex policy responses at national and local levels. In the next section, the handbook introduces dimensions of policy and programme relevance and effectiveness for improving education participation and preventing dropout.

² In some countries there is legal provision for parents to postpone by one year the entrance of their child in Grade 1.

Section 3 | Effective policy and programme development for improving education participation and preventing dropout

This section outlines the components that make policy and programme development relevant and effective to the issue of out-of-school children and dropout.

In Europe and Central Asia, the reasons for children and young people not being enrolled, not attending or dropping out of school are multiple and complex, and vary among countries and regions and between individuals. As enrolment rates are relatively high in basic education across the region, the children out of school or dropping out tend to be the most marginalised. Policies and interventions underpinned by the principles of social justice and equity will contribute to effectively tackling the causes of dropout, and lead to improved socio-economic returns for individuals and for societies as a whole.

There has been hardly any robust evaluation of policies, strategies or interventions that have resulted in a reduction of out-of-school children and dropout in the region. Among other reasons this is because of the complex nature of programmes that combine a range of interventions to address the complex needs of children at risk of education exclusion. The European Union has been sharing knowledge and good practice on early school leaving across member states and accession countries. This work is a valuable source of inspiration and guidance for countries in the Europe and Central Asia region. Drawing from it and other literature, a number of components of policy and programme relevance and effectiveness can be identified.

3.1 Components

Policies and interventions that have been effective in reducing the number of out-of-school children, dropout and early school leaving rates have been systemic policies demonstrating the following characteristics:

1. Policies and programmes are based on a sound understanding of the complexity of the issue of out-of-school children and dropout that encompasses a range of determinants from the enabling environment, supply, demand and the quality of education and other related supported services. Relevant policies are not only informed by quantitative data **but they have also been shaped by the experience and perspectives of children and young people excluded from the education system** (European Commission Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, 2013; UNICEF, 2011b; UNICEF, 2013c), of their families or carers and of the professionals from the education (Bussemaker, 2014), health, social and child protection services that are working with these children within the constraints of a given legislative and policy framework.

Box 1 Policies and programmes: the experience of Serbia

Serbia is currently developing and implementing a range of interventions on out-of-school children and dropout prevention, at national and local levels. The shaping of the policy and practice agenda to combat dropout has been influenced by the many studies and projects conducted over the years that have enabled a better understanding of the barriers faced by specific groups of children, such as Roma children and children with special educational needs. In the past five years Serbia has commissioned a study on out-of-school children and dropout in primary and lower-secondary education and another on dropout at upper-secondary level, the latter including case studies of dropout students and students disengaged from education. These findings, alongside studies on inclusive education and a recent study on the cost of dropout, have enhanced the understanding of the phenomenon at national level and have fed into the work of the National Education Council, mandated to make recommendations on national measures to reduce early school leaving. A cross-sector national steering committee, supported by UNICEF, is also overseeing the development of a school-based model to prevent and respond to dropout.

Source: Antonowicz (2015b)

Box 2 National surveys of early school leavers, the Netherlands

Early school leaving policy development in the Netherlands has been informed by annual surveys of early school leavers, administered by the University of Maastricht and covering more than 2,000 young people each year.

Source: European Commission and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2012)

2. Policies and programmes articulate a vision and a shared understanding of the issue so that all stakeholders are using a common language and are working towards a common goal (Antonowicz, 2014a). A clear vision and purpose are necessary for any policy, but the clarity and simplicity of their formulation are even more important for policies and strategies that span a range of sectors and a range of players such as for those relating to out-of-school children and dropout. Building a collective understanding of the issue is necessary for the appropriation and ownership of policy goals by each actor and sector and for the formulation of agreed targets and measurable results.

3. Policies and programmes have a “long-term political and financial commitment” (European Commission Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, 2013). Progress has been made on enrolment indicators in Europe and Central Asia but issues remain, particularly in pre-primary, lower- and upper-secondary education in terms of attendance and completion. Combatting education exclusion is a long-term endeavour (European Commission and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2012) which requires a long-term political commitment from governments and all sectors as well as a long-term financial commitment. These are particularly important for policies supporting universal access to early childhood education or early school leaving reduction.

Box 3 Long-term commitment to reduce early school leaving: the experience of the Netherlands

The Netherlands has reduced its early school leaving rate, from 15.5 per cent to 8 per cent between 2000 and 2012, with 71,000 early school leavers in 2001 and circa 27,000 in 2013. A key success factor of the Netherlands has been long-term political and financial commitment for early school leaving reduction, which has been a consistent priority of all governments in the past decade. Each municipality and school has early school leaving targets to reach and schools receive 2,500 Euros for each young person staying in school. This approach of “no cure no pay” was complemented by additional financial incentives to develop education programmes and wrap-around services for students facing a combination of problems.

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands, 2014e

4. Policies and programmes are comprehensive and span prevention, intervention and compensation measures (European Commission, 2011). Studies from the European Union show that to be effective, policies to reduce early school leaving should address the spectrum of: (i) prevention of early school leaving, through both universal and targeted strategies, (ii) response interventions for the children at risk or in the process of dropping out, and (iii) compensation interventions for children who have dropped out from school (European Commission, 2010). This spectrum is also relevant to addressing out-of-school children and dropout in primary and lower-secondary education. There is a need for: (i) activities to prevent children enrolling late, never enrolling or dropping out of school before completion of compulsory education, (ii) activities to deal with cases of children out-of-school or dropping out, and (iii) compensation activities for young people who have dropped out of school before obtaining a qualification.

Box 4 Early School Leaving Strategy in Bulgaria

Bulgaria’s Early School Leaving Strategy (2013-2020) is articulated around policy measures for prevention, intervention and compensation.

Preventive policy measures cover: the school environment and school climate, the quality of education and equitable access for students from minority groups and special educational needs.

Intervention-level policy measures encompass: parental involvement, student mentoring, career guidance, support to students’ personal development, models for vocational training, financial support for students at risk of early school leaving, and implementation of an early warning system.

Compensation policy measures cover: reintegration strategies for early school leavers and the development of a national system for the validation of competences.

Source: Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (2012) Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (2013)

Box 5 Early School Leaving Strategy in Romania

Romania's Early School Leaving Strategy is articulated around four pillars:

- i. Ensuring that all children have access to quality education from pre-primary to secondary level.
- ii. Ensuring that all children complete compulsory education, through the development of an early warning system for early school leavers, remedial teaching and support to at-risk pupils, and by improving the quality and relevance of technical and vocational education.
- iii. Enabling early school leavers to return to education by providing appropriate second-chance education programmes.
- iv. Developing institutional support for early school leaving and strengthening the capacity of relevant institutions to implement, monitor and evaluate the Early School Leaving Strategy.

Source: Government of Romania (2015)

5. Policies and programmes are equitable (UNICEF, 2015b), aiming to reduce disparities in access to education, in quality of education and access and quality of support services. This might include channelling more funds to the schools or districts with the highest prevalence of out-of-school children and dropout and to the most deprived areas (Fields et al., 2007).

6. Policies and programmes make quality, learning and qualifications a driver for access and completion (UNICEF, 2013a; Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands, 2014). Education relevance may contribute to a family's decision to enrol or withdraw a child from education. It also plays a role in young people's dropout process, particularly at the end of lower-secondary and in upper-secondary education. Quality, learning and qualifications deemed useful and valuable must be at the core of education retention strategies.

Box 6 Learning at the centre of education reform in Estonia

Estonia's education reforms have focused on, and achieved quality education and equity in, learning through curriculum revision and development and school-funding improvement. PISA results in Estonia, which are above the OECD average, indicate that it is possible to: (i) provide quality education and to ensure equity in learning outcomes, and (ii) minimise regional and school disparities while maintaining high learning performance and achievement. There are no significant gender differences in performance and Estonia has very low learning disparities among students from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Source: UNICEF (2009)

7. Policies and programmes are underpinned by effective cross-sector collaboration and coordination at all levels based on clear responsibilities for each actor (UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF 2013a; European Commission Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, 2013). While schools can play a significant role in dropout prevention, their responsibilities are different for children who have never entered the system. The complexity of reasons behind non-enrolment, non-attendance and dropout requires a collective and cross-sectoral approach, where information from a range of sources and databases is shared and acted upon timely and appropriately and when support services are coordinated and collaborate to address the varied social needs of children and their families as best possible. This calls for coordination between local, regional and national levels and between schools and education authorities and local self-government agencies, civil registry offices, health services, social services, child protection, the police, the judiciary, youth services, housing services,

employment services, migration agencies and border police, NGOs, CSOs and the private sector (UNICEF and UIS, 2016). This also calls for the role of each actor to be clearly identified in the process of identification, recording, management and response to cases of children out of school or dropping out of school (Antonowicz, 2013a). Clarification of responsibilities also enables all parties to be held to account for their effectiveness.

Box 7 Cross-sectoral approach to early school leaving in Ireland

Ireland has put cross-sector collaboration at the core of its interventions against early school leaving. The National Educational Welfare Board has been implementing an Integrated Model of Service Delivery ‘One Child, One Team, One Plan’ since 2012. This model involves the Education Welfare Service, the major national programmes addressing early school leaving (the Home School Community Liaison Scheme and the School Completion Programme), and schools. This integrated approach aims to:

- Improve the identification of children at risk of early school leaving.
- Improve local and national responses to curbing absenteeism and early school leaving.
- Information sharing.
- Improve the coordination of resources at all levels.
- Develop unified complementary services for children and families.

The School Completion Programme, which aims to retain young people in the formal education system until completion of the senior cycle, or equivalent, is run locally by local management committees, which are in charge of developing retention plans supporting children between four and 18 years of age at risk of early school leaving through a participatory process. Committees are cross-sectoral and include the following representatives: school principals, home-school community liaison teachers, parents, municipality representatives, a drugs task force representative, a visiting teacher for Travellers, a juvenile liaison officer, health representatives, vocational education committee member, a National Educational Welfare Board officer and representatives from community and voluntary organisations and from youth organisations. Cross-sector school retention plans draw from local existing resources, addressing the educational, psychological and social needs of students at risk of early school leaving, and are implemented through innovative partnerships between schools, community organisations such as youth organisations and sports clubs, community police, juvenile liaison officers and health services.

Source: National Educational Welfare Board (2012); School Completion Programme (2006); Kelly (2012).

Box 8 The “Golden Triangle” of the Dutch approach to early school leaving

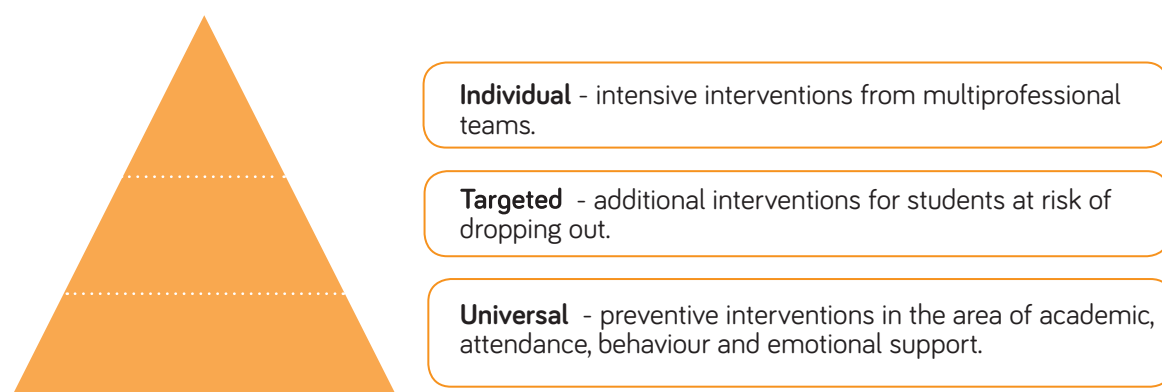
The Dutch strategy to reduce early school leaving is based on covenants between the Ministry of Education, municipalities and schools. The covenants are “long-term performance agreements” which set up early school leaving reduction targets for municipalities and schools. Under the leadership and support of the Ministry of Education, local stakeholders develop approaches and interventions to reduce absenteeism and early school leaving. All actors, from all sectors, share a common language about early school leaving. They understand the complexity of the dropout factors and the necessity to reduce early school leaving, are aware of the targets that they need to reach and are actively engaged in support networks for young people at risk of early school leaving.

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands (2014); Voncken (2013a); Voncken (2013b).

8. Policies and programmes harness the potential of innovative partnerships for out-of-school children and dropout prevention and response between public-sector and government agencies, but also with the private sector, businesses, social enterprises, NGOs and volunteer-involving organisations (Department of Education and Science of Ireland, 2005; European Commission Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, 2013). Wide partnerships across public-sector organisations are necessary for a robust identification system for out-of-school children. NGOs working with marginalised groups are often aware of cases of out-of-school children; their involvement in any identification mechanism is therefore critical. In the region, NGOs also provide a range of psycho-social services that can benefit out-of-school children or those at risk of dropping out. Businesses and social enterprises can play a role in dropout prevention through career guidance or entrepreneurship programmes that will contribute to young people's motivation and acquisition of soft skills necessary for the world of work. Civil society and volunteer-involving organisations can contribute to community-based services such as homework clubs or mentoring programmes.

9. Policies and programmes make provision for a range of prevention and response interventions based on a three-tier approach: universal, targeted and individual interventions. The more targeted the interventions, the more costly they become (Lyche, 2010) and the more intensive they are in terms of cross-sector collaboration (Mitchell, 2014). The three-tier approach enables schools and other services to direct specific resources and efforts to students at high or very high risk of dropping out while also ensuring that all students benefit from the basic academic, attendance, behaviour and emotional support required for most children and young people to complete their education successfully. By keeping this principle in mind when devising policies, strategies and interventions, common needs and specific barriers can be addressed appropriately and in a cost-effective manner.

Figure 3 The three-tier approach: universal, targeted and individual interventions



Source: Adapted from Ryan and Brattman (2012) and Heppen (2010)

10. Policies and programmes rely on sound data collection and information management systems to provide evidence for policy decision-making, monitoring and evaluation (UNICEF and UIS, 2016). Data is necessary not only to identify the children who are out of school – to find them and respond to their needs and those of their families – but also to monitor students in school and identify those at risk of dropping out. A range of data from various stakeholders is often necessary to adequately identify children out of school, such as data from civil registry offices or health centres. Sound collection and information management systems therefore rely on good cross-sector collaboration as discussed in point 7, above.

Box 9 Data collection system for early school leaving: the experience of the Netherlands

At the core of the Dutch architecture for early school leaving reduction is the Basic Records Database for Education (BRON), where every child has a unique education number. A Digital Absence Portal system captures real-time data on absenteeism and early school leaving, which enables schools, attendance officers and other stakeholders to take immediate action.

The Basic Record Database for Education provides a unique ID number to all young people of compulsory school age and identifies those not enrolled or attending school by cross-checking information with the attendance data entered in an online system daily for each child. The BRON system stores socio-economic characteristics of students, which enables an analysis of the profiles of early school leavers. Data can be disaggregated by region and city, down to the level of neighbourhood and schools. The Dutch system is based on transparency, with early school leaving data being published bi-annually and fact sheets for each locality and schools being made publicly available.

Source: European Commission and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2012); Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands (2014)

3.2 Policy development process

Effective policy development for out-of-school children and dropout requires consultation and participation of stakeholders at local and national levels throughout the process. Below is a summary of good practices in the policy and programme development process for addressing issues pertaining to out-of-school children and dropout.

Note that each of these steps or components does not necessarily occur in order and can take place simultaneously. Some steps, such as modelling and testing, could for instance equally take place at the onset and inform the whole process of policy and programme development, or during the implementation of a given programme to generate information on cost-effective practices or explore innovations.

- **Identify a cross-sector coordinating body**, including all possible relevant stakeholders from local, regional and national levels in all sectors.
- **Conduct a situation analysis on the issue of out-of-school children and dropout**, based on primary and/or secondary research, reports and consultation of all sectors involved, and identify the main barriers to access and retention to education.³
- **Research best practices in policy and strategy responses** nationally, in neighbouring countries and in countries that have successfully addressed the issue internationally.
- **Consult a range of stakeholders and decision-makers from all sectors**, including education, health, social protection, child protection, internal affairs, migration and returnees, minorities, police, border police, judiciary, local self-government representatives, employment, employers, housing sector, youth, sports, civil registry, national statistics, parliamentarians, parent associations and parents, student associations and students, and NGOs, etc. This will also start the process of consensus-building for the design, planning and implementation phases.

³ A useful methodology for studies on out-of-school children is presented in the Operational Manual of the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (UNICEF and UIS, 2015).

- **Consider criteria to review policy and intervention options.** They can be: number of children who will benefit; individual, family, social and economic outcomes of the interventions under discussion; equity, costs, benefits and risks (OFMDFM, 2007a); feasibility of implementation; quick-win and longer-term initiatives; simplicity of the interventions; legislative change requirements (OFMDFM, 2007a); existing structures and staff policies and programmes (Lewis, n.d.); views and perspectives of professionals and beneficiaries impacted by the policies; and time required for implementation (OFMDFM, 2007b).
- **Debate policy and strategy options to ensure buy-in from key stakeholders** and professionals so that the resultant changes they expect really take place.
- **Develop a Theory of Change for the policy or programme.** A Theory of Change describes how social change happens by focusing on results and what we want to achieve rather than activities (what we do). A Theory of Change articulates a causal chain between results and the pre-conditions that are necessary to achieve them as well as the activities that will support the realisation of these pre-conditions (Taplin and Clark, 2012). A Theory of Change also enables the investigation, through testing and measuring, of the assumptions behind a pathway of change (linkages between cause and effect) so that they are strongly evidenced (Vogel, 2012).
- **Modelling and testing mechanisms and interventions** and allowing time to learn lessons from these before scaling up strategies and programmes.
- **Ensure that a sound data-collection system underpins the development, implementation and evaluation** of the policy or programme.
- **Identify a steering committee to be in charge of monitoring** implementation.
- **Develop an evaluation plan** based on clear and measurable indicators.
- **Establish networks of professionals at local and national levels** to reflect on implementation and results, to share learning from practice and amend interventions to overcome unforeseen implementation hurdles.
- **Include a capacity-building component**, particularly for administrative and management staff at local and school levels. Ensure that the capacity of all sector stakeholders is developed and that school capacity development favours a whole-school approach.
- **Review policy and strategy regularly** and adopt necessary amendments (to the Theory of Change, to interventions, to documentation of results and lessons learned).
- **Develop a communication and awareness-raising strategy** to ensure that policies and programmes will be known by officials, professionals, families and children, understood and implemented as planned.
- **Communicate widely the results of the policy/strategies and interventions to professionals and beneficiaries.** When positive results are identified, professionals are more likely to continue to improve their practice to sustain them.
- **Document appropriately the results and lessons learned of the implementation of the policy or programme**, from the pilot onwards. This can contribute to evidence some of the assumptions of the Theory of Change.

Following this outline of the components that make policy and programme development relevant and effective to improving education participation and dropout, the next section presents concrete policy and practice pointers that have proven effective across Europe and Central Asia and beyond.

Section 4 | Ten areas of policy and practice development for improving education participation and preventing dropout

Developing a policy framework or strategies and programmes that would enable **each and every** child to enrol on time and complete successfully at least basic education, but preferably upper-secondary education or a vocational equivalent, is the holy grail of most governments across the world.

While some policies can have a significant impact on reducing the number of out-of-school children in countries where thousands or millions are excluded from education, a complex set of policies and mechanisms at both national and local level is needed in countries where largely the most marginalised are out of school and dropping out. For these children, every aspect of the education, care and social systems around them is contributing to either retention or dropout.









It is not only the policies and strategies around access that will contribute to the overall reduction in number of children out of school or dropping out. It is also the quality of education; its inclusiveness (in terms of infrastructure, universal design, assistive device, competences of professionals); the relevance and flexibility of the curriculum; the quality of teaching, learning and instruction; the school climate and the learning environment; the flexibility and diversity of education pathways, including in vocational education; and the capacity of school administrators, directors, teachers and education authority officials. All these components have a role to play to a greater or lesser extent.

UNICEF's Call for Action *Education Equity Now! Including All Children in Quality Learning* (UNICEF, 2013c) and the *UNICEF Regional Education Agenda* (UNICEF, 2015c) have identified more than 30 overarching principles that would significantly contribute to ensuring that all children enrol, attend, participate and learn in school in Europe and Central Asia. These principles recognise the need for both structural reforms and improved school-level inclusive practices to reduce the number of out-of-school children and dropout rates across the region. Based on these principles, 10 areas of policy and practice development related to improving education participation and preventing dropout are explored in the following sub-sections.

Each sub-section provides policy and practice pointers as well as illustrative examples from Europe and Central Asia and beyond. The examples and practices identified have some thematic commonalities. Each thematic thread can be followed throughout the 10 areas of policy and practice development through a coding system. A few topics are both areas of policy and practice development and thematic threads.

Interactive summary lists of practice examples organised by policy area and by thematic thread are available in [Annex 2](#) and [Annex 3](#).

Table 3 Areas of policy and practice development and thematic threads

Areas of policy & practice development	Thematic threads		
1. Starting early: inclusive early childhood education provision	Migrants and refugees	MIG	
2. Enrolling on time in primary school	Children with disabilities	CWD	
3. Reducing financial barriers for students and schools	Ethnic and linguistic minorities	ETH	
4. Improving school transitions	Gender	GEN	
5. Second-chance education and catch up programmes	Capacity building of education staff	CAP	
6. Engaging parents, families and communities	Parental involvement	PAR	
7. Engaging students and supporting their wellbeing	Early childhood/pre-primary education	ECE	
8. Strengthening cross-sector collaboration	Cross-sector collaboration	CRO	
9. Developing and implementing school-based dropout prevention and response interventions			
10. Providing comprehensive needs-based learning support			

Policy and practice development in the area of data (indicators, data-collection methods, Education Management Information Systems, triangulation of databases from different sectors to identify children out of school) are not addressed in depth in this handbook. They are covered in the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016).



AREA 1 | STARTING EARLY: INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROVISION

Research has shown that high-quality early childhood education yields positive results for both individuals and societies. Pre-primary education enhances children's development and cognitive and non-cognitive skills (Sylva et al., 2004). The earlier children start (between two and three years of age) and the longer they participate in pre-primary education, the greater their development outcomes (Sylva et al., 2004). Early childhood education programmes also result in improved productivity and high social and economic return on investment for societies (Heckman and Masterov, 2004; Engle et al., 2011). The efficiency and equity gains of investing in inclusive early childhood education are recognised by most and early childhood education has been identified as a long-term strategy to reduce early school leaving by the European Union (European Commission, 2011).

Pre-primary education coverage for poor children, children with disabilities, Roma and migrant children is low in the region (UNICEF, 2011a), although evidence shows that, for instance, Roma and migrant children with pre-primary education have better learning outcomes, remain in education longer and are less likely to be enrolled in special schools (World Bank, 2012; Nusche, 2009). Early childhood education is also critical for children who lack a strong early learning and care support environment at home, yet supply and demand issues constrain universal access to pre-primary across Europe and Central Asia. In this region, early childhood education is an important starting point for reducing the number of out-of-school children and dropout students, for four main reasons:

- By involving children and their families early in service provision, children become part of the system and can be identified if they do not continue their education.
- Children benefiting from early childhood education are more likely to enrol in Grade 1 on time, hence reducing the likelihood of becoming overage students and of dropping out in higher grades.
- Children attending early childhood education can benefit from early identification and interventions when facing child protection, health or learning and development issues (Ofsted, 2014). Early interventions are more successful and cost-effective than those at a later stage in their lives when problems have intensified.
- Parents are more likely to engage with education institutions when their children are very young, enabling the development of a strong and long-term partnership between the school and the home (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006).

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

1. [Universalisation of pre-primary education.](#)
2. [Interim measures to facilitate children's transition to primary education.](#)
3. [Improving access of disadvantaged children.](#)
4. [Parental involvement in pre-primary education.](#)
5. [Early identification and early intervention in pre-primary education.](#)

1. Universalisation of pre-primary education

Policies aiming to advance the universalisation of pre-primary from three years onward might be shaped by some of the criteria below:

- **Lowering the age at which early childhood education becomes compulsory** (and therefore free-of-charge in public institutions).
- **Lowering the age at which children have a legal entitlement to pre-primary** (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2014) (*Practice 1*).
- Strategies for **enhancing subsidy mechanisms**.
- Strategies for **increasing affordability of services**, such as tax relief and allowances and/or grants to early childhood education providers (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2014).
- Measures **supporting the access of the most marginalised children** (UNESCO, 2012a) (*Practice 2*).
- Provision of **low-cost half-day programmes** (Education for Change, 2014), as research shows that children do not gain better outcomes from undertaking full-time rather than part-time programmes (Sylva et al., 2004) (*Practice 3*).

Practice 1 Legal entitlement to early childhood education and compulsory education, European Union

ECE



In a number of countries, the legal entitlement to publicly subsidised Early Childhood Education and Care starts when children reach the age of three (Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Portugal and the United Kingdom). In Ireland, Hungary and Portugal, however, demand exceeds supply in some geographical areas.

A few countries have compulsory early childhood education legislation in place. In Luxembourg and Switzerland education is compulsory from the age of four, two years before the start of primary education. “In Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Austria and Poland, compulsory education starts when children are around five, whereas primary education only starts when they reach the age of six or seven.”

Source: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2014)

Practice 2 Summer pasture early learning opportunities, Kyrgyzstan

ECE



The Aga Khan Foundation has been working with local communities and district authorities on developing early learning opportunities for young children living with their families in high pastures during the summer months. A range of age-appropriate activities have been developed and parents have been encouraged to engage with the learning of their young children, including through reading stories. The model ensures that some of the most marginalised children in the country have the opportunities to learn early. Studies on learning show that children who benefited from the programme have higher learning achievements in Grade 1 than those who did not participate in school readiness programmes.

Source: Arnold et al. (2012)

Practice 3 Financial models for early childhood education, Europe and Central Asia

ECE



UNICEF in collaboration with government ministries and relevant national stakeholders has supported studies in many countries in the region (Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, etc.) to analyse the costs of the preschool sector. “These studies highlight the imbalance of funding towards full-day services, the costs of which have limited coverage and have largely served urban, wealthier families. New financial models were developed, based on half-day or shorter education-driven programmes and reassessments of different stakeholders’ contributions to other costs (care, nutrition etc.). These models provide financially feasible scenarios for the equitable expansion of early childhood education services to all children and have had a substantial influence in the development of the preschool sector in these countries.”

Source: UNICEF (forthcoming)

2. Interim measures to facilitate children’s transition to primary education

While the universalisation of pre-primary from three years of age onwards is a long-term goal for some countries in the region, a number of interim policy measures or first steps towards universalisation can be implemented to contribute to better transition to primary school and greater retention in education, such as:

- The introduction of **one year of compulsory and free pre-primary** education.
- The development of **school readiness programmes** before entering primary school (*Practice 4*).
- Measures that **expand supply and ensure equitable access** to the most marginalised (UNESCO, 2012a).
- Measures ensuring that pre-primary **programmes are play-based** and not only a downward extension of the more formal and traditional teaching and learning practices of primary school (Education for Change, 2014).

Practice 4 School readiness programme for Syrian refugees, Armenia

ECE - MIG



As many as 7,000 Syrians of Armenian origin fled to Armenia in 2012, among whom were about 800 children. In summer 2013, a school readiness programme was implemented to facilitate 60 Syrian children of Armenian origin from four to seven years of age to transition to kindergarten or primary school. The programme, in line with the Early Learning and Development Standards of Armenia, was play-based and focused on communication skills as Western and Eastern Armenian languages differ slightly. Pre-primary teachers and Step-by-Step trainers facilitated the education activities. At the end of the programme children enrolled in regular primary school or kindergartens in Yerevan. Beneficiaries reported a smooth transition to Grade 1 and parents highlighted how much their children had learned during the summer programmes, giving them a good start to their education.

Source: UNICEF (2013b)

3. Improving access of disadvantaged children

Supporting parental demand for early childhood education programmes is one of the cornerstones of their universalisation. This might be done through:

i. Communication and awareness-raising interventions, such as:

- Information dissemination in various languages and through various channels (through networks, NGOs, the media).
- Parental awareness-raising meetings and campaigns, including working with community leaders or community champions to sensitise parents to the importance of pre-primary education.
- Dissemination of messages on the importance of pre-primary and information on the pre-primary registration process through health staff (e.g. visiting nurses, health mediators), social services and NGOs (World Bank, 2012).

ii. Financial and in-kind support to enrolment, such as:

- Provision of free school meals or breakfasts and snacks.
- Family subsidies conditional to children's enrolment in pre-primary (*Practice 5*).
- Free "hours" of early childhood education and care (e.g. through a voucher system) (*Practice 6*).
- Waiving of or concessions on public kindergarten fees for low-income families.

Practice 5 Kindergarten subsidy programme, Hungary

ECE



35 Euros per child aged three to four years conditional on regular pre-primary attendance. "Multiple disadvantaged" is defined by law and includes a range of criteria.

Source: World Bank (2012)

Practice 6 Free early education and care for two-year-olds, England

ECE-MIG-CWD



In England, some free early education and childcare is available to two-year-olds for eligible families who receive income support or jobseeker's allowance, families with an annual income below a certain threshold and families that are supported under specific immigration and asylum-seeking schemes. Children in the care of local authorities, adopted children and children in foster families, children with special education needs and children receiving disability benefits are also eligible.

Source: Gov.UK (2015)

iii. Administrative and other support to enrolment and attendance, such as:

- Use of mediators (such as Roma mediators) to support parents with registration forms and other administrative requirements for enrolment (World Bank, 2012).
- Support to obtaining birth certificates or other ID documents necessary to enrol in pre-primary (Bennet, 2012).
- Community support to transport from home to pre-primary (Bennet, 2012) (*Practice 7*).

Practice 7 Volunteers to accompany Roma children to pre-primary, Serbia

ECE-ETH



When parents are unable to accompany their children to school, distance and concerns for the safety of young children during their journey is a key barrier to access to pre-primary for Roma children in Belgrade. The Centre for Youth Integration (Centar za integraciju mladih) launched a programme in 2009 whereby volunteers accompany pre-primary-school-age children from home to school every day. In the 2015-2016 academic year, between 55 and 75 children, depending on migration patterns, were accompanied to school every day by volunteers, using public transport. Between 20 and 30 volunteers a week, mostly university students, work in shifts to ensure that children make it safe and sound to pre-primary school. The Centre for Youth Integration works in two Belgrade municipalities: Zvezdara and Palilula. Children come from the Roma settlements Mali Leskovac, Vuka Vrcevic and Orlovsko naselje and from two other Belgrade areas: Mali mokri lug and Veliki mokri lug.

Source: Antonowicz (2015c)

iv. Learning environments that promote and encourage diversity, for instance:

- Adaptation of pre-primary premises to the needs of children with disabilities, and availability of toys and equipment facilitating motor, sensory and cognitive development (*Practice 8*).
- Availability of specialised staff to support children with barriers to learning and development and their parents (health, education and emotional wellbeing).
- Recruitment of Roma or other traditionally marginalised ethnic group pre-primary teachers or assistants (*Practice 9*).
- Provision of language courses for migrant children and other children whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction (*Practice 10*). (See also [Second-language learning support](#) in Area 10).

Practice 8 Toys and the right to play of conflict-affected children, Ukraine

ECE



UNICEF and LEGO have been partnering to provide high-quality play materials to conflict-affected children in schools and kindergartens in government-controlled areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Through play children can alleviate trauma and be better equipped to address the stress associated with the current political crisis.

Source: The Lego Foundation (2015)

Practice 9 Roma pre-primary school assistants, A Good Start model, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

ECE-ETH



In Macedonia, the Roma Education Fund worked with nurses and Roma pre-primary school assistants to link kindergartens with parents and communities. The assistants play a critical role with translation for children and parents and in Macedonian-language-learning for children. They also ensure that classroom activities feature Romani culture.

Source: Roma Education Fund (2013)

Practice 10 Roma-Romanian bilingual curriculum in pre-primary school, Romania

“In Romania, since 2005, a bi-lingual experiment has been run by a Roma NGO, Amare Romentza, in partnership with the school inspectorate. Roma children and their teachers use a bi-lingual (Roma and Romanian) curriculum. Nine groups from different counties now use the curriculum. According to Ministry of Education figures, the number of children attending Romanes language classes at kindergarten has risen steadily in recent years. Within the IECE project, co-funded by the World Bank and the Romanian Government, a strong emphasis is placed on teacher training responsive to the needs of Roma children. The approach is opening the door to a more inter-cultural approach sensitive to Roma culture and language. These bi-lingual kindergartens call attention to Roma history, traditions, language and literature and are generally accompanied by books and resource materials in Romanes to be used by children and teachers.”

Source: Bennet (2012)

4. Parental involvement in pre-primary education

Early childhood education provides a unique opportunity for establishing strong partnerships with parents and to work with them on developing strategies to support their children’s learning throughout education. This can actively contribute to education retention in later years and become one of children’s protective factors regarding dropout.

Parental involvement in early childhood education yields positive outcomes for children through: (i) increased parenting skills in developing the child-parent relationship and in participating in child-centred activities, (ii) stronger home-school relationships, and (iii) responsibility for learning outcomes by supporting early learning in the home environment (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006). While we lack rigorous evaluations to shed light on the most appropriate and cost-effective strategies to involve parents in early learning (World Bank, 2012), the literature strongly asserts the need for more and better involvement of parents and a number of good practices have been identified (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006). Key features of parental involvement in early years address the three domains of parenting skills, home-school relationships and responsibility for learning outcomes. This is often done through:

- Information on child development, child wellbeing and the importance of early learning for children’s later education and life outcomes.
- Parenting skills support workshop or one-to-one advice (Practice 11).
- Inviting parents to participate in pre-primary classroom activities and events.
- Opportunities to participate in family learning activities.
- Ideas for home-based activities that support child development and early learning.
- Involving parents in curriculum and activity development (OECD, 2015).
- Respecting socio-cultural differences between pre-primary schools and families (OECD, 2015).
- Preparation and support for transition to primary education.

Practice 11 Parent Education in Preschools, Singapore

ECE-PAR-GEN



The Parent Education in Pre-Schools programme aims to enhance parenting skills and to strengthen the parent-child relationship from a young age. To reach parents, lunch-time talks are organised in locations close to parents' workplaces, along with open days in pre-primary schools and orientation sessions for parents when enrolling their children for the first time. Parents also receive newsletters from the pre-primary schools with ideas for play and early learning activities for the home environment. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback on activities and outreach modalities and to give ideas on areas for further support that would address their needs. Parent support groups are set up in participating preschools, providing a safe space for parents to share experiences and parenting skills. The programme also aims to increase the involvement of fathers in the early years of their children. Special activities have been organised for fathers and their children, such as breakfast sessions and learning activities.

Source: Ministry of Social and Family Development of Singapore (2012)

Additional useful practice pointers and country examples are provided in this handbook in Area 6, Engaging parents, families and communities.

5. Early identification and early intervention in pre-primary education

Early childhood education is an opportunity for early interventions addressing both children's and parents' needs. By identifying challenges and interventions early, children and families can be better supported and risks to education retention can be reduced. Early childhood education is an opportunity for early identification of:

- Barriers to learning and development.
- Language learning delays.
- Risks of neglect or abuse.
- Needs for parenting support.
- Parents' needs for emotional or social support.

Good practices in early identification of and early intervention for health, child protection and social-protection issues in early childhood settings include:

- **Screening and referral** that are culturally sensitive (WHO, 2012).
- **Early identification and intervention that are family-centred** rather than sector-centred, requiring a high level of coordination and flexibility from professionals of the health, education and social services (WHO, 2012) (*Practice 12*).
- Interventions that **promote support continuity and coherence across age-groups**, between pre-primary and primary education and across geographical areas (Education for Change, 2014).
- Early **interventions that empower parents** and families, which take into account the views of children and parents and promote their active participation in decision-making (Department for Education, 2014a) (*Practice 13*).
- **Developing cross-sector competencies for early childhood professionals** on assessment, referral and follow-up with children and parents.
- **Prioritise pre-primary access for children with barriers to learning or development** and with disabilities (RAND Europe, 2013).

Practice 12 Early childhood intervention, Portugal

ECE-CWD



The Portuguese National System of Early Childhood Intervention is coordinated by the ministries of Labour and Social Solidarity, Education and Health, together with the involvement of families and the community. The System aims to provide integrated support prevention and response measures in education, health and social protection to support children from zero to six years of age and their families. The objectives of early childhood intervention are to: (i) detect and refer all children with early intervention needs, (ii) implement interventions to prevent or reduce the risks of development delays; (iii) support families' access to services and resources from the health, education and social-protection systems, (iv) work with communities to develop social-support mechanisms. Children's Individual Plans are at the core of the intervention system: they identify children's barriers, risks and potential and the changes to implement in their immediate environment to help them realise their potential. The Plans are the main coordination tools and accountability mechanism of the local multi-sector teams around children and their families.

Source: Government of Portugal (2016)

Practice 13 Early childhood education centres and child poverty alleviation, Germany

ECE-MIG-PAR



The Mo.Ki (*Monheim für Kinder*) pilot project in Monheim, Germany, aims to prevent child poverty through the implementation of a range of programmes and activities. Early childhood and care centres are at the centre of the scheme and have improved “family functioning and the social participation of their parents, many of whom are unemployed” (OECD, 2006). This was done through assessment of the needs of parents and referrals towards counselling services and social services, language learning support for newly arrived migrants, information on child wellbeing and expansion of child care and early education for socially-marginalised groups.

Source: OECD (2006); Nowak (n.d.)



AREA 2 | ENROLLING ON TIME IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Delaying entry in primary education negatively impacts children both in the short and long term; in the short term, because evidence shows the critical importance of early learning for a healthy physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development (UNICEF, 2012b); in the long term, because delayed school entry is one of the reasons why young people do not complete their lower- (or upper-) secondary education. When young people reach the end of the compulsory education age range before completing lower-secondary, schools do not always have an obligation to keep them enrolled. Overage students in secondary education are also more susceptible to peer and parental pressure for engaging in income-generating activities and are therefore more likely to drop out from lower-secondary or not to pursue their studies in upper-secondary education.

In Europe and Central Asia, a large proportion of out-of-school children are those aged six to nine who have delayed their entry to primary education (UNICEF, 2013c). There are multiple reasons behind late enrolment. Often parents feel that their child is too young to enrol at the prescribed age, or they are worried about the journey to and from school. Sometimes they want their older child to enter Grade 1 at the same time as younger siblings for logistical reasons. Policies supporting timely enrolment in primary school are essential in Europe and Central Asia due to the overall poor coverage of early childhood education and to the fact that in several countries, compulsory school starts only at seven years of age. Children who do not attend any form of early childhood education and who delay their entrance to primary school to eight or nine years of age therefore face significant disadvantages compared to their peers and are more likely to drop out.

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

1. [Clear definition of the school entry age.](#)
2. [Information dissemination about timely school enrolment.](#)
3. [Identification mechanisms for children at risk of not entering primary school on time.](#)

1. Clear definition of the school entry age

In some countries in the region the definition of the compulsory school entrance age is such that some children can enter primary education later than others. In Kazakhstan, the school entry age is “six (seven)” by law. In Kyrgyzstan it is seven but many children enrol from six years of age onwards. Defining with precision the compulsory school entry age in legislation has clear benefits:

- Parents are aware of the exact school entry age and of the legislative provision for flexibility (Practice 14).
- Schools and authorities can more easily generate lists of children of age to enter primary and can follow-up cases of children not registered.

Practice 14 Access to information for parents: Find Out When Your Child Starts School calculator, United Kingdom



In most OECD countries, information on compulsory education and registration procedures are available on the Internet: on government, citizen's advice, education or municipal authorities and school websites. The information is sometimes provided in several languages depending on the linguistic makeup of the country or locality. In the United Kingdom, some local authorities, such as Kent, have set up an automatic calculator of school entrance age: Find Out When Your Child Starts School. Based on the date of birth of the child, the service automatically provides the date of academic year the child must start school and the period when school registration must be conducted.

Source: Kent County Council (n.d.)

2. Information dissemination about timely school enrolment

Developing advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns can be useful to encourage timely enrolment, including:

- **National campaigns** using a range of media (TV, newspapers, radio, social media...) and languages and showcasing video-clips of parents championing timely Grade 1 enrolment to change other parents' attitudes.
- **Local-level awareness-raising and information-dissemination activities** (Practice 15, Practice 16).

Activities can cover:

- **Official letters from local municipalities** to all families of children reaching the age of five. Letters can include information on compulsory education age and primary-school registration procedures.
- **Information meetings for parents** providing information on the primary-school enrolment process (documents needed, registration period, school calendar, start of the academic year, etc.) and addressing any concerns they may have.
- **School open days** for parents and children and other opportunities for parents to meet the school staff ahead of the academic year.
- **Display of information on Grade 1 enrolment procedures in public places**, including primary-health-care centres, social-benefits offices, pre-primary centres, primary schools, etc.
- **Information dissemination on the existing support mechanisms and benefits families can receive** when enrolling a child (e.g. Grade 1 entrance allowance, cash transfers, available support for the provision or replacement of documents such as birth certificates or passports/ID cards, availability of school meals for early grades, school transport options, etc.).

Practice 15 Enrolling undocumented migrant children, USA & Belgium



Education is a right and many countries have recognised that children of school age should be educated regardless of their migration and citizenship status or the status of their parents. This means that undocumented migrant students have explicitly or implicitly equal access to free public education under the legislation of some countries. Yet parents in irregular situations might worry that their status be discovered during the enrolment process of their children and therefore postpone the enrolment of young children in primary education. Examples of steps towards addressing such situations include:

- In Illinois, United States of America (USA), school admission procedures are extensively shared with education institutions and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that schools never request copies or numbers of parents' visas or Green cards, or Social Security Numbers. Guidance also specifies that students must be able to apply for education benefits schemes such as free lunches without providing a Social Security Number or proof of receiving other social benefits.
- In Belgium, the NGO Kinderen Zonder Papieren conducts information campaigns for families, teachers, and social and health workers about the rights of undocumented children, including their right to education. They support undocumented families at risk of expulsion and have supported schools with undocumented children to establish a solidarity fund aiming to cover the indirect cost of education such as school supplies.

Source: Illinois State Board of Education (2015); Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (2008)

Practice 16 Pre-primary preparatory class enrolment campaign, Serbia



The Group for Social Inclusion of the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with UNICEF, the Red Cross, the Association of Pedagogical Assistants of Serbia, the Roma Education Fund and other national bodies and local NGOs implemented a pre-primary preparatory class enrolment campaign from August to December 2015 to increase the proportion of children enrolled in this relatively new compulsory grade. Leaflets and posters in Serbian and Romani language were developed to provide information on the pre-primary education preparatory programme: where and how to enrol children, the benefits of pre-primary education and parent obligations? Local self-governments disseminated leaflets in Roma settlements, centres for social work, health centres and education institutions. A letter from the Minister of Education to all pre-primary institutions requested urgent local actions to ensure the enrolment of all vulnerable children, through multi-sector partnerships. In addition, regional workshops gathered all pre-primary institutions in the country to present the legal framework of the primary pre-preparatory class, raise awareness about the limited access of vulnerable children and support the development of local action plans.

Source: Rankovic (2016)

3. Identification mechanisms for children at risk of not entering primary school on time

The earlier children at risk of not entering primary school can be identified, the more likely they are to start Grade 1 on time. Pointers for policy and programmes include:

- **Early establishment of lists of children reaching Grade 1 entry age** so that parents can be contacted individually ahead of the registration period and children who have not been enrolled in Grade 1 can be tracked (Practice 17).
- **Identification of children in pre-primary settings** whose parents may not intend to enrol them in primary school at the appropriate age (Practice 18).
- Systematic **tracking of the transition of children from pre-primary classes to primary school**.
- Early **identification of children not enrolled in any early childhood provision** and at risk of not enrolling timely in Grade 1.

Practice 17 Identifying six-year-old children at risk of not enrolling on time in Grade 1, Armenia



In Armenia, UNICEF supported a pilot project in Lori Marz on the identification of out-of-school children from April to December 2014. Out of 228 children identified in two districts, 212 were six to eight years of age and not yet enrolled in primary education. The project successfully enrolled 72 children in school for the 2014 academic year, but many delayed their entrance to 2015. A key lesson from this pilot is the importance of identifying children at risk of not enrolling in Grade 1 before the summer so that community authorities, social workers and schools have the necessary time to organise awareness-raising meetings with parents before the start of the academic year. This maximises the chance of children enrolling on time. Another lesson is the need for key messages about the importance of timely enrolment in primary school to be disseminated to all local authorities and schools to support them in their advocacy work with parents.

Source: Antonowicz (2015d)

Practice 18 Early identification of children at risk of not entering Grade 1 on time, England

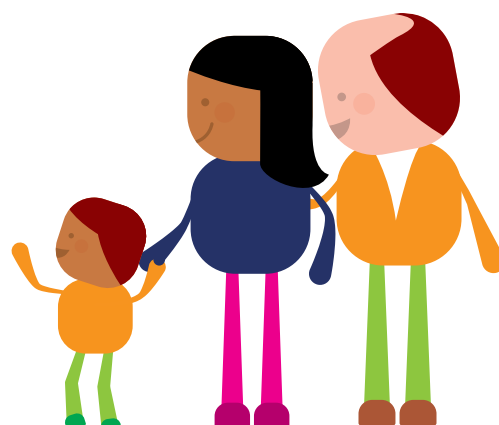
CRO



Ofsted has identified a few good practices in the area of early identification of children at risk of not enrolling in primary education on time. One is to make use of the health check received by children at the age of 3.5 to ask whether the child is attending any education provision. Information on non-attenders is passed to education authorities who ensure that the families are contacted about their entitlement to free early childhood provision and that they receive a school registration form when the child reaches the compulsory education age.

Another is to establish data-sharing protocols between health and education authorities. In Southampton, for instance, the education authorities are provided with a list of 2/3/4-year-old children living in the city. In exchange they provide a list of pre-primary settings children are attending. Obtaining data prior to compulsory school age gives the education authorities some of the information needed to identify those children who may be missing from education provision.

Source: Ofsted (2010)



AREA 3 | REDUCING FINANCIAL BARRIERS FOR STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

Poverty being a barrier to education access, reducing education-related costs for families is an essential component of policies aiming to improve education participation. There are both financial and in-kind support mechanisms to support students at risk of education exclusion: cash transfers, textbook schemes, school-transport schemes, school meals, etc. Such demand-side mechanisms are usually most effective when they complement supply-side mechanisms such as equitable funding formulas for education financing and directing education resources to the students that need them most (UNICEF, 2015b).⁴

Poverty is a key barrier to education access and retention in Europe and Central Asia, combined with other family and individual characteristics and education supply factors (UNICEF, 2013a). In the region, poverty-alleviation mechanisms are particularly relevant when they complement programmes that ensure access to social support and care services. Such a holistic approach to social protection helps tackle the range of factors that contribute to education exclusion. The limited funding allocated to education systems and the lack of flexibility in expenditure eligibility also constrain schools' abilities to address creatively the varied needs of children at high risk of dropping out. Equitable education financing mechanisms have a significant role to play in enabling schools to engage more actively and more successfully in dropout prevention activities.

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

1. [Conditional Cash Transfers.](#)
2. [Scholarships.](#)
3. [School meals, school transport and textbook schemes.](#)
4. [Directing education funding to students and schools that need it most.](#)

1. Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs)

Conditional Cash Transfers aim to reduce poverty through transfers of cash payments while also contributing to improving beneficiaries' future livelihoods. They also seek break the cycle of poverty by developing human capital through, for instance, improving education attainment by making the cash transfer conditional on school attendance (TÁRKI Social Research Institute, 2014a).

When conditionality is education-related, CCTs work both with negative and positive incentives. Negative incentives may take the form of sanctions – reduction or withdrawal of the transfer amount – for non-compliance with the conditionality. Positive incentives may include an extension of the transfer eligibility if an education condition is met (TÁRKI Social Research Institute, 2014a). Cash transfers with negative incentives are commonly found in Central and Eastern Europe and those with positive incentives in other European Union and OECD countries (TÁRKI Social Research Institute, 2014a).

Evidence from large-scale CCT programmes in Latin America shows increased school attendance (e.g. Brazil, Mexico and Honduras) or reduced dropout (e.g. Nicaragua) as a result of the programme (International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, 2010). In Mexico, the CCT *Oportunidades* was extended to upper-secondary-school students as it showed a larger impact on attendance at secondary level. There is also similar evidence from Turkey (TÁRKI Social Research Institute, 2014b).

⁴ Examples of the latter are available in OECD (2012a).

Reviews from programmes in Europe and Latin America show that: (i) CCTs conditional on school enrolment or attendance usually have positive effects on the behaviour used as a conditionality, and (ii) programmes reveal mixed results when the conditionality is performance-related (International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, 2010; TÁRKI Social Research Institute, 2014a). Another study reveals that making universal benefits conditional on school attendance is not effective in increasing participation of Roma children in compulsory education (Friedman et al., 2009).

Policy and programme pointers for CCTs are based on success factors of education-related CCTs:

- **Having a clear targeting strategy** and eligibility criteria (UIS and UNICEF, 2015).
- **Finding the right size of the cash transfer** (covering both direct costs of education and opportunity costs of enrolling children) (Friedman et al., 2009).
- **Analysing the reasons for non-enrolment and non-attendance to inform and shape the CCT programme** – whether demand- or supply-related (TÁRKI Social Research Institute, 2014a), and if demand-related whether financial-related or social-norms-related.
- **Using research evidence to frame the CCT programme.** Research on the impact of selected CCTs in Central and Eastern Europe on education outcomes for Roma identifies some of the potential risks of CCTs, such as possible side-effects of the conditionality that can result in more Roma attending home-schooling or special education schools, or reinforce the poverty levels of families not sending their children to school. The research recommends the use of CCTs for upper-secondary education, particularly when combined with supply-side interventions on quality education and support to learning to complement the CCT programme (Friedman et al., 2009).
- Devising **sound implementation and monitoring mechanisms** (administration of the scheme, compliance assessments, cost-effectiveness of the scheme).
- **Taking into account the broader social and policy contexts.**

Practice 19 Child Allowance, Bulgaria

The Child Allowance is a cash transfer which is part of a comprehensive set of social-protection measures for children. It is conditional on school attendance. The Child Allowance is means-tested, benefiting families earning below 180 Euros/month with children below 20 years of age who are enrolled in and are attending compulsory education (5 to 14) or upper-secondary education. The size of the transfer is currently 18 Euros/child. A lump sum of 75 Euros is also channelled to families when a child registers to the next class, a one-off payment to support education-related expenses at the beginning of the school year. The attendance conditionality is strictly monitored: up to five unexcused absences (unit: one class) per month and up to three days for children in kindergarten will result in a suspended payment for the child for the month.

The programme has recently been complemented by the establishment of Centres for Community Support, which provide integrated support in education, health and social protection.

There is no evaluation to establish the direct contribution of the programme to school retention and reduced dropout rates, however education figures have improved in the last decade. One criticism of the programme is that poor people from rural areas remain penalised by the lower quality of education.

Source: TÁRKI Social Research Institute (2014b)

Practice 20 Universal child benefit with an age extension, Sweden

Sweden has a universal child benefit policy for all children up to 16 years old. Low-income families and families with children aged 16-20 years enrolled in full-time education receive additional supplements.

Source: Work in Sweden (n.d.)

Practice 21 Conditional Cash Transfer, Turkey

GEN 

Turkey has implemented a CCT paid to mothers, with attendance-related conditions for primary and secondary (compulsory since 2012 but with a lower rate of enrolment than primary education). Children must attend 80 per cent of the classes and not repeat more than once. To address gender disparities in access to education, cash transfers are higher for girls than boys at both education levels. The management of the cash-transfer system has been facilitated by the development of an integrated social-assistance information system and the linkages between health and education databases. This enables faster assessment of compliance with eligibility criteria for the scheme. Teachers have played a significant role in informing families about the existence of the scheme. Several evaluations of the scheme have revealed reduced absenteeism overall and increased enrolment in secondary education for girls particularly, even if disparities between urban and rural areas remain. The scheme has had little impact on increased access to primary education and it was suggested that non-financially-related demand-side factors were at play in parental decisions not to enrol their girls in primary school.

Source: TÁRKI Social Research Institute (2014b)

2. Scholarships

Public scholarship schemes are arguably a type of cash transfer (TÁRKI, Social Research Institute, 2014a). They are widespread to encourage education attainment and reduce dropout in upper-secondary education. Policy and programme pointers include:

- **Considering attaching a conditionality** to attendance (Practice 22) or achievement (for instance in Romania in addition to attendance, the scholarship requires students to pass all their exams) (TÁRKI, Social Research Institute, 2014a).
- **Ensuring transparency in scholarships' allocation**, including wide publicity of selection criteria, application procedures and selection procedures.
- **Monitoring of wellbeing and progress** of scholarship recipients.
- **Combining financial incentives with learning-support interventions** (Friedman et al., 2009) (Practices 23 and 24).
- **Ensuring sustainable multi-year funding for scholarship programmes.**
- **Ensuring sound information dissemination** about the scheme.
- **Evaluating scholarships programmes** (effectiveness and impact) and learning lessons on scholarship management.
- **Publicising the outcomes of evaluations**, particularly of impact.

Practice 22 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, England

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides bursaries for education-related costs to young people aged 16 to 19 who are enrolled in school or on a training course. The funds can cover clothes, books, transport and lunches and are allocated on the basis of specific eligibility criteria.

Source: Gov.UK (2015b)

Practice 23 Útravaló programme, Hungary

The *Útravaló* programme combines scholarships with mentoring for disadvantaged students attending secondary or vocational education. In 2013-2014, 14,000 students received scholarships and 7,700 mentors were involved in the scheme. Half of the beneficiaries were young Roma. Evidence from the 2007 evaluation of the For the Road programme in Hungary shows that by combining financial incentives with learning-support interventions, such as mentoring, the chances of transition, retention and to some extent achievement are increased. This learning has been retained in all follow-up scholarship programmes in Hungary and integrated into scholarship programmes run by the Roma Education Fund across the region.

Source: Friedman et al. (2009); Hungarian Government, Prime Minister's Office (2014)

Practice 24 Scholarship and mentoring programme for Roma students, Serbia

Following a seven-year pilot project in the region of Vojvodina, the Ministry of Education, the Roma Education Fund and OSCE are implementing a mentoring-cum-scholarship programme for Roma upper-secondary-school children nation-wide, funded by the European Commission, based on the success of the pilot, which provided scholarships to 1,643 secondary-school children and resulted in improved school performance and reduced dropout from 26 per cent to 4.5 per cent. The new programme is expected to support 1,000 secondary-school Roma children.

Source: Roma Education Fund (n.d.)

3. School meals, school transport and textbook schemes

School meals, transport and textbook schemes are common avenues to support families with education-related expenses. There is an array of schemes, whether national, district or school-based, depending on countries and regions. When used as a dropout prevention measure, schemes should ensure that:

- **The most disadvantaged children benefit the most** and can be provided textbooks, school meals and school transport for free whenever necessary (Practice 25).
- **Strategies to avoid the stigmatisation of beneficiary families** are in place.
- **Parents are aware of the schemes** and are supported to join them.
- **Parents and students are extensively consulted** and participate in the development of these schemes.
- **Contractual arrangements for procurement of goods and services are transparently tendered** and priority is given to local providers.
- **Pilots and evaluations assess the schemes' relevance**, cost effectiveness and impact on enrolment, retention and attendance.

Practice 25 Early School Leaving reduction strategies in Bulgaria and Kosovo*⁵

Bulgaria has made the provision of free textbooks for all children up to completion of lower-secondary education and free school transportation for children in remote areas a key measure of the Action Plan 2014-2015 for Early School Leaving reduction.

The Kosovo* National Action Plan against school dropout (2009-2014) also included free textbooks for all students from Grades 1 to 12 and free transportation for students living far away from their schools.

Source: Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (2012); Government of Kosovo (2009)

4. Directing education funding to students and schools that need it most

Schools and students have varied socio-economic profiles and need to be responded to in a fair manner. Equity, therefore, has resourcing implications (Field et al, 2007). Education financing and funding inclusive education are complex matters that largely depend on the economic situation, the political commitments of governments and the level of decentralisation in each country. General pointers for equitable education financing and redistributive policies are:

- **Informing policies with recent evidence supporting the case of the cost-effectiveness of regular inclusive education over special education schools** (OECD, 1999; UNICEF, 2015d). There is also a clear administrative inefficiency in maintaining parallel systems (regular and special education) and structures (Peters, 2004). This calls for education-funding formulas that take into account the varied needs of children, including children with disabilities and the costs of additional and specialised support staff in regular schools.
- **Considering implementing or fine-tuning funding formulas.** Funding formulas are “efficient, stable and transparent methods of funding schools” (OECD, 2012a) and they can combine “horizontal equity” (schools with similar profiles) and “vertical equity” (students with greater needs) so that schools and students with the greatest needs receive more funds (OECD, 2012a).
- **Allocating additional funds through block grants to schools and targeted programmes** for very disadvantaged schools, such as schools with a high intake of migrants or students of low socio-economic status, and from deprived areas; or for the funding of school-based support services.
- **Accounting for district variation** in geographical size and sparseness of population, wealth and ability to raise taxes.
- **Improving school and student data reliability for ensuring relevance** and appropriateness of funding mechanisms (e.g. socio-economic background, second-language learner, level of difficulty in areas such as motor, intellectual, communication and behaviour development). Data is also needed to evaluate the effectiveness of funding mechanisms.
- **Ensuring equity in teacher and support-staff deployment**, as their salaries represent a significant proportion of the education budget (UNICEF, 2015b).
- **Developing guidance and support for schools and/or municipalities on how to best allocate additional resources** to ensure that they are used appropriately and in line with evidence-based practices (Nusche, 2009).
- **Implementing oversight mechanisms** to ensure that schools spend funding effectively and efficiently is critical (OECD, 2012a).

⁵ *Kosovo Security Council Resolution 1244.

- **Devising strong monitoring frameworks and conducting robust evaluations** to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of equitable policies.

Practice 26 Weighted student funding system, the Netherlands



Since 1985, primary schools receive funding on a weighted per pupil basis as part of a broad policy agenda to reduce educational disadvantage. An additional weight of 0.25 is allocated to native Dutch children whose parents have relatively low educational attainment and an additional weight of 0.9 is allocated to children who migrated from outside Western countries and whose parents have relatively low educational attainment or are engaged in low-skilled work. A study shows that in the 2006-2007 academic year, schools in the highest weight index category have 58 per cent more teachers (classroom teachers, remedial teachers, education coaches) per pupil than the schools in the lowest weight index category, and more staff support per teacher (i.e. teacher assistant and administrative support). Researchers explain that the level of education quality was not higher in the highly weighted schools, which, they explain, might be due to the complex learning challenges faced by their students. This may also be attributable to the use of the additional budget allowance to reduce class size only to the detriment of other strategies, such as increasing salaries to attract more qualified teachers or implementing a broader range of activities to support their students' needs.

Source: Ladd and Fiske (2010)

Practice 27 Education funding in Ontario, Canada



Ontario provides funding according to four priorities: (i) funding for classrooms, (ii) funding for specific education priorities, (iii) funding for schools and (iv) funding for a locally managed system. In addition to basic pupil and school grants, some funding is geared towards School Boards Administration and Governance. The funding allocation also includes Special Purpose grants for: special education, language, First Nations, *Métis* and Inuit Education, Geographic Circumstances, Learning Opportunities, Safe and Accepting Schools and Student Transportation.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Education (2015)

Practice 28 Funding formula loading, Australia



The education-funding formula in Australia combines a base amount and a resource standard funding amount per student and takes into account the community's capacity to contribute financially to the school. Amounts per student are calculated according to a loading system for:

- Students with disabilities (adding 186 per cent of the resource standard funding amount per student).
- Aboriginal students (adding between 20 per cent and 120 per cent of the resource standard funding amount per student depending on the proportion of Aboriginal students in the school).
- Students with a low socio-economic status.
- Students with low English proficiency (adding 10 per cent of the resource standard funding amount per student).

Loadings are also available for schools that are not in major cities and for small schools.

Source: Australian Government (2015)

Practice 29 Priority Education Zones, France

France introduced Priority Education Zones in the 1980s, whereby schools facing high socio-economic disadvantage and schools in highly economically deprived areas receive additional teachers and staff. Teachers receive financial incentives when working in a Priority Education Zones school. The scheme has gradually evolved since the 1980s, including changes to the number and type of schools, location and partnership working, particularly through the development of local networks. The effectiveness of the approach has been limited and existing data is insufficient to shed light on best practices. Factors that are likely to have negatively impacted on the initiative include the lack of targeting (of schools, students and expected results), the assumption that a slight increase in salary would attract more experienced teachers and reduce staff turnover, the stigma attached to Priority Education Zones, the small reduction in class size despite increased funds, the lack of professional development and the patchy development of multi-disciplinary teams. Recent recommendations to improve the Priority Education Zones in France emphasise the need for more funds in primary education; better targeting of schools and students; addressing issues of second-language education and promoting cultural understanding between professionals and migrant students and families; improving parental involvement in school; improving the school climate; selecting motivated and effective teachers and supporting them through induction, mentoring, professional development and professional support; and providing real national leadership and oversight for the initiative.

Source: *Comité interministériel pour la modernisation de l'action publique* (2013); *Bénabou et al.* (2003)

Practice 30 Educational Priority Areas, Romania

Initially developed by the Romanian Institute of Education in 2003, based on the French model and then supported by UNICEF through a number of pilot schools, the Educational Priority Areas system “promotes positive discrimination and compensation by allocating additional school resources to students with learning difficulties and poor school results which stem from social and economic challenges”. The system combines compensation policies and equity interventions through state welfare interventions with anti-discrimination and anti-exclusion policies and strategies to improve inclusive education. The approach has produced positive results in terms of dropout reduction and is currently being rolled out in more districts with high dropout rates.

Source: UNICEF (n.d.)

Practice 31 Quality Multi-Ethnic Schools programme, Switzerland



In Switzerland, the Quality Multi-Ethnic Schools programme provides extra funding and professional incentives and support to schools with 40 per cent or more students from migrant families. The programme focuses on language learning, assessments that are relevant to various socio-linguistic backgrounds and culturally diverse schools. Schools are particularly supported in the area of school improvement and partnership building with local authorities and locally available support services.

Source: Nusche (2009)

AREA 4 | IMPROVING SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

The literature emphasizes the importance of successful transitions between education cycles to prevent dropout. Fear of failure in higher grades and fear of the unknown can affect young people's decision to drop out, particularly between lower-secondary and upper-secondary or vocational education. The first contact between the school and the child and his/her parents is also critical for starting a collaborative and constructive relationship that will contribute to retention and attainment. Research identifies three main factors in successful transitions between education cycles for students: social adjustment (settling well into school life), institutional adjustment (adaptation to new routines and ways of doing things), and curriculum interest and continuity (Evangelou, 2008). This requires school cultures and structures that are aware of and responsive to the breadth and depth of “continuities and discontinuities” at play in a school transition in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment or peer and social networks (Tilleczek, K. Ferguson, 2007). The first contact between the school and the child and his/her parents is also critical for starting a collaborative and constructive relationship that will contribute to retention and attainment. Effective support strategies must respond to students' needs before and after the transition and cover both the academic and social aspects of transition. This requires a level of coordination between schools, pedagogical teams and other child support services and calls for overarching national and local strategies to support school transitions.

While the vast majority of children transit from pre-primary to primary and from primary to lower-secondary in Europe and Central Asia, transition rates from lower- to upper-secondary are much lower. Some children start demonstrating signs of dropout risk as soon as they enter lower-secondary and drop out in the last grades of compulsory education. Many young people drop out during upper-secondary education and during vocational training.⁶ Ensuring a positive first contact between the school, the student and the family and providing specific support measures for students transitioning between levels is too often neglected in a region where many students re-enter education after a long absence, integrate regular education after a stay in a special institution, or change school after an expulsion or a forced transfer.

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

1. [Preparation, induction and learning-support strategies for transitioning students.](#)
2. [Supporting parents throughout education transitions.](#)
3. [Multi-service planning for improved school transitions.](#)
4. [Structural reforms for improved transition to secondary education.](#)
5. [Comprehensive education and career guidance policies.](#)
6. [Flexible and quality education and career guidance delivery.](#)

⁶ Upper-secondary is generally neither free nor compulsory in the region, although some policies are in place to reduce the financial burden on families through scholarships and a few countries have also started making upper-secondary fully or partially compulsory.

1. Preparation, induction and learning-support strategies for transitioning students

Familiarising students with the next cycle of education by preparing them well in advance is proven useful to reduce dropout between education cycles. Policy and programme pointers include:

- Differentiating strategies for students who are changing school premises and those staying in the same school. When students are staying in the same school while transitioning to the next level, consideration should be given to granting them greater autonomy and providing them with opportunities to take on additional responsibilities (Galton et al., 2003).
- **Giving opportunities to students with a “negative reputation” to make a fresh start** after transition, even if staying at the same school.
- **Preparing transition** through:
 - School visits and taster days (when prospective children follow a full day of class in their prospective school) (Evangelou et al., 2008).
 - Teachers from prospective schools addressing students who are about to transition to talk about school routines, education and extra-curricular opportunities.
 - Students from higher grades returning to their former school to talk about their experience in the next cycle of education.
- **Implementing induction and welcoming strategies** for newcomers in a school or in a level of education:
 - Presentation of school premises, school staff (including support staff), school policies (attendance, discipline, etc.), student association representatives, available support, and learning and recreational opportunities available at the school (*Practice 32*).
 - Buddy or coaching systems whereby a younger student will be shadowed by an older student for a few days, weeks or months at the beginning of the year (*Practice 33*).
 - Team-building exercises for new student cohorts at the beginning of the year: excursions and days out early in the year, project work in groups and school events.
 - Adding value to the chosen education stream or pathway early in the year by making links with professionals and opportunities for further education.
 - Learning support (*Practice 34*).
- **Providing learning support at transition stages**, particularly in the transition between lower- and upper-secondary. This can be done through:
 - Recuperative courses before school starts (e.g. through summer programmes) (Lyche, 2010; Galton et al., 2003) (*Practice 35*).
 - Tutoring programmes by older students or university students.
 - “Learning to learn” support, to help students in higher grades to become more autonomous in their learning and develop the ability to cope with a greater workload.
 - Exam support through adult- or student-led small-group work or exam revision clubs.
 - Individual learning support for students at high risk of dropping out.
 - Individualised Transition Plans for students with special educational needs, and use of portfolios.
- **Providing a continuum of support before and after the transition** (such as learning support or mentoring) (*Practices 36 and 37*).

Practice 32 Smoothing transition to primary education for children with disabilities, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



Dimo Hadzi Dimov primary school established a Parent Resource Centre for parents of children with disabilities to receive information about inclusive education practices in the school and discuss with staff the issues faced by their children. Following one of these meetings, a father expressed interest in enrolling his child in Grade 1 the following year. The child visited the school and met the Grade 1 teacher several times before the start of the academic year. When he displayed signs of anxiety in the school, the meetings were switched to a more familiar setting: the centre at which the child was receiving therapy. This provided an opportunity for the school staff to meet other professionals involved in supporting the child and his family, which contributed to a greater understanding of the child's ability and needs and the development of a relevant Individual Education Plan.

Source: UNICEF (2014b)

Practice 33 Transition mentors and buddies, United Kingdom

Bassingbourn Primary School selects every year Transition Mentors among school students. These mentors are then in charge to recruit Buddies for New Arrivals. Mentors publicise the post, select candidates for interviews and establish contracts with the buddies, with the help of their teachers. The role of the buddies is to help new pupils to understand the school rules, to navigate the timetable, to encourage the development of new friendships, to set a good example and to watch out for bullying. The school has developed a best-practice pack for recruiting buddies, available [here](#).

Source: Cambridgeshire County Council PSHE Service (n.d.)

Practice 34 Post-induction programmes, United Kingdom

Post-induction programmes have been experimented with by secondary schools in the United Kingdom to reduce the stress sometimes associated with transition and to help students manage their own learning more effectively. Post-induction programmes have been successful among students and have typically included one or more of the following activities:

- Familiarisation activities (with the school and rooms, with staff and students).
- Strengthening “learning to learn” competences through improving self-study skills, thinking and problem-solving strategies.
- Improving self-awareness of learning styles and learning patterns.
- Developing social skills and improving self-esteem.
- Diagnostic testing to inform the development of learning objectives.

Source: Galton et al. (2003)

Practice 35 Summer programme for children of migrant agricultural workers, USA



The summer migrant programme at Kent City provides a free six-week intensive education summer programme to children of migrant agricultural workers who have gaps in their education and learning following their high level of mobility during the school year.

An average 150 children from pre-primary to the 12th grade attend the eight-hour programme daily. Students receive breakfast, lunch and snacks. The programme focuses on literacy and maths and includes extra-curricular activities and field trips. Teachers use a curriculum specifically developed for children whose schooling is repeatedly disrupted and monitor and document closely learning outcomes. The programme also provides an opportunity to identify migrant families and inform them about local services.

Source: Scott (2013); Maranda Where you live (n.d)

Practice 36 OK Let's Go! transition programme, Northern Ireland

Deis Na Gaillimhe was funded by the European Union in the 1990s to tackle education disadvantage through integrated approaches and aimed to reduce early school leaving. The “OK Let's Go!” sub-component of the project aimed to address the potential fears of students undertaking a transition. The project worked with students during their last year of lower-secondary education, in the summer months preceding their entry to secondary, and during their first year in secondary education. “OK Let's Go!” targeted all students in their last year of lower-secondary education, with a focus on students at risk of dropping out. Activities included discussion on transition, identification of potential fears, the school selection process and visits to secondary schools. The summer programmes conducted by youth and community groups provided opportunities for students to catch up on their learning, improve their skills, discuss issues of matter to them and engage in cultural and recreational activities. Secondary schools set up induction and mentoring programmes to ease the transition of new students. The teachers who designed and implemented “Ok Let's Go!” documented the programme in a publication that was shared with other local authorities and schools.

Source: Rourke (1999)

Practice 37 Harmonising teaching and marking practices, United Kingdom



One strategy to support students' learning across education cycles has been to harmonise teaching and marking practices by multiplying exchanges between lower-secondary and upper-secondary teachers. Activities have included peer class observation, manuals of teaching and learning strategies common to teachers of the two cycles in a given subject, and joint marking sessions.

Source: Galton et al. (2003)

2. Supporting parents throughout education transitions

At time of transition, the value parents place on education and the level of parents' educational aspirations for their children are critical to help them continue to the next level. Parents will have different concerns, attitudes and level of involvement in supporting the transition of their children depending on their children's ages and grades. Entry in or transition to Grade 1 is an important step for parents, who might need to be reassured and guided on how to support their children to adapt to new environments and routines. In secondary education choices have to be made on pathways, streams and types of qualifications.

Pointers to support parents throughout transition include:

- **Organising parent meetings in feeder schools** to explain different pathways, present institutions and raise awareness of choices to be made.
- **Disseminating information material** well in advance for parents and children to discuss options and make enquiries.
- **Organising open days** in prospective schools/institutions.
- **Presenting school premises, school staff** (including support staff and mediators), school policies (attendance, discipline, etc.), school governing bodies (including parent-teacher associations and school management committee), available support and learning and recreational opportunities available at the school.
- **Presenting the organisation of the school**, how teaching and learning are delivered, and expectations from students, teachers and parents.
- **Presenting the channels of communication between the school and parents** and the expectations in terms of communication and participation.
- **Presenting existing support mechanisms** (psychosocial) **and benefits families can receive** (around school meals, transport, textbooks, school supplies, scholarship schemes) and provision of information on broader social benefits families can be entitled to.
- **Providing free translation** for parents not speaking the language of the school.

Practice 38 Informing parents about the education system, Austria and Northern Ireland

MIG



As education streams change over time, parents might have lost touch with existing opportunities, particularly post-lower-secondary or in rapidly changing pathways such as technical and vocational education. This situation is also common among migrant parents who are unfamiliar with the education system. In Austria, DVDs about the education system are widely disseminated to migrant parents. They are available in several languages: German, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Turkish and English.

In Northern Ireland, parents' information is available on a dedicated website: <http://www.education-support.org.uk/> and is available in several languages. For instance, the detailed brochure *The Transfer Process to Post-Primary School* is available in English, Irish, Chinese, Portuguese, Slovak, Hungarian, Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian. It provides information on the calendar for school registration, the transfer process, school and parental obligations throughout the transition, the different types of schools, and transport schemes and provides useful contact details. It also warns parents about the existence of unregulated entrance exams to grammar school.

Source: Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger (2009); and Education Support for Northern Ireland (2016)

Practice 39 Materials to support school transition, United Kingdom



In the United Kingdom, a number of charities and trusts are supporting the inclusion of children on the autism spectrum in education. Working in partnership with local authorities, Autism Outreach Services have been developed across the country. Materials supporting inclusive education practices for children on the autism spectrum are widely disseminated for parents, school staff and education authorities, on websites such as <http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>. Some Autism Outreach Services, such as in Leicestershire, have developed a resource pack for parents and carers on the transition from primary to secondary schools, which includes a list of potential difficulties surrounding the transition to secondary school; ideas and steps to ensure a successful transition; actions for parents, primary-school staff and secondary-school staff to support a successful transition; and checklists and activities for parents to support their child transitioning from primary to secondary school.

Source: Steady and Roberts (n.d.)

3. Multi-service planning for improved school transitions

When support services are institution-centred they tend not to follow young people as they change location or promote to the next cycle of education, which adds to the natural stress of students and families, particularly those most at risk of dropping out or those fearing that their needs will not be holistically addressed in a new school setting or location. Policy and programme pointers include:

- **Ensuring that health, emotional wellbeing and social or mentorship support accompanies individuals throughout their transition.**
- **Establishing close school collaboration and strong cross-sector collaboration** to ensure continuity of support services and mechanisms (Ofsted, 2008).

Practice 40 Supporting transition, Denmark

Denmark has included support to transition between education cycles (primary to lower-secondary to upper-secondary) in its National Reform Programme (2008). An inter-ministerial committee has also been mandated to identify cost-effective measures to increasing the number of young people completing upper-secondary education. Among transition support strategies, the introduction of individualised action plans and mentor schemes have proven successful, helping professionals across two education cycles to support young people in a consistent manner.

Source: Blades (2012)

Practice 41 Education, health and care plans, England

Children and young people up to 25 years of age who need more support than is available through special educational needs in schools are entitled to an “Education, health and care” plan. The plan can be requested by families or professionals. Based on a needs-assessment, it is articulated around what young people want to achieve and the support they need to do so. The local authorities have the responsibility to implement the plan and education, health and care agencies work together to ‘wraparound’ young people the support needed. All children and young people from zero to 25 years of age who need a plan are eligible to it. By having one plan and one single procedure regardless of the age of the child, children can enjoy a greater continuum of education, health and care services when transitioning from one education cycle (or one school) to another.

Source: Gov.UK (2015c); Department for Education (2014b)

4. Structural reforms for improved transition to secondary education

Three broad structural interventions can support improved transition between lower-secondary and upper-secondary and ultimately contribute to reduced dropout and early school leaving rates:

- **Increasing the length of compulsory education**, which can support the transition to upper-secondary and reduce early school leaving, although there is no guarantee of completion or graduation (European Commission, 2010) (*Practices 42 and 43*).
- **Diversifying upper-secondary provision and vocational education** (*Practice 44*). The provision of alternative and permeable pathways in upper-secondary education is deemed to encourage more students to continue their education after completion of lower-secondary (Field et al., 2007). Greater choice and opportunities to change orientation when key decisions have to be made at a young age can help students completing upper-secondary education (European Commission Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, 2013).
- **Strengthening the relevance of upper-secondary education, particularly vocational education**. Relevant vocational pathways that equip learners with the skills that will improve their employability and their social integration are also believed to contribute to reduced early school leaving rates (European Commission, 2010) (*Practice 45*).

Practice 42 Extension of the length of compulsory education, Armenia

Starting from 2017, compulsory education will be 12 years in Armenia, including upper-secondary or vocational education. The 2015 amendment to the Law on Education specifies that young people who have not yet completed the 12th Grade by 19 years of age can leave school if they wish to do so. The requirement on the length of compulsory secondary education is not applicable to certain groups of children with special educational needs.

Source: Republic of Armenia (2015)

Practice 43 Extension of compulsory education for students without basic qualification, the Netherlands

Since 2007, all young people under the age of 18 are required to attend school until they attain a basic qualification (ISCED Level 3). The basic qualification can be in general or professional education: (i) VWO (pre-university education diploma – ISCED Level 3), (ii) HAVO (senior general secondary education – ISCED Level 3), or (iii) MBO level 2 (senior secondary vocational education – students are required to complete the basic vocational education course [MBO level 2], which is an ISCED Level 3 qualification).

Source: CINOP (2008); UNESCO-IBE (2012)

Practice 44 Diversification of vocational education and training, Portugal

Portugal has reduced its early school leaving rate, from 36.9 per cent in 2007 to 20.9 per cent in 2012, and increased the length of compulsory education up to 18 years of age. This has been accompanied by a strong focus on improving the quality, relevance and diversity of vocational education. A National Qualifications System and a National Qualifications Framework were approved in 2007. Portugal is currently implementing a national integrated Vocational Education & Training strategy (2012-2014), which includes: (i) an upper-secondary Vocational Education & Training curricula reform providing more training hours in a work environment and the integration of alternative vocational pathways at lower- and upper-secondary for students at risk of dropping out; (ii) a Specific Vocational Programmes initiative (pilot) providing vocational courses in lower-secondary and apprenticeships to support young people choosing the right education pathway, and (iii) Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education, which provide career guidance and information on education pathways.

Source: ICF-GHK (2013); OECD (2014)

Practice 45 Modernisation of Technical Vocational Education & Training, Cyprus

The early school leaving rate of Cyprus has decreased, from 18.5 per cent in 2000 to 6.8 per cent in 2014 (2014 EU average 11.1 per cent). The share of ISCED Level 3 students in vocational education and training is much lower in Cyprus compared to other European countries (13.6 per cent in 2014 compared to 48.9 per cent). The modernisation of Technical Vocational Education & Training has been one of the measures to tackle early school leaving and Cyprus is currently restructuring vocational education at secondary level to improve the work-based learning offered and the relevance of curricula that are becoming competences-based and skills-oriented. Cyprus has also been improving the transparency of vocational qualifications by developing standards for certification and linking them to the European Qualifications Framework. A new learning pathway, the New Modern Apprenticeship programme, was created to provide additional learning opportunities to both students at risk of dropping out and early school leavers who need a second chance.

Source: European Commission (2015)

5. Comprehensive education and career guidance policies

Guidance services assist children and young people to make educational and training choices. Career guidance⁷ plays a key role in both dropout prevention and reintegration strategies and is critical to the transition process (OECD and The European Commission, 2004). Some have identified the positive impact of career guidance on attainment, behaviour and attendance (Pearson, 2012). Career guidance is relevant to learning goals, market goals and social equity goals (Watts, 2013). It also contributes to reducing inappropriate use of education funding for students who are engaged in the wrong path (Zelloth, 2009). With high rates of youth unemployment in Europe and Central Asia, career and education guidance is attracting more and more attention in political agendas.

Pointers to develop comprehensive and effective career guidance policies and programmes include:

- **Starting career guidance early** (Pearson, 2012; European Commission Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, 2013) (*Practice 46*).
- **Including career guidance in a comprehensive dropout prevention strategy** that addresses the needs of at-risk youth holistically (OECD and The European Union, 2004) (*Practice 47*).
- **Ensuring that career guidance policies embrace a lifelong learning perspective** and span the education, training, employment and youth sectors (*Practice 46 and 48*).
- **Informing career guidance programmes by consultation and needs assessments** with national and local authorities, school students, school staff, career guidance specialists and counsellors, employers, NGOs and civil society organisations, and by reviews and mappings of existing provision (OECD and The European Union, 2004).
- **Developing career guidance services that are learner-oriented** and that support young people navigating both formal and informal education and labour market systems.
- **Identifying sustainable funding mechanisms.**
- **Developing quality assurance mechanisms** for career guidance programmes and services.

Practice 46 Career guidance: the approach of Montenegro

Montenegro has embarked on a lifelong learning approach to career guidance, from school to adulthood. The Centre for Career Information and Professional Counselling, established in 2007, has a practitioner support guidance function (both in schools and employment agencies) and a research and development remit. It has, for instance, surveyed primary-school students to improve its understanding of how students were making education and career choices and to identify their needs in terms of career guidance. In 2011, Montenegro developed a draft National Strategy for Long Life Learning and Career Guidance (2011-2015) with a five-year action plan, under the leadership of the Ministry of Education. One of the focus areas is strengthening career guidance in schools: a pilot project on career orientation in primary and secondary schools was implemented in 2013 and used as a basis for modelling a new system that would be encompassed in a whole-school approach, from school planning to the role of support staff in providing career guidance, to integration of career orientation in curricula. The Strategy also caters for the development of quality standards for career-guidance staff across sectors.

Source: Zelloth (2009); Zelloth (2012); European Training Foundation (2014)

⁷ European Union has been: “services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers”. (OECD and The European Commission, 2004).

Practice 47 Act on Guidance, Denmark

A key component of the early leaving strategy of Denmark is the Guidance Act, initially published in 2003 and amended in 2010. Three types of guidance are in place for young people under 25 years of age: Youth Guidance Centres (focusing on post-compulsory education – see *Practice 50*, below), Regional Guidance Centres (supporting transition to higher education) and eGuidance, which provides generic information on education and employment.

The National Guidance Portal, maintained by the Ministry of Education, provides information on education and training opportunities at all levels, on jobs and professions and on labour market trends. It also supports young people in or out of education and training to take decisions about education and employment with an electronic career-planning tool.

A National Dialogue Forum on Guidance has been established at national level to sustain collaboration between the Ministry of Education and all relevant organisations, stakeholders and professionals in the field.

Source: Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality (n.d.), and Euroguidance Denmark, The Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation (2012)

Practice 48 Comprehensive coverage for career guidance, Serbia

Serbia has adopted a comprehensive policy framework on career guidance. The action plan for 2010-2014 made provision for the creation of a range of centres for career guidance, including a National Resource Centre for Guidance, Career Information and Counselling Centres, Centre for Career Guidance and Counselling for Talented Youth, mobile centres for rural areas, local Youth Offices with guidance functions, university career centres and experimental centres in schools.

Source: Zelloth (2014)

6. Flexible, quality education and career guidance delivery

Career guidance in schools is often the responsibility of support staff that have broad guidance and counselling remits, such as social-pedagogues (Zelloth, 2009), which constrains the breadth and depth of the services that could be provided and affects their overall quality (Watts, 2002).

Policy and strategy pointers for quality career guidance services include:

- **Providing a learning experience for students** and supporting them to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to take education or career-related decisions (Watts, 2013).
- Providing **independent and impartial advice** (Pearson, 2012).
- Presenting **quality and accessible information**.
- Developing **quality self-help tools** (Watts, 2002).
- Providing **professional advice and coaching** to help young people access information, make decisions and take action (Watts, 2002).
- Running services or **outreach activities in locations where young people gather** (OECD and The European Union, 2004).
- Providing **opportunities for interactions with “significant adults”** who play a role in young people's lives (OECD and The European Union, 2004).

- **Combining career guidance delivery models and channels of communication** to ensure greater coverage and responsiveness to the varied needs of young people, students at risk of dropping out and early school leavers already outside the education system. The European Training Foundation identifies four main delivery models (Zelloth, 2012):
 - The curriculum model, such as a career education subject or subject component and extracurricular activities focusing on career guidance, entrepreneurship learning and linkages with the world of work (*Practice 49*).
 - The centre model, such as information centres based in schools or in other institutions, including in employment agencies (*Practice 50*).
 - The individual model, whereby specialists or semi-specialists in schools or employment services provide one-to-one guidance (*Practice 51*).
 - The virtual model, whereby individuals can access self-help facilities in schools and other institutions or through the Internet (*Practice 52 and 53*).⁸

Practice 49 Guidance Orientation Curriculum, Turkey

Turkey has developed a Guidance Oriented Curriculum to be implemented throughout compulsory education from Grades 1 to 12. The Curriculum covers topics such as “academic and career guidance” and “interpersonal relations”. In Grade 9, students are provided with a special orientation and guidance class before deciding whether to pursue the general academic stream or the vocational stream.

Source: Zelloth (2014)

Practice 50 Youth Guidance Centres, Denmark

Youth Guidance Centres target young people up to 25 years of age. They are independent and funded by municipalities to provide advice to young people transitioning from compulsory education. Working closely with schools, Youth Guidance Centres target teenagers from the last three grades of lower-secondary education and support them to find the necessary information and develop the necessary skills to make informed decisions about post-compulsory education and training. Every student in Grade 9 has a plan for life after compulsory education. Activities facilitated by Centres include work placements for lower-secondary students, talks from inspiring managers and professionals, and education and career advice for youth at risk of dropping out. The Youth Guidance Centres also have the responsibility to contact all young people under 25 years of age who are not enrolled or have not completed a “youth education programme” (i.e. post-compulsory education and training opportunities). Schools must inform the Centres as soon as a student has dropped out. The Youth Guidance Centres must develop robust quality assurance systems based on guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education. Evaluation plays a core role in assessing the effectiveness of the work of the Centres.

The Danish guidance system pays special attention to transition between education cycles in order to minimise dropout due to wrong orientation or following a change in education pathway.

Source: Euroguidance Denmark, The Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation (2012)

⁸ Information on education pathways and careers and support tools such as self-assessment tools can easily and cost-effectively be provided online. This, however, requires a high degree of collaboration across sectors and regions, so as to accurately capture formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities for young people. Online and remote information delivery solutions, such as help-lines, enable services to be equitable across regions (OECD and The European Union, 2004).

Practice 51 The Schools Business Partnership, Ireland

The Schools Business Partnership, set up in June 2001, strengthens the links and facilitates exchanges between schools and local businesses. It has been established to support the Government's overall strategy on education and focuses on students facing education challenges and disadvantages. The Partnership is divided into four main programmes:

- The Student Mentoring Programme, which encourages students who are at risk of leaving school early to continue their studies with the advice and support of a mentor from a local business.
- The Skills@Work programme, which invites employees from local businesses to talk to post-primary-school students about real-life workforce skills such as interview preparation and CV writing.
- The Summer Work Placement Programme, which is offered in cooperation with the Irish Funds Industry Association and organises short-term job opportunities for students in leading global financial services organisations.
- The Management Excellence for Principals programme, which facilitates skills sharing between business and school leaders.

Source: Department of Education and Skills (2011)

Practice 52 Career advice helpline, South Africa

"In South Africa, a career advice helpline is being developed which comprises a multi-channel career development service accessible by various means (including telephone, text messages, email, Twitter and Facebook), linked to a career information and career resources website, media activities (such as a national radio campaign), and linkages with institutions providing career development services, such as community colleges. The helpline is viewed as a core element of a new comprehensive career guidance system for South Africa. Its development is being led by the South African Qualifications Authority, as a means of activating learner usage of its National Qualifications Framework. The helpline builds upon experience with similar helplines in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, but its development has also been enriched by drawing upon a tradition for equity-driven community-based career centres established by non-governmental organisations under the previous apartheid regime. One of its distinctive rationales is the capacity of the mobile telephone to reach out into rural and disadvantaged communities."

Source: Watts (2013)

Practice 53 Web-based career information system, Turkey

Turkey has been piloting a web-based career information system targeting young people from 13 years of age onwards, with a specific focus on unemployed and disadvantaged youth and dropout children. The system is learner-centred and explorative. It gives access to databases on educational and training programmes (covering formal, non-formal and informal education), to information packs on occupational standards and career-information resources. It also includes self-assessment tools, and web-based questionnaires on individual abilities, interest and occupational values.

Source: Kilic (2009)

AREA 5 | SECOND-CHANCE EDUCATION AND CATCH-UP PROGRAMMES

For the purpose of this document and to reflect the diversity of settings in Europe and Central Asia, second-chance education refers here broadly to education programmes for young people who have failed to complete primary or lower-secondary education or to gain a qualification.⁹

Second-chance education and catch-up programmes are known as compensation measures (see Section 3.1 [point 4](#)) and enable young people who have never been to school or who have dropped out from school early to catch up on their learning and gain an education qualification. Second-chance education programmes not only help young people to realise their right to education, but also potentially reduce the costs associated with unemployment benefits and other social benefits, health services, the judiciary and loss of tax on earnings borne by states when young people are ill-equipped to integrate into society and into the labour market due to dropout.

There is limited information in Europe and Central Asia on second-chance and catch-up programmes, on the number and types of their beneficiaries and on their effectiveness. Many second-chance and alternative-education programmes tend to be local, small-scale initiatives and examples of successful scaling-up strategies are often lacking, whether in Europe and Central Asia or elsewhere (GHK Consulting Ltd, 2011). Yet, in a region with a large number of adolescents out of school, second-chance education programmes can contribute to improving educational attainment and social and economic outcomes for young people.

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

1. [Mapping existing second-chance education provision and legislation.](#)
2. [Second-chance education specificities and success factors.](#)
3. [Catch-up and accelerated-learning programmes.](#)
4. [Re-engagement programmes.](#)
5. [Alternative pathways and second-chance education programmes.](#)
6. [Accreditation, assessment, certification, validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning.](#)



⁹ Within the European Union, second-chance education is usually understood as education and training opportunities for young people “excluded and who lack the skills and qualifications to enter further training or the job market” (European Commission, 2001). Recently, the term has been more specifically used to refer to education provision for “18-24 year olds who have disengaged with their education and training, and who do not hold the equivalent of upper-secondary qualifications” (Ecorys, 2013).

1. Mapping existing second-chance education provision and legislation

Second-chance education provision tends to be fragmented. This is due to the diversity of providers that can deliver programmes, be they formal learning providers (schools, vocational education centres) or non-formal learning providers (community-based learning centres), and to the range of programme aims and contents, programme delivery modalities and target age groups.

A good starting point for developing compensation measures for out-of-school children and dropout students is to undertake a comprehensive mapping and review of second-chance provision and legislation, covering:

Table 4 Mapping template to review second-chance provision and legislation

Mapping Dimension	Description and Key Issues
Target groups	Age-groups, education-attainment-level groups, other characteristics of the target groups (marginalised groups, etc.).
Programme design	Objectives (e.g. focus on re-engagement into regular schools, on employability skills for transition to work, on compulsory-education equivalent certification, etc.); length; sites; entry and exit points; eligibility criteria.
Teaching and learning approaches	Curricula content; mix of academic, vocational and creative content; degree of flexibility; pedagogy; assessment; learning environment; teachers and facilitators.
Pastoral care ¹⁰ and learner support	Learner-needs assessment, personal development, emotional support, linkages with other services.
Certification and pathways	Validation, recognition and certification issues; bridges to compulsory and non-compulsory education pathways; National Qualification Framework.
Programme quality and effectiveness	Users' level of satisfaction; perspectives of education professionals and employers; learning outcomes; employability skills and access to employment; self-esteem; cost-effectiveness.
Governance and funding structure	Responsibilities and accountability lines; budgeting; accreditation bodies; roles of line ministries/agencies; involvement of young people in governance; involvement of parents, employers.
Capacity development	Managers, education and support staff; volunteers and mentors.
Supervision and quality assurance	Standards; supervision and inspection; self-evaluation and development planning.
Legislation and policy frameworks	Harmonisation of legislation (covering formal and non-formal education; general and vocational education; education and training; adult education and lifelong learning; training and employment; social benefits and education and training for young adults); linkages between education, youth, employment, gender, inclusion and lifelong learning agendas.

Source: Ecorys (2013); Antonowicz (2015f)

2. Second-chance education specificities and success factors

Second-chance education programmes target young people who have been failed by the formal system. Successful programmes therefore do not replicate the approach of the latter and are characterised by their flexibility, relevance to the learners' needs and the provision of holistic support. Pointers for successful second-chance education programmes include:

- **Learner-centred programmes** that ensure a holistic response to the learners' needs in terms of learning and personal, emotional and social support (Ecorys, 2013).
- **Multi-professional teams supporting learners:** subject specialists including second-language teachers, literacy and numeracy specialists, career-guidance workers, psychologists and counsellors (Ecorys, 2013),

¹⁰ Refers to school support for the personal and social wellbeing of students – covering health and social issues as well as behaviour management and emotional support.

mentors and case managers (Price, 2013). The provision of holistic social and emotional support is prioritised.

- **Welcoming learning environments:** safe, caring and respectful, where adults are supportive of learners and value their achievements; promoting small-group work, low teacher-learner ratios and socialising opportunities between staff and learners (Ecorys, 2013), and providing meals and extra-curricular activities, including during holiday periods (Department of Education and Skills, 2011).
- **Flexible curricula** that include arts and sports (Practice 61), providing opportunities for work experience (Ecorys, 2013) such as internships and work placements, personal development and non-cognitive skills support (self-efficacy, self-esteem, planning, communication, team working, conflict negotiation), and basic life skills such as health and financial education (GHK Consulting Ltd, 2011); flexible delivery of the curriculum in terms of timetable and intensity (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010; Spielhofer et al., 2009).
- **Individualised teaching and learning approach**, based on innovative, hands-on and exploratory teaching practices (Department of Education and Skills, 2010), provision of individual learning plans (GHK Consulting Ltd, 2011), and varied opportunities for learning within and outside the classroom (Spielhofer et al., 2009).
- **Assessment approaches that are holistic** (knowledge and skills, including non-cognitive, social and emotional skills) and promote the use of formative assessment through varied methods (portfolio, self-assessment, peer assessment, etc.), and that support learners to overcome challenges associated with summative assessment. Assessment strategies help learners take responsibility for their learning and feed back into the review of individual plans (Department of Education and Skills, 2010).
- **Progression pathways that are flexible and varied** – from qualification awards to informal recognition of achievement (Spielhofer et al., 2009) to re-entry into regular education to further education opportunities to access to employment – and that recognise the importance of supporting learners throughout the process, including once they have transitioned to another step (education/training/employment).
- **Partnerships** between schools, community and learning centres, businesses, support services (health, social services, judiciary, police, etc.) and job centres.
- **Ongoing professional development for teachers, facilitators and support staff** (psychologists, case managers, mentors, etc.).
- **Strong involvement of learners** in all aspects of the programmes from curriculum to governance.

3. Catch-up and accelerated-learning programmes

Catch-up programmes and accelerated-learning programmes are designed to provide opportunities for children and young people to catch up on their education and learning. These programmes are strongly linked to formal and compulsory education and their objective is re-entry into formal education or entry into a more age-appropriate level of education. Catch-up programmes usually target children and young people who:

- Missed out on a large amount of learning during one academic year (*Practice 54*).
- Are over-aged compared to their peers due to repetition (*Practice 55*).
- Have never entered education or have had long breaks in their education (*Practice 56*).

Accelerated-learning programmes typically condense several years of the formal education curriculum and deliver it through a flexible learner-centred teaching and learning approach and with a focus on competence development and growth in self-esteem. The objective of accelerated-learning programmes can be young people's re-engagement in regular education or support to accessing employment opportunities (*Practice 57*).

Practice 54 Summer catch-up programmes in Kosovo*

Catch-up programmes are organised in Kosovo for children who have missed more than two months of education during the year. The programme aims to address the needs of returnees and children in and out of education, particularly from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The programme, through a special curriculum, prepares young people for the August exam session. If they pass, young people are promoted to the next grade without repeating the class.

Source: Antonowicz (2013b)

Practice 55 Accelerated Learning Programme in Brazil

The Programme operated from 1996 to 2001 in most Brazilian states. It aimed to provide lower-secondary learners who were over-aged due to the high repetition rate with a chance to catch up with their peers. Through supplementary classes, young people were supported to go through more than one grade in a given school year until they were restored to the grade corresponding to their age. Although the Programme resulted in a significant reduction of the proportion of learners with age-grade gaps, the system continued to produce repeaters in primary school. Based on this finding, the authorities decided to tackle the reasons behind grade repetition through the long-term improvement of education quality.

Source: Longden (2013)

Practice 56 Catch-up Education Programme in Turkey

The Programme targeted children between 10 and 14 years of age who had either never enrolled, enrolled but were frequently absent, or had dropped-out from basic education. The aim of the Programme was to re-introduce children into formal schooling. To be eligible, children had to be three or more years behind their peers (not for academic reasons). Selected children were placed in groups according to their age and cognitive abilities. The Programme provided up to four cycles of eight to 10 weeks, each cycle corresponding to a specific age or attainment level and delivering a condensed curriculum that would allow progression to Grade 4, 6 or 8 or to another cycle of the Catch-up Programme. The last year of basic education, Grade 8, could not be completed through the Programme.

Specific curricula and supporting materials were developed and teachers were trained. The Catch-up Programme was implemented in regular schools. School teams were responsible for enrolling students and for devising school reintegration strategies. The Programme had a strong family/community engagement component to ensure the re-integration of children in regular education. In 2008/2009 and 2009/2010, 15,450 children completed the Programme.

Source: Aydagül et.al. (2010)

Practice 57 Accelerated Learning Programme in Tajikistan

TUNICEF and the Ministry of Education have developed an Accelerated Learning Programme as one of the responses to the findings of the UNICEF-UIS Out-of-School Children Initiative report (UNICEF and UIS, 2013). The Accelerated Learning Programme targets both adolescents and young adults, enabling them to attend learning cycles combining several grades of the curriculum. The Programme is currently being piloted in partnership with the NGO Refugees, Children and Vulnerable Citizens, in Dushanbe and Vahdat. Four classes, with 65 learners in total, are participating, including 20 refugees from Afghanistan.

Source: Abduvahobov (2015)

4. Re-engagement programmes

Some students at risk or in the process of dropping out from school might benefit from re-engagement programmes. The objectives, scope and implementation modalities of such programmes may vary greatly but their aim is usually to provide flexible learning options to young people for a specific amount of time in order to support them re-engaging with regular education. Pointers for successful re-engagement programmes are:

- **Exposure to a range of non-formal and informal learning options**, including project-based learning, learning by doing, experiencing new learning areas, arts and crafts, vocational education, etc.
- **Students' wellbeing at the core of the programme**, with a strong pastoral care¹¹ component often involving case management, mentoring and personal development activities (see also [Area 7 Engaging students and supporting their wellbeing](#)).
- **Easy transitions back into regular education** (school placement kept for the child or support provided to find a new school placement).
- **Wide support to re-entry to regular education**, by engaging learners to keep contact with peers and teachers, and working with parents.

Practice 58 Sas transition centres in Belgium

The Sas programme is run in or outside schools, targeting young people between 13 and 17 years of age who have dropped out from school. The programme consists of offering students the possibility of taking a break in their studies for up to one year in order to explore a range of creative activities designed to strengthen their self-esteem, self-efficacy and resilience. After their participation in the programme, students re-enter regular school where they had left it.

Source: European Commission (2010)

Practice 59 Hands On Learning, Australia

This programme, run in schools, aims to re-engage students disconnected from school through alternative education opportunities and pastoral care. Selected students (often students with attention-seeking issues, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or who are very withdrawn) can take part one day a week in small-group creative and work-and craft-related activities, and benefit from mentoring and emotional support. They follow their regular class timetable for the rest of the week. Students can attend the programme for one term per academic year over four years. The programme reports increased attendance and retention for participants and improved self-esteem, communication skills and engagement with the school and community.

Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2010)

¹¹ Refers to school support for the personal and social wellbeing of students – covering health and social issues as well as behaviour management and emotional support.

Practice 60 Dobbanto Project, Hungary

The Dobbanto national programme pilot targets early school leavers between 15 and 24 years of age without qualifications due to learning or behavioural difficulties. Participants take part in a one-year course that prepares them to enter a regular vocational school. The course delivers a flexible curriculum combining core skills with creative and practical subjects. Participants learn in small groups and are offered a range of social and emotional support, and education and career guidance. The programme takes place in a dedicated space within a regular school. Teachers and support staff undertake continuous professional development and receive mentoring support.

Source: Ecorys (2013)

5. Alternative pathways and second-chance education programmes

These programmes often cater for slightly older teenagers who have dropped out in the last years of compulsory education or during post-compulsory education. Key features of such programmes include working towards a qualification or certification and a focus on employability skills and support to access employment. As with re-engagement programmes, alternative pathways and second-chance education programmes are more effective when they contain a strong mental wellbeing and personal development component.

Practice 61 Non-Formal Education Programme for Dropout Youth in Jordan

The Programme, launched in 2003, targeted young boys (13-18 years of age) and girls (13-21 years). Over 24 months (three cycles of eight months covering (1) Grades 1-4, (2) Grades 5-7, (3) Grades 8-10), participants could obtain an alternative Grade 10 certificate which enabled entry to state vocational programmes. The Programme had a strong youth empowerment element, focusing on self-confidence, peer learning and personal development through mentoring and other advisory services. The curriculum combined both academic and vocational education, providing opportunities for workplace training. Facilitators were trained to work with youth and in participatory-learning methodologies. The Programme was implemented either in schools or community centres.

The pilot was scaled up following a partnership between the Ministry of Education and Questscope. It was framed as an alternative education path for dropped-out youth, with a curriculum, and testing and certification procedures, organised by the Ministry. Young people who did not wish to re-enter formal education were offered business start-up loans.

Source: Youth Employment Inventory (n.d.); University of Oxford (2011)

Practice 62 Caribbean: Second Chance Programme

The Caribbean Examinations Council partnered with USAID to strengthen the Second Chance Programme. The Programme, implemented in nine countries, is open to adolescents and young adults aged 16-30 who have one or more of the following characteristics: are teenage parents, have limited or no academic certification, have gaps in literacy and numeracy knowledge, are unemployed or underemployed, need life and work skills, have behavioural challenges – such as drug use and abuse, a criminal record or are prone to violence – or are victims of abuse or violence. The Programme offers two flexible paths, one leading to the Certificate of Secondary Level Competence and one to the Caribbean Vocational Certificate. Second Chance Institutions have been selected in all participating Caribbean countries. Learners are allowed to work while following the Programme.

Source: Caribbean Examination Council (n.d.)

Practice 63 Youthreach, Ireland

Youthreach is a national programme implemented through more than 100 community-based centres in Ireland and targeting unemployed early school leavers between 16 and 20 years of age presenting a number of vulnerability factors. The main aim of Youthreach is to prepare young people for employment and adult life by supporting them through individual case management, counselling and social welfare support.

Source: European Commission Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving (2013); Ecorys (2013)

Practice 64 Alternative Learning Programme, Malta

“The Alternative Learning Programme aims to assist young people who are most at risk of becoming early school leavers in their transition from compulsory schooling to further education or employment. The Programme targets students in their final year of compulsory schooling whose examination marks in Maths, English and Maltese (core subjects) are very low and who eventually will not sign up for any Secondary Education Certificate exams. The Programme is vocational in nature, targeting students who prefer a hands-on approach and practical methods of learning to an academic perspective. It provides participants with a work-based approach, offering them a practical work experience as well as equipping them with the skills needed in the labour market. The Programme gives students the possibility of obtaining a Malta Qualifications Framework Level 1 qualification and encourages them to engage in further education after they finish their final year of compulsory schooling.”

Source: Oomen and Plant (2014)

6. Accreditation, assessment, certification, validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning

Second-chance education spans across formal, non-formal and informal education and learning. A key policy area for second-chance programmes is, therefore, the official accreditation of second-chance and catch-up programmes, and the assessment (evaluation of learning outcomes), certification (certificate issuance process), validation (confirmation by a competent body that learning is compliant with a validation standard) and recognition (formal recognition of certificates and learning) of non-formal learning (CEDEFOP, 2008).

Recognition of prior learning gained in non-formal and informal learning settings can improve the confidence of young people and help them continue in or re-enter formal education (Council of the European Union, 2011). Validation and recognition of prior learning can also contribute to the evidence base necessary to support an application to re-enter education and training or enter employment (CEDEFOP, 2010).

The European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (CEDEFOP, 2009) provide good policy pointers for the establishment of a validation process:

- **Embedding the validation framework within the national qualifications system/framework** and the national standards for learning outcomes.
- **Ensuring that validation standards cover administration processes**, validation methods, dissemination of information on validation scheme, applicant guidance and support, selection and professional development of assessors, and quality assurance mechanisms.
- **Developing a business model for validation and recognition** (e.g. is the process free-of-charge for all applicants, what are the funding mechanisms?).

Practice 65 Recognition, validation and certification of competences in Portugal

A recognition, validation and certification of competences system was established in 2000 in Portugal, targeting early school leavers aged over 18 and other adults lacking educational or professional qualifications.

The system was delivered throughout more than 400 new opportunity centres offering a scheme for both educational and professional recognition of competences.

Through the educational route, applicants could access basic or lower-secondary-level qualifications. Applicants were supported by new opportunity centres' staff throughout the process, which included three stages: recognition, validation and certification of competences. Applicants carried out a self-assessment and a reflection on their prior learning and competences, guided by staff members who provided professional feedback on the applicants' journey at various points before the final assessment by the certification jury. Another route enabled applicants to access professional qualifications.

An evaluation of the scheme conducted in 2004 showed positive outcomes in terms of the number of people who had gained recognised certificates through the process, number of people who had returned to education and training or employment, and increased self-esteem.

Source: CEDEFOP (2010)



AREA 6 | ENGAGING PARENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Family engagement is a critical part of education participation improvement and dropout prevention. First, parental involvement is a key factor for children's development and educational success. Research evidence from PISA, the USA and the United Kingdom demonstrates the long-lasting benefits of parental involvement for both cognitive and non-cognitive skills and motivation (Borgonovi and Montt, 2012). There is also increasing evidence of the positive effect of fathers' involvement in their children's learning. Positive impacts associated with fathers' involvement include "better school attendance and behaviour, less criminality, better school results, better mental health and higher quality of later relationships" (Department for Education and Skills, 2004a). Second, parents' partnerships with the school and other local support services are a pre-requisite for the enrolment of out-of-school children and for effective dropout prevention strategies.

In Europe and Central Asia, as in other regions, parents' background, parenting styles and patterns of engagement with services vary greatly between young parents, fathers and mothers, migrants, parents living in high poverty, families with substance abuse addictions or parents with mental health problems (Barrett, 2008). Parents might have bad memories of school, feel unqualified to engage with education "experts" or feel uncomfortable in a school environment, struggle to attend school meetings when juggling several income-generating activities or caring responsibilities, or be intimidated by a system, a jargon, and sometimes a language that they do not understand well (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011; Creative Education, 2014; Conwy Children and Young People's Partnership, 2011; Antonowicz, 2015e). Teachers often lack the skills to engage with parents or community members, a role which is rarely included in their job description or as part of their training and professional development. Teachers might also find parental involvement and relationship building time-consuming and schools might have fragmented practices towards parental engagement (Goodall et al., 2011). Different policies and strategies are necessary to increase parental and community involvement in education, to improve education participation and to prevent dropout: there is no one-size-fits-all method of engagement, particularly with disadvantaged or "hard-to-reach" parents or communities.

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

1. [Building effective relationships with parents.](#)
2. [School engagement with parents of children out of school or at risk of dropping out.](#)
3. [Community involvement in dropout prevention and response.](#)

1. Building effective relationships with parents

Building effective relationships with parents should start early (see [Parental involvement in pre-primary education](#) in Area 1) and setting up a relationship on the right foot from the start is particularly important when the child is promoted to a new level of education (see [Supporting parents throughout education transitions](#) in Area 4). More schools are documenting their approach to engaging with parents, particularly with parents of disengaged students. Parental engagement has increasingly been included in inspection and internal/external evaluation frameworks, providing opportunities for education professionals and parents to reflect on current practices and continue to sustain constructive relationships.

Joyce Epstein (Epstein et al., 2009) synthesises in six types the different dimensions of parental involvement, presented below. Epstein's framework is useful to consider when developing policy and strategy options.

Type 1 Parenting: Assist families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to support children as students. Also, assist schools to better understand families. (Practice 66)

- Suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level.
- Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g. parent support groups [Oftsed, 2008]).
- Family support programmes to assist families with health, nutrition and other services.
- Home visits at transition points to pre-primary, elementary, middle and high school.
- Neighbourhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families (through mediators, community leaders, NGOs...).

Type 2 Communicating: Conduct effective communications from school-to-home and from home-to-school about school programmes and student progress. (Practice 67)

- Conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed.
- Language translators to assist families as needed.
- Weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments.
- Parent/student pickup of report card, with conferences on improving grades.
- Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters and other communications.
- Clear information on choosing schools or courses, programmes and activities within schools.
- Clear information on all school policies, programmes, reforms and transitions.

Type 3 Volunteering: Organise volunteers and audiences to support the school and students. Provide volunteer opportunities in various locations and at various times. (Practice 70)

- School and classroom volunteer programme to help teachers, administrators, students and other parents.
- Parent room or family centre for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families.
- Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times and locations of volunteers.
- Recruiting parents for the celebration of cultural days/holidays at school.

Type 4 Learning at home: Involve families with their children on homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.

- Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.
- Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
- Information on how to assist students to improve skills on various class and school assessments.
- Regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class.
- Calendars with activities for parents and students at home.
- Family maths, science and reading activities at school.
- Summer learning packets or activities.
- Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.

Type 5 Decision-making: Include families as participants in school decisions, and develop parent leaders and representatives. (*Practice 71*)

- Active PTA or other parent organisations, councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation.
- District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement.
- Information on school or local elections for school representatives.
- Networks to link all families with parent representatives.

Type 6 Collaborating with the community: Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students and the school, and provide services to the community. (*Practices 78-82*)

- Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational and social support, and other programmes or services.
- Service to the community by students, families and schools (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama and other activities for seniors or others).
- Participation of alumni in school programmes for students.

Source: Adapted from Epstein et al. (2009)

Practice 66 The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme, EnglandPAR 

The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme was first implemented to support children's learning in pre-primary. The programme helps parents to support the development of their children's communication skills through classroom-based and home-based activities. The programme also organises parent workshops to discuss parenting issues. The programme targets families with children presenting challenging behaviour but is open to all.

Source: Ofsted (2013)

Practice 67 Home School Community Liaison, IrelandPAR 

Home School Community Liaison coordinators work with school staff on strategies to enhance collaboration with parents and provide school-based training to directors and teachers on parental engagement. They also work with parents trying to identify their needs and overcome challenges. They conduct home visits and organise community-based activities to encourage contact between parents, teachers and voluntary organisations, and discussion of community issues which hamper learning in school. They organise leisure activities with parents as well as curricular-related activities to support family learning and personal development and parenting courses. The scheme focuses on parent empowerment and enables them to take on responsibilities for running the scheme's activities, such as conducting home visits and awareness-raising activities for other parents. The scheme also makes provision for the establishment of parents' rooms in schools in order to create a welcoming environment for parents to talk about issues that affect them and to engage in parenting classes, literacy and numeracy activities or school improvement activities.

Source: Department of Education and Science (2006)

Practice 68 Coffee mornings, United Kingdom, Ireland

Many schools in the United Kingdom and Ireland organise coffee mornings for parents, carers and grandparents of children. Coffee mornings can be just drop-in sessions to talk about general things or sessions to consult parents on specific topics.

Practice 69 Multi-level interventions for parental involvement, Romania

Under the framework of the School Attendance Initiative and the Quality Inclusive Education Model, UNICEF Romania has contributed to developing parental involvement through interventions at family, school and policy levels. At family level, interventions include parenting education programmes aiming to enhance parent's understanding of children's various needs according to their age, to improve communication between parents and children and to increase parental awareness of the importance of education and regular attendance. These activities are conducted by parenting educators who are accredited by an NGO. At school level, training sessions equip directors and teachers with ideas and tools for enhancing parental involvement in school and in children's education and learning. At national level, UNICEF is currently supporting the development of a National Strategy for Parenting Education and the creation of a county network of parenting education monitors.

Source: UNICEF Romania (2016)

Practice 70 Engaging fathers, criteria for success, United Kingdom


The English Department of Education and Skills (2004) identified the following criteria of successful fathers' engagement:

- Find out from fathers what sort of programme could interest them; don't make assumptions.
- Be creative about recruiting fathers in interventions and meetings; appeal to their children to recruit them.
- Make the school a welcoming place for them – it is often seen as “women's space”.
- Start with one-off events and develop activities which are dynamic with not too much discussion.
- Engage with individual fathers about a specific child's learning and behaviour.
- Organise dads' breakfasts or dads' activities after work.
- Make use of fathers' skills in the school and in the class.
- Use fathers in a mentoring capacity.
- Be perseverant and committed over several years; things do not happen overnight.
- Show them that their involvement will make a big difference in their children's learning and attitude even at a much later stage.
- Engage fathers who are not living with their children by contacting them regularly and updating them on the progress of their children; do not contact them only for bad news.

Source: Department for Education and Skills (2004a)

Practice 71 Involving Roma parents in school decision-making, Spain

PAR-ETH



La Paz Primary School in Albacete serves a community at 90 per cent Roma and was characterized by very high dropout and absenteeism rates and low education achievement. The EU-funded research programme INCLUDE-ED implemented a Dialogic Inclusion Contract aiming at “recreating through egalitarian dialogue” successful education actions identified through previous research. All school stakeholders (parents, teachers, students) were engaged in activities to express their “dreams” for the school. A mixed committee was created with parents, teachers and students to develop “a shared education project for the school”. Issues identified in the “dreams” were taken to the school board. By involving parents in the decision-making process of the school, prejudices around the lack of interest of Roma parents for the education of their children were proven wrong and the school increased attendance, graduation, transition and achievement rates.

Source: Flecha and Soler (2013)

Policies and strategies for parental involvement should be developed based on principles of good communication, such as:

- **Two-way communication strategies** that are based on honesty and respect (Allen, 2009).
- **Cultural sensitivity** (Allen, 2009).
- **Empathy** (Allen, 2009).
- **Consistency** in communication approach.
- **Contacting parents when things are going well** so that communication with the school is not only associated with negative behaviour/bad performance of their children (Ofsted, 2008).

Specific strategies and interventions should also support the engagement of very disadvantaged or “hard to reach” parents. Current research on parental engagement in support services highlight the importance of:

- **Differentiated strategy to parental involvement** recognising the diversity of needs and approaches (Downes, 2014).
- **Holistic parental involvement** strategy that addresses complex needs by taking into account family support interventions that go beyond educational involvement (Downes, 2014); this might be achieved through enhanced cross-sector collaboration at local level, using the school as the strategic point for information dissemination and outreach work.
- **Building on families’ strengths** rather than problems (Allen, 2009; Barrett, 2008).
- **Empowering approaches** (Barrett, 2008).

The specific **needs of migrant parents** should be taken into account and strategies to support them to understand the education system developed, such as:

- Organisation of meetings with translators to present the education system, organisation of the school and teaching and learning.
- Dissemination of leaflets/DVDs in relevant languages presenting the education system and providing information on how to engage with the school and in the learning of their children (OECD, 2010).
- Offering language classes.
- Establishing school liaison coordinators to facilitate contact between schools and migrant families.
- Provision of information on benefits, allowances and services available.

Practice 72 Creating a culture of schooling at home, Finland

PAR-MIG



The project organises thematic discussion groups for parents with an immigration background. Group discussions are run by school staff and NGO staff in both Finnish and parents' mother tongue. The focus is on home-school communication and parenthood. Information disseminated during sessions includes how schools and the education system work, child development, language acquisition and homework support.

Source: Väestöliitto (n.d.)

2. School engagement with parents of children out of school or at risk of dropping out

Policies and strategies are necessary to support schools and education professionals to engage meaningfully and constructively with families with diverse backgrounds and needs and sometimes facing complex problems. Policy areas to consider include:

- **Clarification of education professionals and schools' roles and responsibilities** regarding parental involvement (Downes, 2014).
- **Inclusion of parental involvement** in teachers', school managers' and support staff's **job descriptions** (Downes, 2014) and in professional standards.
- **Inclusion of parental engagement in** both pre-service and in-service training (Goodall et al., 2011, OECD, 2012b) (*Practices 72, 73, 74*).
- **Inclusion of parental involvement as a core component of school planning** and school self-evaluation (OECD, 2010; Goodall et al., 2011; OECD, 2012b) (*Practice 75*).
- **Inclusion of parental involvement in inspection and external evaluation frameworks**, including involvement of marginalised or hard-to-reach parents (Downes, 2015) (*Practice 76*).
- **Multi-agency arrangements for information sharing** and referral to comprehensive services (Goodall et al., 2011).

Practice 73 Equal Chance Project, Serbia

PAR-ETH



The Equal Chance Project included workshops for school staff run by Roma NGOs on Roma culture, tradition, religion and language. These workshops helped to facilitate the communication and collaboration between the school and Roma communities and parents. Teachers also attended a training course on Education for Social Justice to better apprehend cultural differences in the classroom and to better respond to Roma children's individual needs. Other trainings were organised with the school management and selected teachers to work on school environment improvement and micro-projects

Source: UNICEF (2010)

Practice 74 Building the capacity of teachers to engage with parents of students at risk of dropping out, Serbia



UNICEF Serbia in partnership with the European Policy Centre is piloting dropout prevention and response interventions in 10 schools, including improved parental involvement. Schools were asked to map out their parental involvement practices:

- **Who** (directors, psychologists, teachers, other support staff, or parent-initiated communication)?
- **Is engaging with whom** (mothers, fathers, parents of children from certain grades, parents of high achievers, parents of low achievers, parents of disengaged students, hard-to-reach parents; or school staff)?
- **Why** (talk about an attendance or behaviour problem, provide information, give positive feedback on achievement or behaviour, etc.)?
- **Where** (director's office, classroom, cafeteria, staff room, parents' room, the playground, outside the school...)?
- **How** (one-to-one meetings, group meetings, phone calls, letters, email, newsletters, home visits, community meetings, formal communication, informal communication, regular communication, one-off communication...)?

Schools identified and reflected on common patterns of parental involvement, discussed the meaning of parental involvement in their schools and what the potential gains for students, parents, teachers and the school could be (Epstein's approach, see above), brainstormed new approaches to parental involvement and developed approaches based on locally relevant scenarios of students at risk of dropping out. Schools were encouraged to develop their own school approach to parental involvement, to learn lessons on what works and what doesn't and to develop partnerships with communities, local authorities and NGOs to improve parental engagement in education and reduce dropout risks for children.

Source: Antonowicz (2015e)

Practice 75 Teacher Training Module based on voices of excluded parents, France



A partnership between ATD Quart Monde and the Brittany education authorities has resulted in the development of a family engagement training programme for teachers in primary and secondary schools. The programme is based on videos where parents from very disadvantaged backgrounds share their perceptions about school and education and talk about the challenges they are facing when engaging with school staff as well as their expectations for constructive family-school relationships. Parents who have been excluded from education or who have been living in very high poverty also co-facilitate reflection workshops for parents and teachers to lay the foundations for mutually respectful relationships.

Source: CRDP Rennes (n.d.)

Practice 76 Challenging staff perceptions, United Kingdom

PAR-CAP-ETH



“One school in the Gypsy¹², Roma and Traveller Achievement programme discovered that many of the staff had anxieties about visiting the nearby Gypsy site. The headteacher decided to address these feelings and concerns through an open and honest discussion with all the staff. These training sessions allowed staff to separate myth from reality and also enabled members of the local community to come into school, to meet staff and discuss with them facts about their way of life. The school now has a dedicated outreach worker who visits the families on-site regularly. [...] All the children in the nursery class visit the site, accompanied by staff and parents. The headteacher now feels that his staff have a better understanding of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community in their area thanks to their honest expression of concern.”

Source: Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009)

Practice 77 Parental engagement in school inspection framework, Ofsted, England

PAR



Since September 2009 Ofsted has been considering how effectively schools engage with parents. The focus has been on building positive relationships with parents, the quality of communications, reporting to parents on progress, and the mechanisms for helping parents to support their children’s learning.

The Inspectorate for England, Ofsted, started assessing the effectiveness of school engagement with parents in 2009. In the latest inspection framework (2014) schools are assessed on their “strategies for engaging with parents and carers, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult”. Schools must demonstrate that they promote the confidence and engagement of parents in their children’s learning and behaviour. Other issues include how schools include parental views in self-evaluation and how successful schools are to engage “hard-to-reach” parents.

Source: Ofsted (2015a); Dooley (2012)

3. Community involvement in dropout prevention and response

Communities also have a role to play in dropout prevention and response (see Section 3.1 [point 7](#) and [point 8](#)). Policy pointers for community involvement include:

- **Developing innovative partnerships** with community-based associations, businesses and NGOs (*Practice 78*).
- Recruiting, training and compensating **mediators and school-home liaison officers** (*Practice 67*).
- **Setting up mentoring schemes**, with youth associations, university students and businesses (*Practice 79*).
- **Involving communities in art, culture, leisure and sports activities** to provide young people with opportunities to explore new things and broaden their horizons (*Practice 80*).
- **Establishing homework clubs** to provide a safe and supportive study environment to students and help those lagging behind in their learning (*Practice 81*).
- **Tapping community human resources** for career guidance and developing entrepreneurship skills (*Practice 82*).

¹² The terminology used here is the one used by the programme.

Practice 78 Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents and Education, Netherlands**PAR-MIG-ETH** 

The National Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents and Education was established in 2006 with the financial support of the Ministry of Education and National Parents Associations. Local platforms have been set up in 30 towns across the country to help migrant parents understand and navigate the Dutch education system, contribute to teacher-training programmes on cultural understanding, conduct home visits and support school-based initiatives such as homework clubs or non-discrimination interventions. They have contributed to increased accountability of schools over results and participation of minority students. The National Platform provides research evidence to contribute to policy development.

Source: Henwejer (2009) Smit et al. (2009)

Practice 79 Positive migrant role models, Denmark**MIG** 

The We Need All Youngsters Campaign, launched in 2002 by the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, fosters exchanges between migrant children and migrant role models on the education system in Denmark. Information is shared, particularly on Vocational Education & Training, and activities are organised with voluntary organisations such as homework cafés and online homework cafés. An evaluation showed that 50 per cent of participating students felt inspired by role models and intended to complete their education.

Source: Nusche et al. (2010)

Practice 80 Partnerships for after-school programme, Romania**ETH-CWD-CRO** 

The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports in 2009 provided funding and support enabling schools to 'extend the classroom' after classes. Students are offered the possibility to stay at school for eight hours in total. Non-class time is allocated to learning, leisure, sports and supervision activities. Partnerships with parent associations and other NGOs or civil-society organisations are sought. Remedial-learning activities for children with learning disabilities and a fast-learning path for gifted children are to be provided under the programme.

The Roma Education Fund is supporting a School after School Programme in locations with a high concentration of Roma children. Their approach includes: (i) homework supervision and guidance, (ii) remediation for children with difficulties in learning, (iii) leisure and creative activities, and (iv) life skills and personal development activities (Roma Education Fund Romania, 2011).

Source: Government of Romania (2009); Government of Romania (2012); Roma Education Fund Romania (2011)

Practice 81 Homework Clubs, Balkan Sunflowers, Kosovo***ETH** 

Balkan Sunflowers works in selected municipalities, providing support to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, young people and women through learning centres that offer school preparedness activities, language classes and a Homework Club. The Homework Club provides a space and a conducive learning environment for children to study. Clubs are run by volunteers, who establish peer-to-peer mechanisms for children to help each other. Tutors are mostly secondary-school students and young people who gain skills and competences through their volunteering experience.

Source: Antonowicz (2012a)

Practice 82 EPIS – Entrepreneurs for social inclusion, Portugal

CRO



EPIS is an NGO comprising 250 private-sector members. EPIS's programme Mediators for School Success has been implemented in more than 100 schools across Portugal and targets more than 2,500 12- to 15-year-olds at medium and high risk of early school leaving. Interventions are intensive and repeated over a three-year period to maximise results. The programme focuses on non-cognitive skills development to improve students' self-esteem and empower them on their journey to completing their education. Mediators work on a full-time basis and are supported by a network of volunteers from member organisations. The involvement of full-time staff (more than 100) in the programme has been identified as a key success factor, along with the cooperation of families. The programme has been achieving significant results, particularly with those students who are at medium risk of dropping out due to an overall lack of motivation.

Source: ICF-GHK (2013)



AREA 7 | ENGAGING STUDENTS AND SUPPORTING THEIR WELLBEING

Student engagement in school is a critical factor in school retention and completion: if students actively participate in school and can identify with the school, they are less likely to drop out (Finn, 1993). Student engagement is multidimensional. For Appleton et al. (2008), the common components of student engagement relate to:

- Behaviour (mostly conduct and participation).
- Emotion (interest, identification, belonging, attitude towards learning).
- Cognition (self-regulation, learning goals).

For Finn (1993), participation (expressed as response to requirements, class-related initiatives, extracurricular activities and decision-making) and identification with school (belonging and valuing) are critical to education outcomes (Finn, 1993). Studies demonstrate a strong causal link between identification, belonging, participation and achievement, even when accounting for socio-economic status (Appleton et al., 2008).

In Europe and Central Asia, student engagement is a core component of dropout prevention, particularly for students at risk of marginalisation in schools such as ethnic-minority students and students with special educational needs. A UNICEF study on demand for education innovation in Europe and Central Asia revealed: (i) the high demand from young people for more school psychologists and social workers to address the range of social, emotional and behavioural issues they are facing, (ii) their eagerness to participate in innovative projects and extra-curricular activities, and (iii) their wish to engage much more in education decision-making processes (UNICEF, 2011b). Schools in the region, however, seldom take students' views and complex needs into consideration when planning education activities and the organisation of the school. Demonstrating that the school cares for students (Ofsted, 2008), making students feel encouraged by teachers and peers (Goodenow, 1993) and making them feel an important part of school and class life (Goodenow, 1993) are core pillars of student engagement.

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

1. [Student emotional wellbeing support.](#)
2. [Constructive relationships between education staff and students.](#)
3. [Student sense of belonging to the school.](#)

1. Student emotional wellbeing support

Some research reveals that students with caring teachers have less chance of dropping out (Rumberger, 1995). Schools are increasingly addressing the issue of student emotional wellbeing, making connections between mental health, attitudes to risk, and learning and success in school. Policy pointers and lessons from good practice in supporting the emotional wellbeing of students include:

- **Holistic approaches** covering the learning environment, teaching and learning, school management, relationships and communication within the school, and between the school and parents and communities (Weare and Gray, 2003) (*Practice 83*).

- **Life skills and personal development** included in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities (see [Equipping students with “non-cognitive” skills](#) in Area 10).
- **School pastoral care system**¹³ based on students’ needs, providing comprehensive support of student emotional wellbeing, from learning to physical and mental health (*Practice 84*).
- **Comprehensive anti-bullying policies** and support in schools (*Practice 85*).
- **Involvement of all teachers** to some degree in emotional wellbeing support.
- **Professional development of teachers** regarding students’ emotional support (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007).
- **Establishing psychological services** in schools (for drop-in sessions and through referrals).
- **Referral process in place** to external psychological or health services.
- **School-based or district-based multi-professional teams** to address students’ needs holistically (*Practice 86*).

Practice 83 Psycho-social support in a Syrian refugee school, Turkey

CRO-MIG



A temporary education centre for 2,000 Syrian refugee children has been set up in Reyhanli, Hatay Province. Students from Grades 1 to 12 learn in five shifts over six days a week. They follow a UNICEF-adapted Syrian curriculum in Arabic approved by the Ministry of Education of Turkey. The school has two Syrian refugee psychologists who work with the most-affected students and provide them with psycho-social support. Partnerships with various NGOs have resulted in students being provided with free health checks and dental treatments. The Al Salam school is painted in bright colours and has been decorated by students. On the day off and after school, the school organises with the support of NGOs and volunteers an array of activities for children: games, sports, drama, music, etc. The school and volunteers provide a lot of opportunities for children to express themselves, through videos, articles and plays. The school also keeps animals in the backyard that children can handle, learn from and play with.

Source: Bell (2015)

Practice 84 Three-tier intervention model to pastoral care, Australia

In Australia, students receive personal and social wellbeing support addressing health and social issues as well as behaviour management and emotional support. Donna Cross shares a three-tier model of intervention covering: (i) general support – prevention activities (substance abuse, depression, suicide) and curricula on personal, cultural and spiritual development, (ii) targeted support with guidance and counselling, peer support and mentoring, and (iii) individual support through case management and comprehensive psychosocial support.

Source: Cross (2012)

¹³ Refers to school support for the personal and social wellbeing of students – covering health and social issues as well as behaviour management and emotional support.

Practice 85 Prevention of peer violence, Croatia

CRO



The For a Safe and Enabling Environment in School programme was implemented in Croatia between 2003 and 2011. A network of school mentors was developed to help schools embrace a whole-school approach to violence prevention and response, with the improvement of the school atmosphere and student participation at the heart of school activities. Schools followed a seven-step approach to reduce peer violence: (i) awareness-raising about the problem, (ii) definition of the elements of a protective network, (iii) establishment and implementation of a protective network, (iv) collaboration with community-based stakeholders, (v) encouraging students to seek help, (vi) establishment of school response protocols, and (vii) schools becoming better places. A mid-term evaluation showed a reduction of peer violence in participating schools. A programme handbook with training materials for schools and mentors is available at: http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/SVAC_handbook_web_100dpi.pdf

Source: UNICEF (2015e)

Practice 86 Multi-professional student support teams, Finland

CRO



Multi-professional teams are part of a three-tier support model for growth, learning and school attendance. Intensified and special support is delivered by special-needs education teachers and multi-professional teams for those students who are facing more complex family, psychological and social challenges. Multi-professional teams consist of the headteacher, teachers, special-needs teacher, social worker, nurse, psychologist and other relevant professionals from the housing or justice sector.

Source: Field et al. (2007); Finnish National Board of Education (n.d.)

Many schools in Europe and Central Asia have psychologists and/or social-pedagogues working with children and families. Sometimes their roles and responsibilities are unclear and their capacity low, particularly when they are not trained psychologists but subject teachers appointed to take on an extra role. Policy pointers in such cases would include:

- **Review and revision of roles** and responsibilities and job descriptions (*Practice 87*).
- Opportunities for continuous professional development.
- **Assessment of the relevance of university programmes** for school psychologists (both pre-service and in-service programmes).
- **Development of pre-service training programmes** when non-existent.
- Creation or strengthening of **school psychologist networks** and professional organisations at national and local levels.

Where such support services are not available in schools, one policy option is to make them accessible through a combination of strategies such as:

- **School clusters** sharing the services of one professional.
- **Agreements between schools and local health centres** for referral of students.
- Organisation of school-based **training in emotional wellbeing** and child and youth psychology by local and regional health staff.
- **Establishment of mobile district teams** to provide support to students and staff (*Practices 88 and 89*).

- **Development of a funding formula** at national or local level for the allocation of school psychologists.
- **Review of existing practice** to support student emotional wellbeing to feed into the development of a legislative and policy framework at national level.

Practice 87 Professional development for social-pedagogues, Kyrgyzstan

CAP 

All schools in Kyrgyzstan have a nominated social-pedagogue on a part-time or full-time basis depending on the number of students. These professionals are regular subject teachers who undertook in-service training before taking on their new role as social-pedagogues. To support their professional development, USAID developed a handbook comprising a job description, guidance on activity implementation and reporting, and a few tools to support home visits and effective communication with students.

Source: USAID (2012)

Practice 88 Psycho-pedagogical mobile teams, Moldova

CRO-CWD



Psycho-pedagogical mobile teams in Moldova operate at district level and comprise social-pedagogues, psychologists, psycho-pedagogues, speech therapists and physiotherapists. Their role is to conduct child development assessments, provide psycho-pedagogical assistance to children, assist teachers and parents, and make recommendations to public authorities on inclusion matters in regular schools. Mobile teams have been set up to overcome the scarcity of services at local level. Children are referred by local authorities, schools, social workers or police, and health and justice professionals. Parents can also contact mobile teams directly. Children who have benefited from the service so far have been those with special education needs, those in conflict with the law, child victims of violence or abuse, and children at risk of suicide.

Source: Lefter (2015)

Practice 89 Network for inclusive education, Serbia

CWD-CAP



Serbia established a Network for Support to Inclusive Education in 2010 under the framework of a World Bank-funded project to support professionals in the implementation of the 2009 inclusive education reform. The Network facilitates peer learning between schools, and shares and promotes the learning from model schools. It contributes to the capacity development of staff in regular schools through continuous professional development and coaching. The Network has a core committee comprising 16 pedagogical advisors directly under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and a network of 140 practitioners (teachers, school psychologists and social-pedagogues, and NGO technical experts) and 14 model schools. The network of practitioners operates informally and mostly on a voluntary basis. In 2015, the Network supported 142 schools (students, children with disabilities, school staff and parents

Source: UNICEF Serbia (2015)

2. Constructive relationships between education staff and students

Conflict between teachers and students can play a role in the dropout process. Conversely, positive relationships between teachers/education staff and students positively influence student adjustment and play an important role, particularly during adolescence (Reddy et al., 2003). Adult support can increase students' connectedness to the school through learning support, mentoring and other ways, including "open and regular positive communication between teachers and students" (Ofsted, 2008). Work on resilience has shown that dropout prevention strategies which respect the individuality of each student and offer opportunities for supportive and caring adult-student relationships are more successful (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2009).

The literature highlights a number of elements which contribute to positive student-adult relationships in school environments and that are to be taken into consideration in policy and programme development (Hamre and Pianta, 2008):

- **Creation of safe and neutral environments/situations** where students can express themselves.
- **Respect and understanding of students' individuality**, backgrounds and needs.
- **Serious consideration given to students' views**, concerns and problems.
- **Open communication channels** and regular feedback loops between students and adults.
- **On-going support opportunities** offered to students on both emotional and academic matters.
- **Instilling a school ethos with mutual respect** at the core of the relationships between adults and young people.
- **Socialisation opportunities** between teachers and students and creation of informal communication opportunities (e.g. shared meals, extracurricular activities, etc.).
- **School discipline policies based on conflict resolution** and mediation strategies (Hamre and Pianta, 2008).

Interventions that have contributed to improved teacher-student relationships include:

- **Strengthening teachers' competencies** and capacity to engage meaningfully and constructively with students through teacher education, teacher training and professional development.
- **Mentoring schemes**, which have proven an effective strategy to prevent student disengagement from education while strengthening the teacher-student relationship (*Practice 90*).

Practice 90 GAIN project, France

In France (GAIN project), mentors meet students every week. After the student has made a self-assessment of his/her situation, the mentor and the mentee work together to understand the reasons behind absenteeism, poor performance and behavioural issues. They develop an action plan together and monitor progress. The mentor also helps the student to identify external support activities such as joining a catch-up class or homework group, finding a work placement, joining extra-curricular activities, or being referred to health and social services, collective therapy groups or young-people support groups, etc.

Source: *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale* (2012)

3. Student sense of belonging to the school

A range of interventions can contribute to improving students' sense of identification and belonging to the school. These include:

- Student participation in school governance (through the school self-evaluation and school planning process, through students' councils and other meaningful engagement in needs analysis, assessment of quality teaching and learning and decision-making for school improvement).
- School-based team building and bonding activities (*Practice 91*).
- Sports activities and events.
- Extracurricular activities and clubs that support peer-group development and positive school climate (*Practice 92*).
- School projects, such as entrepreneurship projects or creative projects that engage young people in a meaningful way and that encourage recognition for what they produce or achieve (*Practices 93, 94 and 95*).
- Projects linking the school to the local community, the workplace or the wider world.
- Peer-tutoring and peer-mentoring interventions (*Practices 96 and 97*).
- School bullying prevention and response interventions (*Practice 85*).

Practice 91 Open Schools, Italy

In Naples the initiative *Scuole Aperte* aims to organise extra-curricular activities outside school hours but in school for students, whether enrolled or not enrolled at the school. Activities are organised in partnership with local organisations and can encourage students at risk of dropping out to re-engage in their education, and out-of-school students to re-enter education. This project was one of the many funded through the Open Schools flagship programme co-funded by the European Commission. Most of the projects associated schools and local/community organisations. Anecdotal evidence suggests that by participating in activities, young people who were not enrolled in school re-engaged in learning.

Source: European Commission (2010)

Practice 92 Engaging students with barriers to learning and development through creative activities, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

CWD



As part of a UNICEF/Ministry of Education-funded programme in inclusive education in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, schools are encouraged to document and share their practices with other schools. Dane Krapcev primary school's inclusive-education team shared a case study on how it has been engaging with an 11-year-old with hearing and speech impairments. The team explains how it has built on the child's ability and interest in drawing and artwork to support her socialisation in the school. As part of her Individual Education Plan, she receives additional classes for gifted students in creative arts. Her artwork has been exhibited around the school and used to develop teaching and learning aids for the classroom.

Source: UNICEF (2014b)

Practice 93 School Café, Australia

A School Café was established in a high school to give students a wider choice of food and drink, in a bid to reduce the number of students leaving the school for lunch in a nearby mall and often not returning for afternoon classes. The Café was set up as a school alternative-learning project, involving students in its design and management (accessing supplies from local businesses, offering students catering and event-management services, etc.). Students who were part of the project became more involved in the life of the school and more engaged in their learning.

Source: Stehlik (2006)

Practice 94 Entrepreneurship projects, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Under the framework of the joint UN Youth Employability and Retention Programme (YERP), UNICEF supported entrepreneurship learning activities in primary and secondary schools. Lower-secondary-school clubs received small seed grants (150-200 KM) to develop a product or service. Student clubs were facilitated by one teacher. They developed business plans and were encouraged to fund-raise in their local communities. All schools attended a national fair in Sarajevo to present their products/services/innovations, which received good media coverage and very positive feedback.

In upper-secondary schools, UNICEF and the NGO OIA supported the Active Youth Project, providing an opportunity for young people to implement small projects in their schools or communities. Following a needs-assessment, young people submitted a project proposal through an open call to schools. Selected schools received mentoring support and small seed grants (maximum 1,500 KM) that could only be used for fund-raising, promotion and partnership-building activities. An evaluation report showed positive changes in skills and attitudes of young people. Teachers also explained how they felt students were empowered by the project and how staff changed their perception of young people and their capacities to participate, create and achieve.

Source: Antonowicz (2013c)

Practice 95 Student-led advocacy for out-of-school children, Kosovo*

In Selman Riza Primary School, teachers and students produced a short video to raise parental and community awareness about out-of-school children and dropout. Children discussed barriers to access to school and how these could be overcome to inform the scenario. The film describes the situation of a young boy of Ashkali origin not attending school because he is selling cigarettes in the street to support his single mother. The film captures the discussions between the mother and her son on the pros and cons of attending school. The video has been used as an awareness-raising tool in the school and in community meetings.

Source: Antonowicz (2012a)

Practice 96 Peer-tutoring and school disengagement: experience from the USA and United Kingdom

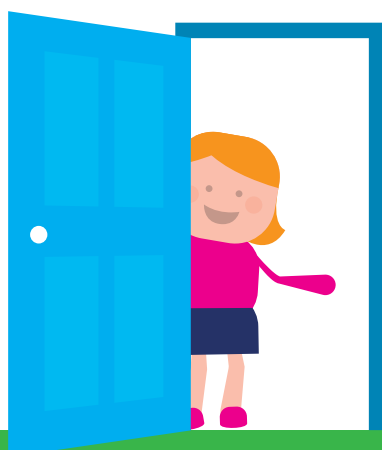
Based on a successful experience from the USA (Coca Cola-funded originally), the United Kingdom has implemented the Valued Youth project in several regions. The programme was intended to help secondary-school students who were at risk of disengaging with school, or underperforming, by them becoming tutors for primary-school children in need of learning support. Tutors were selected by school staff and received training and support from a youth charity. They were placed in primary schools for four hours a week on average and attended a weekly meeting with the coordinator in their own schools. The original USA model built in a reward system where tutors were paid the minimum-wage salary. In the United Kingdom the scheme favoured rewarding tutors through events and vouchers for books and school supplies. An evaluation of the United Kingdom programme showed improvements for tutors in terms of improved attitudes toward learning and increased self-confidence and communication skills. In the USA, a robust evaluation with control groups showed that the project had a direct impact on dropout reduction for tutors.

Source: Trickey et al. (2005); Lehr et al. (2004)

Practice 97 YACHAD – Children Tutoring Children in Reading, Israel

The YACHAD programme pairs up students from Grade 2 who are slow readers with tutors from Grades 5, 6 and 7. The aims of the programme are twofold: (i) increasing the motivation and reading ability of second-graders and (ii) increasing the self-confidence, social skills and motivation of older children. Tutors were trained in tutoring techniques and followed a structured approach comprising a warm-up, reading aloud and reading comprehension and interpretation. Based on this experience a tutoring programme for new immigrant children was developed in a few Jerusalem schools with high levels of migrant children from Russia and Ethiopia.

Source: Jewish Virtual Library (n.d.)



AREA 8 | STRENGTHENING CROSS-SECTOR COORDINATION

Cross-sector collaboration and information sharing between agencies (civil registry offices, health and social services, the police, local self-government agencies, migration agencies, border police and NGOs) are necessary for identifying children who are out of school, as mentioned in [Section 3](#) and in the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016). Cross-sector collaboration is also key to implementing combined and coordinated dropout prevention and response interventions that can address the varied social needs of children and their families as best as possible. Not only education professionals have a role: social workers, local self-government agencies, youth services, NGOs, businesses and community members can also take an active role in dropout prevention and response.

In Europe and Central Asia, children of compulsory school age who are not enrolled or are not attending school are often invisible to education professionals and other sectors' staff. Sometimes these children are identified by the police, NGOs and health or social services, but few countries in Europe and Central Asia have clear referral protocols for such cases. Referrals and the case management of children too often depend on the goodwill of professionals and on informal arrangements between agencies that are not sustainable. When children of compulsory school age are not enrolled or do not attend school, they are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. It is therefore the responsibility of all professionals and services to adequately respond to cases of children out of school.

Cross-sector coordination at national and local levels can be challenging in the region, due to the different political priorities of line ministries, unclear or overlapping roles and responsibilities, competition for funding and the different working cultures of the professionals involved. This is why the responsibilities of each sector and of various professionals have to be clearly defined for the referral and case management of out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out. Adopting an integrated approach to planning also enables services to be better linked.

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

1. [Protocols for the referral of children out of school.](#)
2. [Case management.](#)
3. [Integrated social-inclusion programmes.](#)

1. Protocols for the referral of children out of school

The *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016) provides a methodology and tools for identifying children out of school through cross-sector information exchange.¹⁴ Once a child is identified, referral systems need to be in place so that professionals can act quickly in the best interest of the child.

Good practices in establishing cross-sector protocols and referral systems (*who should do what, when and how* when suspecting that a child is out of school) include:

- Developing protocols that are complementary or **in line with child protection protocols** and referral systems and guidelines in the country.

¹⁴ See “Step 5: Close gaps in horizontal information flows through cross-sector collaboration” in the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016).

- Developing protocols and referral systems collegially **with all parties/actors** involved (see green box below).
- **Disseminating protocols widely** and explaining to all professional bodies, agencies and associations the importance of complying with these.
- **Providing generic contact details** (phone numbers and email addresses) on referral documents, which do not change when officers in charge change jobs.
- **Piloting protocols** and including practitioners' feedback.
- **Keeping protocols simple.**
- Reviewing and **amending** all professional **job descriptions** to reflect statutory obligations for staff in various agencies to refer children who are victims of abuse and neglect, including educational neglect.
- Establishing protocols between agencies that enable the **sharing and triangulation of electronic data** on children in line with child data-protection regulations.

Professionals who might typically come across cases of children of compulsory school age not enrolled or not attending school include:

- Police officers and border police officers.
- Officials working with refugees and returnees.
- Juvenile justice officers and judges.
- Local authority staff.
- Social workers and child protection officers/services.
- Health staff (doctors, nurses, visiting nurses, health assistants, birth attendants).
- Housing association staff.
- Teachers and other education and early childhood staff.
- NGO/CSO staff.
- Shelter staff (for homeless people, refugees, migrants, victims of human trafficking, street children or women victims of domestic violence), youth association staff and other professionals in contact with families or children (religious leaders, sports coaches, etc.).
- Other children, other parents and the general public.

Other professionals who do not work directly with children and families but might have information that could lead to the identification of a child out of school include:

- Tax officers (when they have access to information on household members).
- Social assistants in charge of administering social benefits.
- Civil registry officers and IT departments or agencies running databases with information on children from the education, health, internal affairs, justice and social-welfare sectors.

Practice 98 Cross-sector protocols, Armenia

CRO



In Armenia, Lori Marz regional authorities have developed a cross-sector protocol of collaboration among local actors to identify children of compulsory school age not enrolled in school. The protocol outlines the responsibilities of schools, communities (local authorities), health facilities (polyclinics), the police, NGOs and social case managers (social workers). A coordinating council comprising representatives of the education, child protection, social services, health and police *marz* (regional level) departments was set up to lead and monitor implementation. The protocol addresses three main issues dealing with the identification of compulsory age children not enrolled and not attending school:

- A referral system for student absenteeism.
- Case management of out-of-school children.
- Lists of children are cross-checked between schools, local authorities and databases of children with disabilities and families receiving benefits.

During the 2014 pilot that covered only Vanadzor and Gugark districts, 228 children were identified as being out of school. The largest group was of children six to eight years of age who had not yet enrolled in Grade 1 (212). An additional 16 children from nine to 16 years of age were also not enrolled and not attending school. Eighty-three children were enrolled in school as a result of the pilot and joint efforts from all sectors and parties involved.

Source: Antonowicz (2015d)

Practice 99 Inter-ministry agreement for out-of-school children, Albania

CRO



The ministries of education, health, interior affairs and labour, social affairs and equal opportunities have signed an agreement on the identification and registration in school of all compulsory-school-age children. This agreement obliges all parties to communicate regularly on the issue, to attend bi-annual meetings to analyse the situation and find solutions to problems, and to share both hard and electronic information on children, such as lists of children of age to enrol in school, lists of children enrolled in school and lists of children of compulsory school age not enrolled in school. Data is then triangulated, cases of out-of-school children identified and steps taken towards children's enrolment.

Source: Government of Albania (2013); Republic of Albania (2015)

Practice 100 Children missing education, England

CRO



In England, "all children regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have" (Department for Education, 2015). Children of compulsory school age who are not receiving a suitable full-time education are referred to as "children missing education". Children missing education can be identified by local authorities, schools, health staff, housing associations, visiting nurses, special-needs-education case workers, the police, programmes for disengaged youth, any other professional in contact with children or the general public (Department for Education and Skills, 2004b). Referrals are made to the Children Missing Education Officer attached to each local authority, which then takes steps to investigate and solve the case in collaboration with the relevant support services. Each local authority has a clear protocol for referral, and data information sharing across children's services in order to support the identification of children missing education.

Source: Department for Education, 2015; Department for Education and Skills (2004b)

Practice 101 Regulation on the identification and case management of children in difficult life circumstances, Kyrgyzstan



The 2015 regulation on the identification and case management of children in difficult life circumstances gives responsibilities to local authority social workers to conduct family and children's needs assessment to identify children in difficult life circumstances. One criterion covers the psycho-pedagogical needs of families and children: social workers are asked to identify whether families need help with enrolling or reintegrating children into school or with improving relationships with the school. In the comprehensive needs assessment of children, social workers are required to record the level of education/grade of the child, whether s/he has been absent from school for more than 40 days in the school year and why, whether s/he has dropped out from school and, if so, when was the last time the child went to school? Among the conclusions that can be used to draw the Child Support Plan are a range of education-related measures, including provision of home schooling; free textbooks, school supplies and transport; learning support and mentoring. The regulation makes provision for social workers, education authorities and schools to work together to address the education-related needs of children in difficult life circumstances

Source: Government of Kyrgyzstan (2015)

Practice 102 Collaboration between the Department of Internal Affairs and the Department of Education and Child Rights Protection, Kazakhstan



In Kazakhstan children absent from school for more than 10 days without a valid reason are reported to the Department of Internal Affairs (police) or the Department of Education and Child Rights Protection. Each Department keeps records of children reported missing from education according to a common template. This information is reconciled on a monthly basis, signed by both Departments and then sent to the central level for inclusion in a national database. The local database includes children's names, ages, school they attended, date they stopped attending school, reason for their absenteeism/dropping out and the actions taken by different actors to support the return of the child to school. A child's name will remain on the database until (i) his/her case is solved, i.e. until the child returns to his/her school or to another education institution; and (ii) s/he reaches the age of 18.

Source: Antonowicz (2013a)

2. Case Management

The Case Management approach has proven effective in policies and practices aiming to prevent and respond to children being out of school or at risk of dropping out. The Case Management approach is typically used by local children's services or social services to organise and coordinate multiple-agency support for children with multiple needs (such as for education, care, health and housing, in the case of a child out of school). The approach can also be used by schools when coordinating prevention and response interventions for students at risk of dropping out.

By "case", we mean the person or the child who is in need of support. By "management" we mean organised procedures and mechanisms. The aim of Case Management in the context of education participation improvement is: (i) to identify and mobilise the necessary resources for the child not enrolled in school or the student at risk of dropping out of school, (ii) to bring together professionals from all sectors and informal networks to support the child holistically, and (iii) to coordinate, record and monitor support interventions.

Case Management is most effective when:

- **Case Managers are** carefully selected and adequately **trained**.
- A **Child Plan** records the objectives, interventions and results for each child and is closely monitored.
- **Case Conferences are organised regularly** with representatives from different sectors and the family to discuss issues, assess progress and review the Child Plan.
- **Data-protection mechanisms** are in place to protect sensitive information about children.
- All sectors and **children's services are able to coordinate**.

Pointers for improving cross-sector coordination in a Case Management context include:

- **Mapping existing support services for families and children** locally, regionally and nationally (public, private and voluntary sector services).
- **Identifying services gaps** and prioritising investments for these.
- **One Child-One Plan approaches** that coordinate all support services around the needs of the child.
- **Developing coordination platforms** for children's services.
- **Identifying responsibilities** for each service/professional.
- **Building the managerial and technical capacities of professionals** involved in coordination of children's services.
- **Developing management frameworks for services for families and children** (strategy development, goal and target setting, resources deployment, information sharing, conflict resolution and accountability mechanisms) (Children Workforce Development Council, 2009).

Practice 103 The role of case managers in the integrated social services reform, Armenia



Armenia is currently implementing an integrated social services reform which establishes a case manager function and creates community-based services for families. Case managers are in charge of conducting comprehensive family needs assessments and of organising support services around identified needs. In Lori Marz, case managers conduct a family assessment when a child is identified as out of school and jointly find solutions with parents to support the enrolment or reintegration of the child into school. Case managers work with a range of professionals, including schools, special-needs teachers, local authorities, health and child protection staff as well as NGOs and other private or voluntary services for children at local level.

Source: Antonowicz (2015d)

Practice 104 One Child One Plan, Ireland

CRO



To tackle attendance issues, Ireland has developed a One Child One Plan approach, organised around a cycle of “Understand, Plan, Do, Review”. Families and students are supported along a continuum of interventions of varying intensity with universal, targeted and individual interventions. When a child is identified as at risk of dropping out, a plan for the child is developed jointly by school, care and welfare professional staff, based on an assessment that takes into account the views of the child, his or her needs as well as resilience and strength. The planned activities draw from a range of existing support interventions such as literacy support, out-of-school educational and cultural activities, counselling, mentoring and parental outreach, etc. Families are directed towards a range of support services where needed (housing, finance, etc.). When there are child protection concerns or when the child needs more in-depth assessment and professional support, the school makes an external referral.

Source: National Educational Welfare Board (2012)

Practice 105 Educational Psychological Services, Norway

CRO-CWD



Every municipality in Norway has an Educational Psychological Counselling Service comprising psychologists, social workers and special educational needs teachers. Individual plans are usually drawn for a period of three to four years for children with special developmental or educational needs who require long-term and coordinated services to help them complete schools or transit to work. The plans are used as coordinating tools while also contributing to an equal partnership between service providers and clients. The Educational Psychological Counselling Services work with children, families, schools and education professionals to help create an adequate learning environment for children to succeed in.

Source: Frilseth (2012)

3. Integrated social-inclusion programmes

More and more countries have been implementing large cross-sector programmes to address social exclusion, including education exclusion. Examples include Roma social-inclusion programmes and programmes for the inclusion of people with disabilities. These approaches focus on children and their environment, addressing unemployment issues for their parents as well as health, housing, education, leisure and attitudes of the wider society. Social-inclusion programmes have included financial components (See [Area 3 Reducing financial barriers for students and schools](#)).

Pointers of good practice around social-inclusion programmes include:

- **Making a business case** for local communities to understand the long-term benefits of social inclusion (Guy, 2009).
- **Providing capacity support to local communities** to apply for funding.
- **Facilitating local communities' access to technical expertise in a range of sectors.**
- **Supporting innovative and wide-ranging partnership** (Macpherson et al., 2007).
- **Ensuring that components on access to services** complement poverty-alleviation interventions (Irwin, 2010).
- Designing and **implementing community-involvement mechanisms** (Macpherson et al., 2007).

- **Conducting awareness-raising campaigns** on social inclusion and for challenging prejudice (Guy, 2009).
- **Collecting baseline data** to enable assessment of progress and monitoring of key indicators.
- **Ensuring long-term project commitment** to maximise sustained change.

In terms of policy development, lessons from social-inclusion programmes include (Guy, 2009):

- **Linking anti-discrimination laws and social-inclusion policies.**
- **Mainstreaming ethnicity or disability in general legislation and policy** with actions to address inequalities.
- **Developing two-ways inclusion policies** that address both the rights and responsibilities of excluded groups and the society around them (Guy, 2009).

Practice 106 Give Kids a Chance Programme, Szécsény, Hungary

ETH-CRO



Hungary adopted a National Strategy and Programme for Combating Child Poverty covering a 25-year period, 2007-2032. The Strategy aims to reduce child poverty, eliminate child exclusion and segregation and reform in depth the institutions contributing to the reproduction of social exclusion. Among priority groups are Roma children and children living in disadvantaged regions. The “Give Kids a Chance” programme began in 2008 in the micro-region of Szécsény (20,000 people, 13 settlements). The programme covers early childhood development, education, nutrition, healthcare, reform of social and children’s services, housing, employment and citizens’ participation through access to information and participation in decision-making. The latter is a key feature of the programme. Results have included a significant increase in children’s services, including extracurricular activities and second-chance education, and reduced school segregation for Roma children. During the Peer Review mechanism at European level, there was a broad consensus on the usefulness of the approach.

Source: Fresnoe (2010)



AREA 9 | DEVELOPING SCHOOL-BASED DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS

The role of schools in dropout prevention and early response is critical. School absenteeism is the first predictor of dropout and jeopardizes children's learning and achievement.¹⁵ By improving absenteeism recording procedures, implementing interventions to curb absenteeism and developing systems to identify and support students at risk of dropping out, schools can improve attendance and reduce dropout rates. A whole-school approach, which embeds dropout prevention in all activities, has a greater chance of success than isolated and fragmented interventions. Teachers, managers, support staff, students and parents all have a role to play in school-based dropout prevention and response interventions.

Too often, schools in Europe and Central Asia are not fully aware of the importance of regular attendance and accurate absenteeism recording. Regulations on the matter are not always well known and recording systems can be outdated. Accountability mechanisms for school absenteeism are weak and it is not rare for schools to downplay the level of absenteeism of their students to avoid blame from and complications with education authorities. Once a student has dropped out, schools often feel they do not have the mandate or the resources to bring him or her back to school. Dropout cases are often complex and schools sometimes adopt a fatalistic attitude, concluding that the student “is not motivated” and “does not want to learn” or that the family “is dysfunctional” or “does not want to send the child to school”. An attitudinal shift is required in the region from education authorities and education professionals to recognise the importance of regular attendance and of identifying early signs of dropout. Professionals must also recognise the role that schools play in students' disengagement and families' reluctance to send their children to school.

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

1. [Managing and curbing school absenteeism.](#)
2. [School-based dropout early warning systems.](#)
3. [Embedding dropout prevention in every aspect of school work and planning.](#)
4. [Building school staff capacities.](#)

1. Managing and curbing school absenteeism

Definition and information on data collection on school absenteeism are discussed in the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016).

Policy pointers regarding managing and curbing absenteeism in schools include:

- **Review definitions and legislation pertaining to school absenteeism:** articulating clearly valid reasons for absences and specifying the responsibility of the school in authorising absences.
- **Develop school absenteeism management systems,** comprising a set of procedures that schools must follow consistently and systematically when a child is absent.
- **Agree and harmonise absenteeism recording guidelines** (when, how and by whom shall it be recorded, who oversees absenteeism recording, etc.?).

¹⁵ PISA 2012 reveals that: “On average across OECD countries, arriving late for school is associated with a 27-point lower score in mathematics, while skipping classes or days of school is associated with a 37-point lower score in mathematics – the equivalent of almost one full year of formal schooling.” (OECD, 2013)

- **Clarify steps to be taken in the event of absenteeism** (who should be doing what and when?) and establish a referral protocol for cases of chronic absenteeism (such as informing local authorities of the unauthorised absence of a child after X days).
- **Identify consequences and/or sanctions** for students and parents following unauthorised or unexcused absences.

Schools with good attendance rates are schools that have been successful in developing a culture where attendance matters. This is often done through:

- **The development of school attendance policies**, which include a clear definition of justified and authorised absences and explanation of the consequences of absenteeism and tardiness.
- **Clear communication of the attendance policy to parents and students.** Schools might have to communicate information in several languages, both in writing and orally. Communication of the policy when children enter a new school or enter a new level of education is particularly important.
- **Consistent implementation of the attendance policy** by all staff.
- **Regular communication with students and families** to understand the reasons for tardiness or absenteeism.

Practice 107 Information on school attendance, England

PAR



In England, each local authority publishes school attendance regulations on its website. These include:

Information on parents' legal responsibility regarding schooling:

- Parents' legal obligations towards the education of their children.
- Compulsory school age.
- What constitutes an authorised and an unauthorised absence.

Help with getting children to go to school:

- Tips for parents to encourage school attendance.
- Tips for parents to ensure children arrive on time at school every day.

Legislation enforcement mechanisms:

- Fines for unauthorised absences.
- Prosecution in court.
- Parenting orders, such as attending parenting classes.

Source: Gov.UK (2015d)

Practice 108 Local attendance officers (Netherlands, Ireland, England)

In the Netherlands, Ireland and England, among other countries, attendance officers are appointed at local level to oversee attendance issues in schools. Their role is usually to support attendance policies and strategies in a given locality, to advise schools on interventions for curbing absenteeism and to provide direct support to students and families that are referred to them.

In the Netherlands, each child absent for nine hours in a two-week period is systematically referred to the attendance officer for a discussion. In England and Ireland, schools make a referral to Education Welfare Officers (Ireland) or Education Attendance Services (England) when their early interventions have failed. When a referral is made, attendance officers will work directly with the child and the family to try to solve the issue. They will also be involved in any legal prosecution should the case not be solved.

Source: Antonowicz (2013d); Department for Education and Skills (2004b); van der Klei (2014)

Practice 109 Electronic attendance/absenteeism registration management software

Electronic attendance/absenteeism registration management software can help schools to keep track of attendance electronically and to generate automatic SMS or emails to parents and students. They also enable the drawing of analytical tables and charts to help monitor attendance on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. These systems are often part of broader software packages for schools, facilitating teachers' tasks in reporting and recording behaviour and achievement, and in liaising with parents.

A range of interventions can contribute to curbing absenteeism. Some of these interventions are linked to the themes explored in other chapters of this handbook. Among good school-based practices in curbing absenteeism we find:

- i. **Interventions related to the school climate** (see also [Area 7 Engaging students and supporting their wellbeing](#))
 - Providing a safe, violence-free and welcoming school environment, respectful of diversity.
 - Improving the school climate and teacher-student interactions and relationships.
 - Improving student participation in schools, both in governance structure and in projects and extra-curricular activities.
 - Having high expectations for each student and making students feel part of the school (e.g. welcoming students by name).
 - Delivering certificates to students and classes with good or improved attendance (*Practice 109*).
 - Positively reintegrating absentees by providing them the support they need to catch up with their learning.
- ii. **Interventions related to family-school relationships** (see also [Area 6 Engaging parents, families and communities](#))
 - Providing support to parents who are struggling to bring their children to school on time or who have concerns about the level of truancy of their children (*Practice 111*).
 - Involving senior school management staff in cases of chronic absenteeism and appointing a respected and trusted member of staff to liaise with the student and the family.
 - Engaging home-school mediators/liaison officers (*Practice 67*).

iii. **Interventions related to school organisation**

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to identify trends and patterns in absenteeism periods (e.g. the harvest season, before holidays, a specific day of the week, etc.) and in reasons for absences (*Practice 112*).
- Providing free transport or reviewing bus routes and schedules where appropriate.
- Opening schools early/late to enable working parents to bring their children to/from school and pick them up.

iv. **Community-based interventions** (see also [Community involvement in dropout prevention and response](#) in Area 6)

- Engaging shops and cafes students tend to go to when skipping classes, by reminding them of attendance regulations and providing them with a hotline number to call for suspected cases of school truancy.
- Working with NGOs to provide extra support with children/families with attendance issues.
- Engaging religious and traditional community leaders in interventions to increase attendance.
- Awareness-raising campaigns about the importance of regular attendance through social and other media.
- Engaging parents of children at risk of seasonal migration early in the year to identify solutions for children not to miss out on their education (delayed departure, registration in another school, etc.).

Practice 110 Attendance rewards and incentives, Wales

“As part of the Attendance Tree project, pupils are given a gold leaf for 100 per cent attendance, silver for over 98 per cent, and bronze for over 95 per cent. At the end of each term, the pupils add their leaves, with their names on, to the tree, and are presented with a certificate in school assembly. At the end of the year, those with over 95 per cent attendance over the whole year are entered into a prize draw.”

Source: Welsh Assembly Government (2011)

Practice 111 Familibase Morning Programme, Ireland

The Familibase Morning Programme supports children with chronic absenteeism and their families in Dublin. Activities include parental support to implement morning and evening routines, parental guidance on improving attendance, and resolving transport issues. The Child Welfare Officer can call or visit homes in the morning or the evening to work on routines (breakfast, homework, bed time, school-bag preparation) and support parents when a child refuses to go to school.

Source: Downes (2014)

Practice 112 An absence minus! An extra chance! Romania

This project aimed to identify absenteeism patterns among students and to understand the reasons behind absenteeism through questionnaires for students and parents. Schools identified specific strategies to address absenteeism patterns of specific grades and students. They devised tools to monitor absenteeism weekly. Attendance competitions “a week without absences” were organised in schools in addition to awareness-raising activities with parents and students, and provision of extra-curricular activities, counselling and career guidance.

Source: County Resource Center and Educational Assistance Dâmbovița (2013)

2. School-based dropout early warning systems

School-based early warning systems to identify students at risk of dropping out aim to select context-relevant predictors of dropout to be monitored. A red-flag system identifies students at risk or high risk of dropping out, which triggers an assessment of students’ needs and targeted dropout prevention interventions for the child within the school, and beyond when other professionals and support services can play a role.

While this section provides lessons learned from early warning systems in the region and beyond, the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016) outlines the steps that are necessary to set up a paper-based or electronic early warning system.¹⁶

Good practice pointers include:

- A **selection of dropout predictors** that is contextually relevant and based on data.
- The development of an **early warning system which is easy to use** for teachers and school management, drawing from existing information on each student and attendance and achievement data regularly collected by the school.
- A **student needs-assessment** made in close collaboration with the child and his/her family.
- A **support process** which is constructive, supportive and participatory but not stigmatising for the student.
- A **package of response activities** that directly answer the needs of the student. These can address attendance, academic and behavioural issues, as well as self-confidence and psychological issues or financial and material barriers.
- **Regular review of progress** and evaluation of results.
- **Embedding the early warning system in a whole-school approach**, with strong involvement of senior managers, teachers, students and parents in implementing and reviewing the system.
- **Establishing innovative links and partnerships** with support services and community-based organisations outside the school.
- **Learning lessons** to improve the implementation of the early warning system (Antonowicz, 2012b).

¹⁶ See Step 6 and Step 7 of the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016).

Practice 113 School-based model for dropout prevention and response, Serbia

UNICEF Serbia in partnership with the Centre for Education Policy, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Youth is currently piloting a school-based early warning system and dropout intervention model in 10 schools.

Students at risk of dropping out are identified by homeroom teachers based on indicators that are weighted differently if the child is enrolled in primary and lower-secondary or in upper-secondary education: (i) socio-economic status of the child, (ii) absenteeism, (iii) school achievement, (iv) behaviour, (v) recipient of welfare benefits, (vi) acceptance of the student at school, and (vii) other risk factors.

School-based dropout prevention teams conduct needs assessments with each student identified as at risk of dropping out, assessing personal and family situations as well as academic self-perception, attitudes towards teachers, attitudes towards school, academic aspiration and motivation and self-regulation. Results of the needs assessment feed into the development of targeted interventions and activities for the child's individual dropout prevention plan, which is then implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Schools are being supported to develop dropout prevention and response interventions in three main areas: parental engagement, peer support and remedial teaching.

Source: Centre for Education Policy (2014); Centre for Education Policy (2015)

Practice 114 Early warning system, Tajikistan

UNICEF Tajikistan, in partnership with the NGO Economics and Education and the Ministry of Education, is currently piloting a school-based early warning system in 60 schools. Predictors of dropout include attendance, academic difficulties in core subjects, behaviour, being two years' overage, and health and family circumstances. The system is paper-based in remote schools and electronic in 10 pilot schools in Dushanbe, which are using electronic school journals with attendance data. After a needs assessment, a plan is developed for children with three risk factors – or two risk factors and irregular attendance – which is then implemented and monitored. Homeroom teachers or school psychologists are in charge of following up each case, liaising with the student and parents and other community members or organisations where relevant, such as religious leaders or NGOs.

Source: Antonowicz (2014c); Abduvahobov (2015)

Practice 115 Dropout prevention system, AlbaniaCRO 

Teachers identify cases of dropout and school psychologists are responsible for creating and updating records of children who dropped out, or are in and out of school, and for developing an action plan for each child. A multi-disciplinary team is established to monitor the case and implement the action plan. Family visits are conducted by the school psychologist and regional inspectors. Unresolved cases are referred to other agencies (labour inspectorate, police, Ministry of Education, etc.).

Source: UNICEF and UIS (2016)

3. Embedding dropout prevention in every aspect of school work and planning

Several policy measures can be used to increase schools' and professionals' responsibilities in dropout prevention, such as:

- **Including dropout prevention in staff job descriptions.**
- Making **dropout prevention a mandatory component of school development plans** (*Practice 116*).
- **Establishing dropout prevention and response teams** in schools (*Practice 117*).
- Including **dropout prevention in education quality standards.**
- Including **dropout prevention in teacher professional standards.**
- Including **dropout prevention in inspection frameworks.**

Practice 116 School development planning, education quality standards and dropout, Serbia

An amendment on the Law on Education in 2013 has established a specific requirement for all schools to establish a dropout prevention plan as an integral part of their School Development Plan.

In addition, the Education Quality Standards used for both internal and external school-evaluation purposes cover a range of dropout-related issues in the learning, student support and ethos dimensions of the standards. These standards have to be reflected in school plans. Among student support standards are: (i) students are informed of existing support mechanisms in schools, (ii) students benefit from tailored support measures as needed, (iii) staff supports students to adapt to school life, (iv) the school cooperates with relevant institutions to support students, (v) the school organises extracurricular activities meeting the various needs and interests of students, (vi) the school organises activities to develop student social skills, and (vii) the school has support mechanisms for marginalised children including: measures for regular attendance, Individual Education Plans, learning-support activities and outreach activities with parents.

Source: Republic of Serbia (2010)

Practice 117 School dropout prevention teams, Kosovo*

CRO 

A regulation has established Dropout Prevention and Response Teams in each and every school and every municipality. School Teams draw from teachers, psychological support staff, and School Board, Parent Council and Student Council members. School Teams are in charge of case management for children at risk or in the process of dropping out from school. They also develop school-based prevention and response interventions, embedding them in the school development plan to the extent possible. The role and remit of the School Teams have been specified in national Terms of Reference. A manual with tools for identifying students at risk of dropping out and guidelines to implement dropout prevention and response activities has been developed with UNICEF support and is available on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science.¹⁷ A network of peer trainers (two per municipality) has been created. Ninety school and municipal teams were trained in 2015. The new Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 will make provision for scaling up the training and for institutional support to dropout prevention teams.

Source: Antonowicz (2014b) Spahiu (2015)

¹⁷ <http://masht.rks-gov.net/en/prinderit>; https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/12/doracak-per-ekipet-shkollore-per-parandalim_1.pdf

4. Building school staff capacities

Teachers, school directors and other support or management staff need to be trained on issues pertaining to dropout prevention and response as these have become a policy priority in many countries in the region.

Policy pointers to support staff capacity development in this area include:

- **Integrating** out-of-school children identification mechanisms, **dropout prevention** and absenteeism management **in pre and in-service teacher and school director training** (*Practices 118 and 119*).
- **Developing staff capacity to collect, analyse and use data to shape dropout prevention** and response strategies (e.g. attendance data, learning achievement data – some examples are provided in the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* [UNICEF and UIS, 2016]).
- Engaging staff in **identifying, documenting and sharing best practice** on dropout prevention and response.
- **Providing opportunities for school teams to reflect on dropout** prevention and response (*Practice 120*).
- **Developing learning and sharing platforms for professionals**, locally, nationally and internationally for schools to be inspired by the experience and achievements of their peers.

Practice 118 Dropout prevention and response manual for schools, Kyrgyzstan

CAP 

UNICEF and the Kyrgyz Academy for Education have jointly developed a practical manual for schools to:

- Support the identification of students out of school.
- Improve school attendance and school absenteeism management.
- Identify students at risk of dropping out and support them adequately.
- Increase the awareness of the need for accurate data entry in the Education Management Information System.
- Provide tips for teachers to engage with families, students and external partners and services.

The manual will be disseminated across the country, making use of the August teachers' conferences, or school social-pedagogues' in-service training and other local or national opportunities to raise awareness about out-of-school children, dropout prevention and tools and best practices to address the issue.

Source: UNICEF Kyrgyzstan (2015)

Practice 119 School coaching and mentoring, Serbia

CAP 

Under the framework of the Dropout prevention project, UNICEF Serbia is piloting a new model for school capacity development through coaching and mentoring. Each school participating in the project is matched with a mentor who has a longstanding and strong experience in the field of education in Serbia. Mentors accompany and support schools on their journey to change their understanding and practice regarding dropout prevention and response. They provide opportunities for schools to reflect on their practice in a non-judgemental manner and help them to:

- Increase their awareness about dropout and dropout prevention.
- Increase their confidence about their capacity to prevent dropout.
- Develop effective strategies to prevent and respond to dropout.
- Plan effectively.
- Improve their communication with students and parents.

Mentors prepare teachers to be agents of change and strengthen organisational learning in schools in a respectful manner based on mutual trust and commitment to co-construct knowledge (Hargreaves and Fullan 2000).

Source: UNICEF and the Centre for Education Policy (2015)

Practice 120 Reflective schools, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

CAP-CWD-ETH



In all its education projects, UNICEF has been encouraging schools and education professionals to reflect on their practices. When teachers identify positive results among their students following a change in their own practice, they are more likely to continue implementing this new practice or using their new skills. Following a series of teacher training workshops on inclusive education, schools have reflected on the implementation of their new knowledge and skills and have documented the changes in their practices and the results for children. Through case studies, schools have articulated lessons learned in the area of inclusive education. While this approach is strongly contributing to sustaining change in the participating schools, the case studies can also be used to inspire other schools to become more inclusive.

Source: UNICEF (2014b)



AREA 10 | PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE INDIVIDUAL LEARNING SUPPORT

Underachievement is one of the factors contributing to disengagement from school and dropout. Learning-support provision in schools can be organised around the three-tier approach described in Section 3 [point 9](#), so that support is tailored to students' needs and individualised when necessary. Adoption of universal design for learning, increased use of differentiation in classroom teaching, organisation of one-to-one tutoring or small-group learning, language learning-support programmes and monitoring learning outcomes: there are many options and approaches that can be used by schools to improve students' learning outcomes. Education professionals have a role in engaging students in their own learning, in supporting the acquisition of non-cognitive skills such as self-regulation, and in teaching learning-to-learn skills. Learning and progressing equips children with the motivation and confidence they need to pursue their education.

The analysis of PISA results for non-European Union countries of the UNICEF CEE/CIS region reveals that 48 per cent of students do not reach the baseline level of achievement in reading, 53 per cent in mathematics and 47 per cent in science (UNICEF, 2012c). Schools seldom adapt to the varied needs of their students in the region, and teaching and learning methods remain for the most part teacher-centred (Pfaffe et al., 2014). For instance, subject teachers often demonstrate a lack of responsibility for the academic achievement of students with special educational needs, or for language acquisition for refugee, migrant or ethnic-minority students whose mother tongue is different from the medium of instruction.

National decision-makers must ensure that teachers and schools have appropriate resources and capacity so that all students can learn, progress and achieve, and do not disengage from education.

This section presents policy and practice pointers on the following topics:

5. [Setting up school systems that provide equitable learning opportunities for all students.](#)
6. [Individual learning strategies.](#)
7. [Second-language learning support.](#)
8. [Literacy and numeracy support.](#)
9. [Equipping students with “non-cognitive” skills.](#)

1. Setting up school systems that provide equitable learning opportunities for all students

Research shows that diverse and non-segregated school systems result in better learning outcomes for students. Over-representation of migrant students in schools, for instance, can negatively impact the school achievement in general and the learning outcomes of migrant students in particular (Nusche, 2009). Similarly, students enrolled in special education institutions achieve less than those enrolled in regular and inclusive settings (Black-Hawkins et al., 2007). This evidence has implications for policy and programme development in the area of dropout prevention. Policy pointers are as follows:

- **Promoting inclusive schools and education systems** that do not rely on special education and early tracking to stream learners with different abilities and attainment levels (Field et al., 2007) (*Practice 121*).
- **Removing entrance tests** in pre-primary, primary and lower-secondary education.

- **Mixing children from different social backgrounds** in early childhood education, which increases learning benefits for young children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Sylva et al., 2004).
- **Avoiding the concentration of migrant students in schools**, which can negatively impact their learning outcomes and those of other students (Nusche, 2009) (*Practice 122*).
- **Developing equitable policies** at local level to support mixed social intake in schools (*Practices 123 and 124*).
- **Avoiding ability grouping**, which results in less stimulating learning environments, low levels of teacher expectations and lower student performance (Field et al., 2007).
- **Avoiding grade repetition**, which might put a child at risk of dropout and is generally detrimental to the education system as a whole (Hattie, 2009).
- Reviewing **curricula and teaching and learning materials** and ensuring that they **reflect** the **diversity** of cultures and learners and are free of gender, ethnic and other bias so that all children feel respected and valued.
- **Standardising the curriculum for all children**, to mitigate the effect of student socio-economic background on learning (Nusche, 2009).
- Ensuring that **curriculum design is underpinned by Universal Design for Learning** (UNICEF, 2015g).
- **Promoting teacher awareness of behaviour and bias**, as research shows that ethnicity and social class partially shape teacher expectations (Nusche, 2009).
- Including compulsory **cultural and social diversity and multicultural education in teacher** pre- and in-service **training** (Nusche, 2009; Field et al., 2007) (*Practice 75*).
- **Harnessing the potential of e-Learning and mobile technology**, to provide learners with diverse learning experiences (*Practice 125*).

Practice 121 Inclusive Education Policy of New Brunswick, Canada



The policy on inclusive education of the Province of New Brunswick has been internationally recognised as a model. The policy clearly states that “segregated and self-contained programmes or classes for students with learning or behavioural challenges” or “alternative education programmes” for students from kindergarten to Grade 8 should not occur in either school or community-based settings. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development of New Brunswick received the UNESCO Prize to Promote Quality Education for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.

Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development New Brunswick (2013)

Practice 122 Copenhagen Model for Integration, Denmark



The Copenhagen city authorities have worked to increase social mixing in schools by encouraging schools with a high intake of native ethnic Danish to attract migrant students, and schools with a high intake of migrant students to attract ethnic Danish students. In addition to public campaigns and collaboration between schools, city authorities are training teachers to deal with diverse classrooms and are providing an integration worker or translator in traditionally ethnic Danish schools recruiting more migrant students.

Source: Nusche (2009)

Practice 123 Roma desegregation project, Bulgaria

ETH



Desegregation projects have been implemented since 2000 with the support of authorities and the Roma Education Fund. Interventions include transport subsidies for Roma students to be enrolled in various city schools, extra-curricular activities aiming to increase cultural understanding and tolerance among students, tutoring and additional learning support for students lagging behind, and free school meals and scholarships to address demand-side barriers to education. Projects resulted in increased enrolment and retention of Roma students in regular schools.

Source: UNICEF (2010)

Practice 124 Sharing good practices across schools, Sweden and Denmark

MIG



In Sweden, the National Agency for School Improvement identified successful schools with a diverse social and ethnic intake to serve as role models for other schools. Professionals exchanged ideas through local school networks and benefited from in-service training. In Denmark, a publically funded study “This Works in Our School” gathered and showcased effective strategies identified by teachers for meeting the individual learning needs of migrant students. The aim was to complement academic research on the topic with hands-on experience.

Source: Swedish Ministry of Education and Research (2009); Danish Ministry of Education (2009)

Practice 125 Learning opportunities to reduce early school leaving, Malta

Improving teaching strategies is one of the pillars of Malta’s strategy to reduce early school leaving. This will be done through:

- Developing the e-Learning infrastructure, content and training of teachers and tapping mobile technology to respond to students’ diverse needs.
- Reviewing the work of Nurture Groups (primary) and Learning Support Zones (secondary), which aim to provide learning support to students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, and their impact on behaviour self-management and academic competences.
- Reviewing after-school programmes and improving their articulation with school teaching to better support students’ learning process and outcomes.
- Teaching students learning-to-learn skills.

Source: Ministry of Education and Employment of Malta (2014)

2. Individualised learning strategies

Students at risk of dropping out might need individualised learning. While most individualised learning is to be done during regular teaching time in regular classes, sometimes extra support is necessary to address learning gaps, respond to specific learning barriers or boost students' confidence in their ability to succeed.

Policy and programme pointers for individualised learning strategies include:

- Establishing classroom and **school-based systems to closely monitor learning** and students' attainment and to identify students that require additional learning support (*Practice 126*).
- **Using formative assessment as a diagnostic tool** and as a method to involve students in their own learning and provide feedback which is constructive (Field et al, 2007).
- **Providing learning support according to a three-tier approach** (sometimes referred to as Response to Intervention [Rti] or Gradual Response Model): (i) learning support provided during core classroom instruction, (ii) supplemental instruction, and (iii) intensive intervention (Mitchell, 2014) (*Practice 127*).
- **Supporting teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to students' varied learning needs** and levels of attainment.
- **Developing Individual Education Plans.**
- **Evaluating the systems to support underachievers** in place at national, local, school and classroom levels.
- **Creating learning environments where teachers have high expectations for all students.**
- **Ensuring that learning-support methods are adapted to each individual, developed with the active involvement of students,** and respond to their individual learning goals (*Practice 128*).

Practice 126 Learning measures to reduce early school leaving, Portugal

Portugal has set up a number of learning-support-related measures in its strategy to combat early school leaving such as: (i) provision of individual study time supervised daily by teachers in both primary and secondary education for students lagging behind, (ii) additional targeted learning support for students at risk of failing Grade 4 and Grade 6, (iii) possibility for students to sit the Grade 4 and Grade 6 national assessments following a period of intensive learning support, and (iv) small-group work.

Source: OECD (2014)

Practice 127 Response to Intervention (Rti, USA) or Gradual Response Model (United Kingdom)

CWD 

These methods involve monitoring students' progress, identifying those who perform significantly below their peers and assessing in a systematic fashion the result of teaching strategies on achievement. They follow a three-tier intervention model: (i) Tier one: core classroom instruction – the focus is on in-class support, including adaptation of curricula, timetabling and teaching approaches to students' needs; (ii) Tier two: supplemental instruction – students with continuing barriers to learning may receive extra learning support in small groups, for instance by the teacher or another member of staff specialised in learning barriers; and (iii) Tier three: Intensive intervention – targeting very few students facing extreme learning and social difficulties with individual remediation activities and daily monitoring of progress. The three-tier model allows for students to move fluidly from one level to another yet enabling students facing complex barriers to directly benefit from Tier three interventions and to possibly undertake an assessment to receive a statement of Special Educational Needs, as per country practice.

Source: Mitchell (2014)

Practice 128 Universal Design for LearningCWD 

The aim of Universal Design for Learning is to ensure that curricula are developed to be accessed by everyone, regardless of language, disability and learning styles. For Mitchell, three principles underpin the concept:

- “Provision of multiple means of representation” – teachers can disseminate information through different channels (e.g. visual, oral), using different formats (e.g. texts that can be enlarged).
- “Provision of multiple means of action and expression” – teachers provide options for physical action (e.g. through assistive technology) and options for expression and communication (e.g. writing a text, drawing, making a film).
- “Provision of multiple means of engagement” – teachers enable students to engage (e.g. by offering a choice of activities) and ensure the relevance of class content.

Source: Mitchell (2014)

(UNICEF provides practical and accessible information on Universal Design for Learning in the Booklet [Access to School and the Learning Environment II - Universal Design for Learning](#) [UNICEF 2015g]).

3. Second-language learning support

A common barrier to learning across the region is the limited understanding of the language of instruction. This is particularly an issue for linguistic minorities, migrants and refugees. Some countries make provision for education in several languages to accommodate large or incoming linguistic-minority groups, but policy implementation in this area remains patchy and schools and education authorities often do not have the capacity to secure subject specialist teachers with specific language skills, or to purchase textbooks in minority languages.

Policy pointers to strengthen second-language policy planning and second-language learning support include:

- **Providing language support in early childhood** education settings (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2014) (*Practices 129 and 130*).
- **Monitoring children’s language development** and providing systematic targeted support (Nusche, 2009).
- Developing a **national curriculum for second-language learning** (Nusche, 2009).
- **Training second-language-learning teachers**, and training all teachers in second-language-learning teaching strategies.
- Ensuring a **continuum of support in second-language learning from early childhood education to upper-secondary** (Nusche, 2009).
- **Strengthening the collaboration between second-language and classroom/subject teachers** to ensure a collective responsibility for students’ progress in second-language learning; developing approaches whereby second-language teachers can widely share effective teaching practices to other teachers (Nusche, 2009).
- **Valuing children’s mother tongues**.
- **Designing mother-tongue-based multilingual education systems** where children have the opportunity to become literate first in their mother tongue before gradually being introduced to another language/medium of instruction in higher grades. This model has positively impacted on second-language acquisition, learning outcomes, self-esteem and participation in class (UNESCO Bangkok, 2014).
- **Combining second-language learning with other learning-support** strategies (Nusche, 2009).

Practice 129 The Integration of the European Second Generation: the case for second-language learning support in early childhood education

ECE-MIG



The Integration of the European Second Generation is a European research project administrating European standardised surveys to 10,000 respondents from Turkish, Moroccan or “Yugoslavian” origin between 18 and 35 years of age in 15 cities across eight countries. The survey explores the importance of national context on education pathways and the success of second-generation migrants. In Germany, among the subgroup of second-generation Turks from parents with relatively low educational attainment, only five per cent reached tertiary education, 33 per cent completed at best lower-secondary education and 62 per cent reached upper-secondary or vocational education. In contrast, in Sweden 32 per cent of the same subgroup reached tertiary education, only nine per cent had completed at best lower-secondary education and 59 per cent had reached upper-secondary or vocational education.

Researchers identified early childhood education as one of the key explanatory factors to these very different pictures, alongside the length of the school day and the age at which students must choose between different education streams. In Germany, most subgroup respondents had not attended pre-primary education and their parents had the responsibility to teach them German. In Sweden, almost all respondents had attended pre-primary education, starting to learn Swedish from the age of two or three in a structured learning environment for which schools took the overall responsibility. This research shows the critical importance of early childhood education in social mobility for disadvantaged families.

Source: Crul (2014); The Integration of the European Second Generation (n.d.)

Practice 130 Bilingual early childhood education, Slovenia

ECE-ETH



In Slovenia, children from Italian and Hungarian communities can attend bilingual early childhood education programmes. A Supplement to the Curriculum has been developed by the education authorities for use in bilingual settings. Schools running bilingual programmes are entitled to additional funding for professional development.

Source: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2014)

Practice 131 Language teaching policies, Norway

ETH-MIG



Norway has adopted a pragmatic approach to language teaching policies. Policies used to provide every child with the right to be educated in his or her mother tongue. As society has become increasingly multicultural, Norway in the early 2000s changed policy direction to provide mother-tongue education only to students who do not speak Norwegian, and until they can follow classes in Norwegian. Students are able to take diagnostic tests in their mother tongue to ensure they are appropriately assessed. Schools with a high proportion of migrants receive extra funding to organise Norwegian-language learning support. Norway also strongly promotes Sami, Finnish and Romani minority languages. In Sami districts, authorities have the responsibility for providing Sami language education from kindergartens to upper-secondary. All children learn English from Grade 1 onwards.

Source: Ministry of Education Norway and Council of Europe (2004); OHCHR/Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2012); Taguma et al. (2009)

4. Literacy and numeracy support

Literacy and numeracy are the core competences needed by students for effective learning across subject areas. Students at risk of dropping out are particularly vulnerable to learning gaps in literacy and numeracy.

Policy and programme pointers to improve literacy and numeracy support and reduce dropout risks include:

- **Investing in early literacy and numeracy** interventions, from early childhood onwards (National Dropout Prevention Centre, n.d.) and ensuring a continuum of interventions between pre-primary and early grades of primary education.
- **Researching cost-effective models for early literacy and early numeracy support.**
- **Developing national policies for literacy and numeracy improvement** that are evidence-based and supported by adequate funding.
- **Aligning teacher-training content with the latest research** in literacy and numeracy teaching strategies.
- **Supporting schools to identify literacy and numeracy learning gaps early.**
- **Providing students with continuing opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, including in secondary education.**
- **Developing family learning activities** that encourage (early) literacy and numeracy.
- **Creating a demand for children's literature** and encouraging students to read through a range of projects and in partnership with cultural organisations.

Practice 132 Improving early literacy and early numeracy through teacher education, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

CAP



The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has implemented a Teacher Education Programme on Early Literacy and Early Numeracy, aiming to improve students' learning outcomes. All teachers in early grades were trained in literacy and numeracy teaching techniques. Training activities engaged them in the kind of learning experience they are expected to provide to their students. The programme provided opportunities for teachers to collaborate, observe and support each other through peer mentoring. Schools were encouraged to gather evidence of students' progress and to review practices accordingly. In addition, Regional Learning Teams were set up for teachers to deepen their newly acquired competences and to receive extra support in implementing their new skills in practice. Regional Learning Teams comprise teachers, early literacy and numeracy school and national trainers, and national teaching advisors from the Bureau for the Development of Education. The programme has resulted in improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in Grade 4, and in narrowing equity gaps in learning for students of Albanian language of instruction compared to students of Macedonian language of instruction.

Source: UNICEF (2015f)

Practice 133 Literacy and numeracy programmes for dropout prevention in Australia, the USA and Ireland

Australia, the USA and Ireland have invested in literacy and numeracy support as part of their dropout prevention strategies and programmes. When students are identified as at risk of dropping out, they are immediately referred to literacy and numeracy support programmes when underachievement in these two areas is a dropout risk factor.

Source: Antonowicz (2012a)

Practice 134 Improving the reading skills of travellers' children, England



Kingsmead Primary School has adopted a whole-school approach to improve students' literacy skills: "All pupils' progress is checked regularly [...]. Staff discuss all pupils during regular pupil-progress meetings and agree next steps, which may include pupil support from the Inclusion Manager, resources for staff or suggestions for teaching strategies. Where Traveller pupils or other individuals are struggling with their reading, they receive one-to-one or small-group catch-up sessions with a specialist reading teacher. Parents are invited into school to see what activities they can do with their children at home to support their reading. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a focus on language development and communication skills for pupils below age-expected levels. This continues through Key Stage 1 so that pupils can catch up quickly and make substantial and sustained progress in Key Stage 2."

Source: Ofsted (2015b)

5. Equipping students with “non-cognitive” skills

Research has established a relationship between “non-cognitive skills” and academic outcomes (Morisson Gutman and Shoon, 2013). Non-cognitive skills also play a role in securing longer-term outcomes in personal, social and professional life. The definition of non-cognitive skills and the terminology around those competences that are not merely academic are on-going subjects of debate. Among these skills we find self-perception, motivation, perseverance, self-control, metacognitive strategies (such as goal setting, problem solving and awareness of own strengths and weaknesses), social competences, resilience and coping and creativity (Morisson Gutman and Shoon, 2013). These skills are particularly relevant in the context of dropout as they can act as protective factors and support students to remain in and complete education.

Policy and programme pointers in this area include:

- **Developing programmes that target non-cognitive skills**, as these are more effective than those targeting only cognitive and academic skills (Kautz et al., 2014).
- **Providing curricular and extra-curricular opportunities** for students to develop non-cognitive skills.
- **Implementing non-cognitive skills development interventions in early childhood education** as they have a life-long lasting effect (Kautz et al., 2014).
- **Learning from out-of-school programmes that have positively reinforced non-cognitive skills** and identifying strategies that could be included in education systems, schools and classrooms (Garcia, 2014).
- **Training teachers and other school staff** in understanding the benefits of non-cognitive skills and in being able to teach them.

Practice 135 Self-Regulated Strategy Development for improved writing skills

Self-Regulated Strategy Development combines teaching about writing and self-regulation to help students to plan, monitor and evaluate their writing. Elaborated in the USA, the method has been successfully adapted elsewhere, including in the United Kingdom. The method requires students to undertake a number of steps in a given order, which will reinforce their self-regulation and enable them to improve writing outcomes. Steps include: discussion about text genres, a pre-assessment (students do a piece of writing), mnemonics used to structure the writing, use of graphic organisers to structure writing, self-scoring, self-talk or talking oneself through the writing task, peer scoring and final assessment. An evaluation based on a randomised controlled trial shows that the approach is relevant and yields improved writing outcomes for participating students compared to peers in control groups.

Source: Togerson and Togerson (2014)

Practice 136 Becoming a Man programme, USA

GEN ♀♂

Becoming a Man has been implemented in Chicago, targeting more than 2,000 male students at risk of dropping out between Grades 7 and 12. Programme activities combine school and after-school interventions, including sessions of Cognitive Behavioural Training, conducted in large groups to develop social-cognitive skills that contribute to the reduction of anti-social behaviour, and regular small-group tutoring in maths. A recent evaluation shows that the programme positively impacted on improved learning outcomes in maths (both in test scores and maths grades) and through a reduction of school absenteeism by 10 days. There was also a 44 per cent reduction in violent crime arrests among participants.

Source: Kautz et al. (2014)



Section 5 | Concluding note

The diversity of factors at play in education exclusion and the process of dropping out require complex policy responses at national and local levels. This handbook introduced dimensions of policy and programme relevance and effectiveness for improving education participation and preventing dropout. It then presented policy options and international practices and strategies to help policy-makers and practitioners strengthen their approaches to improving education participation and preventing dropout. Policy and practice pointers addressed a wide range of risk factors impacting on children's access to and retention in education: individual factors, family factors, school-related factors and systemic/national-level factors. These pointers also addressed the main periods at which children are most at risk of not entering or not remaining in education, particularly when reaching the compulsory school age or when transitioning between two education cycles.

The pointers included in the handbook are indicative and not exhaustive. The 10 policy areas covered in this publication are too often neglected in the policy discourse and in professionals' practices. Indeed, structural education and social welfare system reforms also contribute to better-identification of out-of-school children and increased education quality, attainment and retention, as does increased fiscal space for education. The 10 policy and practice areas investigated here should form the cornerstones of any attempts to improve education participation and prevent dropout in the Europe and Central Asia region.

As this handbook is intended to support planning at national and local levels, a self-assessment tool is presented in [Annex 1](#) to enable policy-makers and education practitioners to assess their current situation and to identify areas for improvement. The tool draws from the policy and practice pointers of the handbook. It can be used by policy-makers at national or local levels, or any agencies engaging in education participation improvement and dropout prevention. Based on the self-assessment results, the reader can refer to the handbook sections for inspiration or to design and strengthen interventions in a specific policy or practice area.



Annex 1 | Self-assessment tool for education participation improvement and dropout prevention

This self-assessment is a tool to enable countries to assess their current situation regarding policies and practices in place to support education participation by encouraging enrolment for all children and adolescents and preventing dropout. Most specifically, the self-assessment tool enables national- and local-level policy-makers and education practitioners to:

- Assess the comprehensiveness and responsiveness of their policies in ensuring the participation of all children and adolescents and preventing dropout.
- Identify areas for improvement and change.

The tool draws from the policy and practice pointers of this handbook. It is organised around three sections:

Part 1: Legislation and regulations.

Part 2: Effectiveness of policies and of the policy planning process (which criteria are drawn from [Section 3](#) of this handbook).

Part 3: Content of policies and interventions (which criteria are drawn from the 10 policy and practice areas in [Section 4](#) of this handbook).

Each part contains several criteria, which can be assessed using the following scoring system:

- 1-Not in place
- 2-Under discussion/revision
- 3-In place but not implemented
- 4-In place but partially implemented
- 5-Fully implemented

Based on the self-assessment results, the reader can refer to the different handbook sections to look for inspiring examples, lessons learned and recommendations to design interventions on a specific policy or practice area.

Table 5 Self-assessment tool for education participation improvement and dropout prevention

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Part 1: Legislation and regulations					
1. Non-discriminatory education legislation and commitment to education inclusion and inclusive education.					
2. Legislation and regulations explicitly refer to children traditionally marginalised from the education system:					
Children with disabilities.					
Children from linguistic minorities.					
Children from traditionally excluded or marginalised minorities.					
Migrant and returnee children.					
Refugee children.					
Stateless and undocumented children.					
Children with chronic or life-threatening illnesses.					
Working children.					
Children in conflict with the law.					
3. Compulsory education:					
The starting age of compulsory education is well defined.					
The length of compulsory education whether age-based, attainment-based, or a combination of both is clearly articulated.					
When compulsory education as an attainment requirement (such as Grade 9 or 12), exceptions are foreseen for children with severe or complex disabilities.					
Regulations address the issue of children reaching the end of compulsory school age but not having yet graduated lower-secondary.					
Compulsory education includes at least one year of pre-primary education.					
Education is free of charge from three years of age onwards.					
4. Enrolment of overage children:					
There are clear guidelines for the enrolment or re-enrolment of overage children who have never attended school or have had long breaks in their education.					
Guidelines ensure that prior knowledge and informal learning of overage children is recognised.					
Guidelines ensure that overage children are placed in grades that are appropriate to their age to avoid stigmatisation and demotivation linked to placement in grades with a large age difference with peers.					
5. Identification of out-of-school children:					
There is concerted national cross-sector identification and referral system for children of compulsory school age not enrolled and not attending school.					
There is concerted local cross-sector identification and referral system for children of compulsory school age not enrolled and not attending school.					
There is a concerted cross-sector national and local identification and referral system for children dropping out from compulsory education.					
There is a concerted cross-sector national and local identification system for children dropping out from post-compulsory education.					

6. School absenteeism:					
Justified and non-justified reasons for absences are clearly identified in legislation.					
Schools are required to record separately justified and non-justified reasons for absence.					
7. Dropout is clearly defined in legislation:					
Regulations make provision for a referral to the local education authorities when a child is absent for more than X days for a non-justified reason.					
Regulations identify a clear absenteeism management system for all schools (who should do what when following the absence of a child?).					
School plans must include an absenteeism management component and a dropout prevention and response component.					
8. The concept of education neglect is included in legislation (e.g. in family code, child code).					
9. Home schooling:					
Home schooling is well regulated and quality assured.					
Safeguards are in place to avoid difficult children's cases to be systematically solved through home schooling.					
10. School enrolment:					
Enrolment procedures ensure that children without identity documents or official proof of address can be registered in school while support is provided to their families to obtain the necessary documents.					
11. Child marriage and teenage parenthood:					
Legislation on the minimum legal age of marriage clearly states that children should continue their compulsory education after marriage when one can marry before reaching the end of the age range of compulsory education.					
Pregnant girls are allowed in school throughout pregnancy.					
Young mothers are allowed and supported to return to school after giving birth.					
12. School transfers:					
School transfer processes are clearly regulated.					
There is a nominated officer in charge of supervising school transfers.					
There is a nominated officer in charge of following-up incomplete school transfers identified through a School Management Information System.					
School transfers are tracked between public and private institutions and across sub-national levels.					
Parents have a legal obligation to notify the school of any school transfer.					
Parents have a legal obligation to notify the school when children are migrating abroad.					
13. School expulsion:					
There are clear regulations on school expulsion.					
Permanent school expulsion cannot be applied to compulsory-school-age children unless the school is responsible for finding an acceptable alternative school for the child.					

14. Second-chance education:					
Bridges between formal and second-chance education for children of compulsory school age and young adults are defined.					
15. Data:					
The definition of out-of-school children is clear, including the age range used, the method of calculation, and encompassing both dropouts and children who have never enrolled in school.					
Dropout is clearly defined in terms of a defined period of “unexcused absenteeism” (see below) and a list of exclusionary conditions (such as migrating abroad or completing compulsory education).					
A distinction is made in the legislation between excused and unexcused absenteeism (truancy), with the former clearly specified in terms of which types of absenteeism may be excused (such as illness, urgent family situations, etc.).					
Part 2: Effectiveness of policies and of the policy planning process (See Section 3 for details)					
A. There is a national policy in place to prevent and respond to dropout.					
B. There is a national policy in place to prevent and respond to chronic truancy.					
C. There is a national policy in place to actively identify children who are not enrolled and not attending school and to support their (re)integration in school.					
1. Policies and programmes are based on a sound understanding of the complexity of the issue of out-of-school children and dropout that encompass a range of determinants from the enabling environment, supply, demand and the quality of education and other related supported services.					
2. Policies and programmes have been shaped by the experience and perspectives of children and young people excluded from the education system, of their families or carers and of the professionals from the education, health, social and child-protection services that are working with these children within the constraints of a given legislative and policy framework.					
3. Policies and programmes articulate a vision and a shared understanding of the issue so that all stakeholders are using a common language and are working towards a common goal.					
4. Policies and programmes have a long-term political and financial commitment.					
5. Policies and programmes are comprehensive and span prevention, intervention and compensation measures.					
6. Policies and programmes are underpinned by effective cross-sector collaboration and coordination at all levels based on clear responsibilities for each actor.					
7. Policies and programmes make provision for a range of prevention and response interventions based on a three-tier approach: universal, targeted and individual interventions.					
8. Policies and programmes are equitable: they aim to reduce disparities in access to education, in quality of education and access and quality of support services. This might include channelling more funds to the schools or districts with the highest prevalence of out-of-school children and dropout and to the most-deprived areas.					
9. Policies and programmes make quality, learning and qualifications a driver for access and completion.					

10. Policies and programmes rely on sound data-collection and information-management systems to provide evidence for policy decision and making (how many children are out-of-school, who are they, where are they, why are they out-of-school?) and for policy monitoring and evaluation.					
Part 3: Content of policies and practices (Refer to Section 4 for policy and practice pointers)					
Area 1: Inclusive early childhood education provision. Policies and practices:					
Aim to universalise pre-primary education.					
Identify interim measures in early childhood education to facilitate children's transition to primary education.					
Focus on improving access of disadvantaged children.					
Address parental involvement in pre-primary.					
Establish early identification mechanisms to address children's and families' needs early.					
Area 2: Timely enrolment in primary school. Policies and practices:					
Define clearly the school-entry age.					
Focus on information dissemination about the importance of timely enrolment in primary education.					
Enable the identification of children at risk of not entering primary school on time.					
Area 3: Financial barriers for students and schools. Policies and practices:					
Consider Cash Transfers, scholarships and other benefits to reduce families' financial barriers to education access.					
Make provision for free school meals, school transport and textbooks.					
Direct education funding to students and schools that need it most.					
Area 4: School transitions. Policies and practices:					
Are in place at national, local and school levels to prepare and support students through transitions.					
Are in place at local and school levels to support parents throughout school transitions.					
Enable multi-service/cross-service planning for improved transitions.					
Support increased transition to upper-secondary education.					
Address comprehensive education and career guidance.					
Enable the delivery of flexible and quality education and career guidance.					
Area 5: Second-chance education and catch-up programmes. Policies and practices:					
Are informed by a mapping of existing second-chance education provision and review of legislation.					
Are based on success factors and lessons learned from existing programmes.					
Consider and enable the implementation of relevant second-chance education, including catch-up programmes, accelerated-learning programmes, re-engagement programmes and second-chance programmes for early school leavers.					
Address issues of accreditation, assessment, certification, validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning.					

Area 6: Parent, family and community engagement. Policies and practices:					
Support positive relationships-building between schools and parents.					
Support schools to engage with parents of children out of school or at risk of dropping out.					
Encourage community involvement in dropout prevention and response.					
Area 7: Student engagement and wellbeing. Policies and practices:					
Address student emotional wellbeing.					
Enable the development of constructive relationships between education staff and students.					
Strengthen students' sense of belonging to the school.					
Area 8: Cross-sector collaboration. Policies and practices:					
Establish cross-sector protocols for the referral of out-of-school children.					
Support the implementation of a Case Management approach for children out of school and children at risk of dropping out.					
Promote integrated social-inclusion programmes.					
Area 9: School-based dropout prevention and response interventions. Policies and practices:					
Are in place to manage and curb school absenteeism.					
Promote the development of school-based dropout early warning systems.					
Ensure that dropout prevention is embedded in schools' everyday work.					
Address school and staff capacity gaps in dropout prevention and response.					
Area 10: Comprehensive individual learning support. Policies and practices:					
Set up school systems that provide equitable learning opportunities for all students.					
Promote the use of individualised learning strategies.					
Adequately support second-language learning.					
Focus on literacy and numeracy improvement.					
Recognise the importance of non-cognitive skills and equip schools to support students' non-cognitive skills development.					

Annex 2 | List of illustrative examples for the 10 policy and practice areas

All the illustrative examples used in the handbook are listed below, organised by the 10 policy areas of section 4. The list is interactive: “Contr+Click” to follow the link and go directly to the Practice you are looking for.

Area 1: Starting early: inclusive earlychildhood education provision

Practice 1 Legal entitlement to early childhood education and compulsory education, European Union	27
Practice 2 Summer pasture early learning opportunities, Kyrgyzstan	27
Practice 3 Financial models for early childhood education, Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States	28
Practice 4 School readiness programme for Syrian refugees, Armenia	28
Practice 5 Kindergarten subsidy programme, Hungary	29
Practice 6 Free early education and care for two-year-olds, England	29
Practice 7 Volunteers to accompany Roma children to pre-primary, Serbia	30
Practice 8 Toys and the right to play of conflict-affected children, Ukraine	30
Practice 9 Roma pre-primary school assistants, A Good Start model, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	30
Practice 10 Roma-Romanian bilingual curriculum in pre-primary school, Romania	31
Practice 11 Parent Education in Preschools, Singapore	32
Practice 12 Early childhood intervention, Portugal	33
Practice 13 Early childhood education centres and child poverty alleviation, Germany	33

Area 2: Enrolling on time in primary school

Practice 14 Access to information for parents: Find Out When Your Child Starts School calculator, United Kingdom	34
Practice 15 Enrolling undocumented migrant children, USA & Belgium	35
Practice 16 Pre-primary preparatory class enrolment campaign, Serbia	36
Practice 17 Identifying six-year-old children at risk of not enrolling on time in Grade 1, Armenia	36
Practice 18 Early identification of children at risk of not entering Grade 1 on time, England	37

Area 3: Reducing financial barriers for students and schools

Practice 19 Child Allowance, Bulgaria	39
Practice 20 Universal child benefit with an age extension, Sweden	40
Practice 21 Conditional Cash Transfer, Turkey	40
Practice 22 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, England	41
Practice 23 Útravaló programme, Hungary	41
Practice 24 Scholarship and mentoring programme for Roma students, Serbia	41

Practice 25 Early School Leaving reduction strategies in Bulgaria and Kosovo*	42
Practice 26 Weighted student funding system, the Netherlands	43
Practice 27 Education funding in Ontario, Canada	43
Practice 28 Funding formula loading, Australia	43
Practice 29 Priority Education Zones, France	44
Practice 30 Educational Priority Areas, Romania	44
Practice 31 Quality Multi-Ethnic Schools Programme, Switzerland	44

Area 4: Improving school transitions

Practice 32 Smoothing transition to primary education for children with disabilities, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	47
Practice 33 Transition mentors and buddies, United Kingdom	47
Practice 34 Post-induction programmes, United Kingdom	47
Practice 35 Summer programme for children of migrant agricultural workers, USA	48
Practice 36 OK Let's Go! transition programme, Northern Ireland	48
Practice 37 Harmonising teaching and marking practices, United Kingdom	48
Practice 38 Informing parents about the education system, Austria and Northern Ireland	49
Practice 39 Materials to support school transition, United Kingdom	50
Practice 40 Supporting transition, Denmark	50
Practice 41 Education, health and care plans, England	51
Practice 42 Extension of the length of compulsory education, Armenia	51
Practice 43 Extension of compulsory education for students without basic qualification, the Netherlands	52
Practice 44 Diversification of vocational education and training, Portugal	52
Practice 45 Modernisation of Technical Vocational Education & Training, Cyprus	52
Practice 46 Career guidance: the approach of Montenegro	53
Practice 47 Act on Guidance, Denmark	54
Practice 48 Comprehensive coverage for career guidance, Serbia	54
Practice 49 Guidance Orientation Curriculum, Turkey	55
Practice 50 Youth Guidance Centres, Denmark	55
Practice 51 The Schools Business Partnership, Ireland	56
Practice 52 Career advice helpline, South Africa	56
Practice 53 Web-based career information system, Turkey	56

Area 5: Second-chance education and catch-up programmes

Practice 54 Summer catch-up programmes in Kosovo*	60
Practice 55 Accelerated Learning Programme in Brazil	60
Practice 56 Catch-up Education Programme in Turkey	60
Practice 57 Accelerated Learning Programme in Tajikistan	60
Practice 58 Sas transition centres in Belgium	61
Practice 59 Hands On Learning, Australia	61
Practice 60 Dobbanto Project, Hungary	62

Practice 61 Non-Formal Education Programme for Dropout Youth in Jordan	62
Practice 62 Caribbean: Second Chance Programme	62
Practice 63 Youthreach, Ireland	63
Practice 64 Alternative Learning Programme, Malta	63
Practice 65 Recognition, validation and certification of competences in Portugal	64

Area 6: Engaging parents, families and communities

Practice 66 The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme, England	67
Practice 67 Home School Community Liaison, Ireland	67
Practice 68 Coffee mornings, United Kingdom, Ireland	68
Practice 69 Multi-level interventions for parental involvement, Romania	68
Practice 70 Engaging fathers, criteria for success, United Kingdom	68
Practice 71 Involving Roma parents in school decision-making, Spain	69
Practice 72 Creating a culture of schooling at home, Finland	70
Practice 73 Equal Chance Project, Serbia	70
Practice 74 Building the capacity of teachers to engage with parents of students at risk of dropping out, Serbia	71
Practice 75 Teacher Training Module based on voices of excluded parents, France	71
Practice 76 Challenging staff perceptions, United Kingdom	72
Practice 77 Parental engagement in school inspection framework, Ofsted, England	72
Practice 78 Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents and Education, Netherlands	73
Practice 79 Positive migrant role models, Denmark	73
Practice 80 Partnerships for after-school programme, Romania	73
Practice 81 Homework Clubs, Balkan Sunflowers, Kosovo*	73
Practice 82 EPIS – Entrepreneurs for social inclusion, Portugal	74

Area 7: Engaging students and supporting their wellbeing

Practice 83 Psycho-social support in a Syrian refugee school, Turkey	76
Practice 84 Three-tier intervention model to pastoral care, Australia	76
Practice 85 Prevention of peer violence, Croatia	77
Practice 86 Multi-professional student support teams, Finland	77
Practice 87 Professional development for social-pedagogues, Kyrgyzstan	78
Practice 88 Psycho-pedagogical mobile teams, Moldova	78
Practice 89 Network for inclusive education, Serbia	78
Practice 90 GAIN project, France	79
Practice 91 Open Schools, Italy	80
Practice 92 Engaging students with barriers to learning and development through creative activities, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	80
Practice 93 School Café, Australia	81
Practice 94 Entrepreneurship projects, Bosnia and Herzegovina	81
Practice 95 Student-led advocacy for out-of-school children, Kosovo*	81

Practice 96 Peer-tutoring and school disengagement: experience from the USA and the United Kingdom	82
Practice 97 YACHAD – Children Tutoring Children in Reading, Israel	82
Area 8: Strengthening cross-sector coordination	
Practice 98 Cross-sector protocols, Armenia	85
Practice 99 Inter-ministry agreement for out-of-school children, Albania	85
Practice 100 Children missing education, England	85
Practice 101 Regulation on the identification and case management of children in difficult life circumstances, Kyrgyzstan	86
Practice 102 Collaboration between the Department of Internal Affairs and the Department of Education and Child Rights Protection, Kazakhstan	86
Practice 103 The role of case managers in the integrated social services reform, Armenia	87
Practice 104 One Child One Plan, Ireland	88
Practice 105 Educational Psychological Services, Norway	88
Practice 106 Give Kids a Chance Programme, Szécsény, Hungary	89
Area 9: Developing school-based dropout prevention and response interventions	
Practice 107 Information on school attendance, England	91
Practice 108 Local attendance officers (Netherlands, Ireland, England)	92
Practice 109 Electronic attendance/absenteeism registration management software	92
Practice 110 Attendance rewards and incentive, Wales	93
Practice 111 Familibase Morning Programme, Ireland	93
Practice 112 An absence minus! An extra chance! Romania	94
Practice 113 School-based model for dropout prevention and response, Serbia	95
Practice 114 Early warning system, Tajikistan	95
Practice 115 Dropout prevention system, Albania	95
Practice 116 School development planning, education quality standards and dropout, Serbia	96
Practice 117 School dropout prevention teams, Kosovo*	96
Practice 118 Dropout prevention and response manual for schools, Kyrgyzstan	97
Practice 119 School coaching and mentoring, Serbia	98
Practice 120 Reflective schools, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	98
Area 10: Providing comprehensive individual learning support	
Practice 121 Inclusive Education Policy of New Brunswick, Canada	100
Practice 122 Copenhagen Model for Integration, Denmark	100
Practice 123 Roma desegregation project, Bulgaria	101
Practice 124 Sharing good practices across schools, Sweden and Denmark	101
Practice 125 Learning opportunities to reduce early school leaving, Malta	101
Practice 126 Learning measures to reduce early school leaving, Portugal	102
Practice 127 Response to Intervention (Rti, USA) or Gradual Response Model (United Kingdom)	102
Practice 128 Universal Design for Learning	103

Practice 129 The Integration of the European Second Generation: the case for second-language learning support in early childhood education	104
Practice 130 Bilingual early childhood education, Slovenia	104
Practice 131 Language teaching policies, Norway	104
Practice 132 Improving early literacy and early numeracy through teacher education, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	105
Practice 133 Literacy and numeracy programmes for dropout prevention in Australia, the USA and Ireland	105
Practice 134 Improving the reading skills of travellers' children, England	106
Practice 135 Self-Regulated Strategy Development for improved writing skills	107
Practice 136 Becoming a Man programme, USA	107

Annex 3 | List of illustrative examples for the eight thematic threads

Below is a list of practices by thematic thread. This is an interactive table: “Ctrl+Click” to follow the link and go directly to the Practice.

Thematic thread 1: Migrants and refugees (coding: MIG)

- Practice 4 School readiness programme for Syrian refugees, Armenia
- Practice 6 Free early education and care for two-year-olds, England
- Practice 13 Early childhood education centres and child poverty alleviation, Germany
- Practice 15 Enrolling undocumented migrant children, USA & Belgium
- Practice 26 Weighted student funding system, the Netherlands
- Practice 31 Quality Multi-Ethnic Schools Programme, Switzerland
- Practice 35 Summer programme for children of migrant agricultural workers, USA
- Practice 38 Informing parents about the education system, Austria and Northern Ireland
- Practice 72 Creating a culture of schooling at home, Finland
- Practice 78 Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents and Education, Netherlands
- Practice 79 Positive migrant role models, Denmark
- Practice 83 Psycho-social support in a Syrian refugee school, Turkey
- Practice 122 Copenhagen Model for Integration, Denmark
- Practice 124 Sharing good practices across schools, Sweden and Denmark
- Practice 129 The Integration of the European Second Generation: the case for second-language learning support in early childhood education
- Practice 131 Language teaching policies, Norway

Thematic thread 2: Children with disabilities (Coding CWD)

- Practice 6 Free early education and care for two-year-olds, England
- Practice 12 Early childhood intervention, Portugal
- Practice 27 Education funding in Ontario, Canada
- Practice 28 Funding formula loading, Australia
- Practice 32 Smoothing transition to primary education for children with disabilities, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Practice 39 Materials to support school transition, United Kingdom
- Practice 41 Education, health and care plans, England
- Practice 42 Extension of the length of compulsory education, Armenia
- Practice 80 Partnerships for after-school programme, Romania
- Practice 88 Psycho-pedagogical mobile teams, Moldova
- Practice 89 Network for inclusive education, Serbia

Practice 92 Engaging students with barriers to learning and development through creative activities, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Practice 105 Educational Psychological Services, Norway

Practice 120 Reflective schools, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Practice 121 Inclusive Education Policy of New Brunswick, Canada

Practice 127 Response to Intervention (Rti, USA) or Gradual Response Model (United Kingdom)

Practice 128 Universal Design for Learning

Thematic thread 3: Ethnic and linguistic minorities (coding ETH)

Practice 7 Volunteers to accompany Roma children to pre-primary, Serbia

Practice 9 Roma pre-primary school assistants, A Good Start model, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Practice 10 Roma-Romanian bilingual curriculum in pre-primary school, Romania

Practice 16 Pre-primary preparatory class enrolment campaign, Serbia

Practice 23 Útravaló programme, Hungary

Practice 24 Scholarship and mentoring programme for Roma students, Serbia

Practice 28 Funding formula loading, Australia

Practice 54 Summer catch-up programmes in Kosovo*

Practice 71 Involving Roma parents in school decision-making, Spain

Practice 73 Equal Chance Project, Serbia

Practice 76 Challenging staff perceptions, United Kingdom

Practice 78 Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents and Education, Netherlands

Practice 80 Partnerships for after-school programme, Romania

Practice 81 Homework Clubs, Balkan Sunflowers, Kosovo*

Practice 95 Student-led advocacy for out-of-school children, Kosovo*

Practice 106 Give Kids a Chance Programme, Szécsény, Hungary

Practice 120 Reflective schools, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Practice 123 Roma desegregation project, Bulgaria

Practice 130 Bilingual early childhood education, Slovenia

Practice 131 Language teaching policies, Norway

Practice 134 Improving the reading skills of travellers' children, England

Thematic thread 4: Gender (Coding GEN)

Practice 11 Parent Education in Preschools, Singapore

Practice 21 Conditional Cash Transfer, Turkey

Practice 70 Engaging fathers, criteria for success, United Kingdom

Practice 136 Becoming a Man programme, USA

Thematic thread 5: Capacity building of education staff (coding CAP)

Practice 37 Harmonising teaching and marking practices, United Kingdom

Practice 74 Building the capacity of teachers to engage with parents of students at risk of dropping out, Serbia

Practice 75 Teacher Training Module based on voices of excluded parents, France

Practice 76 Challenging staff perceptions, United Kingdom

Practice 87 Professional development for social-pedagogues, Kyrgyzstan

Practice 89 Network for inclusive education, Serbia

Practice 118 Dropout prevention and response manual for schools, Kyrgyzstan

Practice 119 School coaching and mentoring, Serbia

Practice 120 Reflective schools, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Practice 132 Improving early literacy and early numeracy through teacher education, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Thematic thread 6: Parental involvement (coding PAR)

Practice 11 Parent Education in Preschools, Singapore

Practice 13 Early childhood education centres and child poverty alleviation, Germany

Practice 14 Access to information for parents: Find Out When Your Child Starts School calculator, United Kingdom

Practice 17 Identifying six-year-old children at risk of not enrolling on time in Grade 1, Armenia

Practice 66 The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme, England

Practice 67 Home School Community Liaison, Ireland

Practice 68 Coffee mornings, United Kingdom, Ireland

Practice 70 Engaging fathers, criteria for success, United Kingdom

Practice 71 Involving Roma parents in school decision-making, Spain

Practice 72 Creating a culture of schooling at home, Finland

Practice 73 Equal Chance Project, Serbia

Practice 74 Building the capacity of teachers to engage with parents of students at risk of dropping out, Serbia

Practice 75 Teacher Training Module based on voices of excluded parents, France

Practice 76 Challenging staff perceptions, United Kingdom

Practice 77 Parental engagement in school inspection framework, Ofsted, England

Practice 78 Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents and Education, Netherlands

Practice 107 Information on school attendance, England

Practice 111 Familibase Morning Programme, Ireland

Thematic thread 7: Early childhood/pre-primary education (coding ECE)

Practice 1 Legal entitlement to early childhood education and compulsory education, European Union

Practice 2 Summer pasture early learning opportunities, Kyrgyzstan

Practice 3 Financial models for early childhood education, Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Practice 4 School readiness programme for Syrian refugees, Armenia

Practice 5 Kindergarten subsidy programme, Hungary

Practice 6 Free early education and care for two-year-olds, England

Practice 7 Volunteers to accompany Roma children to pre-primary, Serbia

Practice 8 Toys and the right to play of conflict-affected children, Ukraine

Practice 9 Roma pre-primary school assistants, A Good Start model, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Practice 10 Roma-Romanian bilingual curriculum in pre-primary school, Romania

Practice 11 Parent Education in Preschools, Singapore

Practice 12 Early childhood intervention, Portugal

Practice 13 Early childhood education centres and child poverty alleviation, Germany

Practice 129 The Integration of the European Second Generation: the case for second-language learning support in early childhood education

Practice 130 Bilingual early childhood education, Slovenia

Thematic thread 8: Cross-sector collaboration (coding CRO )

Practice 17 Identifying six-year-old children at risk of not enrolling on time in Grade 1, Armenia

Practice 18 Early identification of children at risk of not entering Grade 1 on time, England

Practice 51 The Schools Business Partnership, Ireland

Practice 80 Partnerships for after-school programme, Romania

Practice 82 EPIS – Entrepreneurs for social inclusion, Portugal

Practice 83 Psycho-social support in a Syrian refugee school, Turkey

Practice 85 Prevention of peer violence, Croatia

Practice 86 Multi-professional student support teams, Finland

Practice 88 Psycho-pedagogical mobile teams, Moldova

Practice 98 Cross-sector protocols, Armenia

Practice 99 Inter-ministry agreement for out-of-school children, Albania

Practice 100 Children missing education, England

Practice 101 Regulation on the identification and case management of children in difficult life circumstances, Kyrgyzstan

Practice 102 Collaboration between the Department of Internal Affairs and the Department of Education and Child Rights Protection, Kazakhstan

Practice 103 The role of case managers in the integrated social services reform, Armenia

Practice 104 One Child One Plan, Ireland

Practice 105 Educational Psychological Services, Norway

Practice 106 Give Kids a Chance Programme, Szécsény, Hungary

Practice 115 Dropout prevention system, Albania

Practice 117 School dropout prevention teams, Kosovo*

Annex 4 | References

- Abdulahobov, P. (2015) Communication with Antonowicz, L. [Email], 25 November 2015.
- Allen, J.B. (2009) Effective Home-School Communication, in FINE Newsletter, Volume I, Issue 1, January 2009, Harvard Family Research Project.
- Antonowicz, L. (2012a) Literature review: Drop-out prevention and response: School-based intervention and community support models. Good international practices, Belgrade: UNICEF Office for the Republic of Serbia.
- Antonowicz, L. (2012b) Early Warning System for Early School Leaving Prevention, Unpublished, Belgrade: UNICEF Office for the Republic of Serbia.
- Antonowicz, L. (2013a) Identification and monitoring of out-of-school children and dropping-out of students: Kazakhstan, Astana: UNICEF in the Republic of Kazakhstan, available from: http://unicef.kz/uploads/posts/00001031/00001031_en.pdf
- Antonowicz, L. (2013b) Regional Out-of-School Children and Adolescents Initiative: Tajikistan report for UNICEF Tajikistan, Unpublished.
- Antonowicz, L. (2013c) Entrepreneurial Learning: institutionalisation, partnership, fundraising. Unpublished, Sarajevo: UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Antonowicz, L. (2013d) Identification and monitoring mechanisms for OOSC and children at-risk of dropping-out: The Case of Ireland, Unpublished, Geneva, UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS.
- Antonowicz, L. (2014a) "Develop improved evidence-based policies and strategies", presented at the UNICEF Workshop on the Regional Framework for Monitoring Out-of-School Children and Children at Risk of Dropping Out, Bucharest, 3-5 December 2014.
- Antonowicz, L. (2014b) Designing a manual for PRTAN teams. PowerPoint presentation, UNICEF, Pristina, Out-of-School Children Workshop 21-22 May 2014.
- Antonowicz, L. (2014c) Ensuring regular attendance and completion of basic education for all children: Whole-school training – Tajikistan, Dushanbe, UNICEF Office for Tajikistan.
- Antonowicz, L. (2015a) Identifying and managing cases of children out-of-school or at risk of dropping out: Ways Forward for a National Programme in Armenia, Yerevan: UNICEF Office for Armenia.
- Antonowicz, L. (2015b) UNICEF Internal information sharing document – Regional Education Agenda: Serbia. Unpublished.
- Antonowicz, L. (2015c) Pre-primary project [Skype call]. Conversation with Marko Tomic, Centre for Youth Integration, Serbia, 2 October 2015.
- Antonowicz, L. (2015d) Identification of out-of-school children: the experience of Armenia's cross sector approach in Lori Marz, Yerevan: UNICEF Office for Armenia.
- Antonowicz, L. (2015e) Dropout prevention and response: Parental involvement, Presentation at the School Network Meeting, Belgrade, Serbia, 25 June 2015.
- Antonowicz, L. (2015f) Initial thoughts on Second Chance Education: Report for UNICEF Bulgaria, Unpublished.

- Anxiety and Depression Association of America (n.d.) School Refusal [Online]. Available at: <http://www.adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/children/school-refusal> [Accessed on 06/01/2016].
- Appleton, J., Christenson, S., Furlong, M. (2008) Student Engagement with School: Critical Conceptual and Methodological Issues of the Construct, in *Psychology in the Schools*, Vol. 45(5), 2008 Wiley Periodicals Inc.
- Arnold, C., Aitikulova, B., Mamadfozilo, Z. (2012) Ensuring Quality Early Childhood Education for All in Resource Poor Settings. Presentation at UNICEF and Global Partnership for Education High Level Technical Workshop, Improving the Quality of ECE Services for All in the CEECIS region, Athens, 4-6 June 2012.
- Australian Government (2015) Guide to the Australian Education Act 2013, [Online], available at: <https://aeaguide.education.gov.au/content/b211-funding-formula-participating-schools> [Accessed 14/11/2015].
- Aydagül et.al. (2010) Catch-Up Classes Curriculum: Mid-Term Evaluation Report, October 2010, Istanbul: Education Reform Initiative/UNICEF/Ministry of National Education of Turkey.
- Barrett, H. (2008) 'Hard to reach' families: Under-represented, invisible or service resistant? Presentation at Parenting Across Scotland, 28 October, 2008.
- Bell, S. (2015) Skype Call with L. Antonowicz, 25 November 2015.
- Bénabou, R., Kramarz, F., Prost, C. (2003) La Mise en Place des Zones d'Education Prioritaire : Une Evaluation Empirique, 1982-1993. Available at: <http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/files/Benabouetal2002.pdf> [Accessed 06/01/2016].
- Bennet, J. (2012) Roma Early Childhood Inclusion: Overview report. RECI Initiative, Budapest: UNICEF/Open Society Foundations/Roma Education Fund.
- Black-Hawkins, K., Lani, F., Rouse, M. (2007) *Achievement and Inclusion in Schools*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Blades, R. (2012) Denmark Case Study, London: National Children's Bureau. Available at: http://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/appendix_b_denmark_case_study.pdf [Accessed 06/01/2016].
- Borgonovi, F., G. Montt (2012), *Parental Involvement in Selected PISA Countries and Economies*, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 73, Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (2012) *Early School Leaving Reduction Strategy (2013-2020)*, Sofia: Ministry of Education and Science.
- Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (2013) *Implementation Plan 2014-2015 of the Early School Leaving Strategy (2013-2020)*, Sofia: Ministry of Education and Science.
- Bussemaker, J. (2014) Speaking Notes of the Dutch Minister of Education to the UNICEF delegation from Europe and Central Asia: Early School Leaving Study Tour: Learning from the Dutch experience, November 2014, The Hague.
- Cambridgeshire County Council PSHE Service (n.d.) How do we organise the Buddy system in our school? – the role of the Transition Mentor in selecting and training Buddies for New Arrivals. Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire County Council PSHE Service. Available online at: <https://www.learntogether.org.uk/Resources/Documents/Moving%20in%20Moving%20on%20-%20In-school%20support.pdf> [Accessed 06/01/2016].
- Caribbean Examination Council (n.d.) Second Chance Education Programme [Online], available at: <http://secondchance.cxc.org/page-questions-answers-2nd-chance.php> [Accessed 06/01/2016].

CEDEFOP (2008) Terminology of European education and training policy - a selection of 100 key terms, Luxembourg: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

CEDEFOP (2009) European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. Luxembourg: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

CEDEFOP (2010) Guiding at-risk youth through learning to work. Lessons from across Europe. Research Paper N.3. Luxembourg: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training/Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Centre for Education Policy (2014) Combating Early School Leaving in Serbia through effective drop-out prevention and intervention measures at the school level, Project Proposal, Unpublished, Belgrade: UNICEF Serbia.

Centre for Education Policy (2015) *Projekat Sprečavanje osipanja učenika iz obrazovnog sistema Republike Srbije, Obuka za primenu instrumenata za testiranje učenika za koje se sprovodi IPPO*, Presentation made at the UNICEF Dropout Prevention Project Open Method of Coordination Workshop, Belgrade, 24 June 2015.

Chávez Chávez, R., Belkin L. D., Hornback J.G., Adams K. (1991) Dropping Out Of School: Issues Affecting Culturally, Ethnically, And Linguistically Distinct Student Groups. The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students. Volume 8, Winter, 1991. Boise State University, Boise, ID 83725.

Children Workforce Development Council (2009) The Team Around the Child (TAC) and the lead professional: Co-ordinating and delivering integrated services for children and young people - A guide for managers, Leeds: Children Workforce Development Council.

CINOP (2008) General education, professional education and training in the Netherlands, s-Hertogenbosch: CINOP.

Comité interministériel pour la modernisation de l'action publique (2013) Evaluation de la politique d'éducation prioritaire. Rapport de diagnostic, Juillet 2013, Paris : Ministère de l'éducation nationale.

Conwy Children and Young People's Partnership (2011) Engaging parents: Guidance on removing barriers from parent participation, Colwyn Bay: Conwy Children and Young People's Partnership.

Council of the European Union (2011) Council Recommendations of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving, 2011/C 191/01, Brussels: Council of the European Union.

County Resource Center and Educational Assistance Dâmbovița (2013) Final Report. SaVED - Support against Vocational Training and Education Dropout. Leonardo Da Vinci project, available from: <http://www.project-saved.eu/index.php/en/about-projects> [Accessed 06/01/2016].

CRDP Rennes (n.d.) Familles, école, grande pauvreté, Quand parents et enseignants s'en mêlent..., available from : <http://crdp2.ac-rennes.fr/blogs/familles-ecole-grande-pauvrete/> [Accessed 06/01/2016].

Creative Education (2014) Overcoming 10 common barriers to parental engagement [Online], available from: <http://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/blog/parental-engagement/> [Accessed 06/01/2016].

Cross, D. (2012) 'Next practice' for pastoral care and student wellbeing in schools. Edith Cowan University. PowerPoint presentation available at <http://www.ahisa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Donna-Cross.pdf>

Cruġ, M. (2014) Pathways to Success: Does the Integration Context Matter? Presentation at UNICEF Study Tour on Early School Leaving in the Netherlands, The Hague, 12/11/2014.

Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality (n.d.) Educational and vocational guidance [Online], available at: <http://eng.uvm.dk/educational-and-vocational-guidance/guidance> [Accessed 20/01/2016].

Danish Ministry of Education (2009) OECD Thematic Review of Migrant Education. Country Background Report for Denmark, Paris: OECD.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) Moving Forward Together: Raising Gypsie, Roma and Traveller Achievement. Booklet 4: Engagement with parents, carers and the wider community, London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Department for Education (2014a) Guide to the 0 to 25 SEND code of practice. Advice for early years providers that are funded by the local authority, London: Department for Education.

Department for Education (2014b), Education, Health and Care Plans, London: Department for Education/Council for Disabled Children.

Department for Education (2015) Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities. January 2015, London: Department for Education.

Department for Education and Skills (2004a) Engaging fathers: Involving parents, raising achievement, London: Department for Education and Skills.

Department for Education and Skills (2004b) Identifying and Maintaining Contact with Children Missing or At Risk of Going Missing from Education. Process steps. Good Practice Guide. LEA/022/2004, London: Department for Education and Skills.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2010) Pathways to re-engagement through flexible learning options. A policy direction for consultation, Melbourne: State of Victoria (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development).

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development New Brunswick (2013) Inclusive Education. Policy 322. 17 September 2013, available at: <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/policies-politiques/e/322A.pdf>

Department of Education and Science (2005) School Completion Programme. Guidelines towards Best Practice, Dublin: School Completion Programme Unit, Department of Education and Science of Ireland.

Department of Education and Science (2006) The Home, School, Community Liaison Scheme in Ireland: From Vision to Best Practice, Dublin: Department of Education and Science of Ireland.

Department of Education and Skills (2010) An Evaluation of Youthreach. Inspectorate Evaluation Series, Dublin: Department of Education and Skills, Ireland.

Department of Education and Skills (2011) OECD Project Overcoming School Failure: Policies that Work. National Report Ireland, Dublin: Department of Education and Skills, Ireland.

Dooley, C. (2012) The importance of parental engagement within the new OFSTED Framework. East Sussex Council, Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service, January 2012.

Downes, P. (2014) Towards a Differentiated, Holistic and Systematic Approach to Parental Involvement in Europe for Early School Leaving Prevention. Prevent – Involving parents in the prevention of early school leaving.

Ecorys (2013) Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe – Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education, Brussels: European Commission.

Education for Change (2014) Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda for Children in the CEE/CIS region: Independent Multi-Country Evaluation of Results Area 3: increasing access and equity in early childhood education in CEE/CIS. Final Report, November 2014, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Education Support for Northern Ireland (2016) Parents [Online], [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2014) Early Childhood Education and Care: Eurydice Policy Brief, Brussels: European Commission.

Engle, P. L. et al. (2011) Strategies for reducing inequalities and improving developmental outcomes for young children in low-income and middle-income countries, *The Lancet*, Child Development in Developing Countries 2. 23 September 2011.

Epstein, et. al. (2009) *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*. Third Edition. Corwin Press.

Euroguidance Denmark, The Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation (2012) *Guidance in Education – the educational guidance system in Denmark*. ISBN 978-87-90021-77-1.

European Commission (2001) *Second Chance Schools: The Results of a European Pilot Project*, Brussels: European Commission.

European Commission (2010) Commission Staff Working Paper Reducing early school leaving. Accompanying document to the ‘Proposal for a Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving’, Brussels: European Commission.

European Commission (2011) Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions. Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda, Brussels: European Commission.

European Commission (2015) *Education and Training Monitor 2015: Cyprus, Luxembourg*: Publications Office of the European Union, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/docs/2015/monitor2015-cyprus_en.pdf

European Commission and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2012) *Reducing Early School Leaving in the Netherlands: Peer Learning Activity Report*, 9-12 September 2012, the Hague and Rotterdam. Available online http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/doc/netherlands-esl_en.pdf [Accessed on 06/01/2016]

European Commission Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving (2013) *Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support*. Final Report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving. November 2013, Brussels: European Commission.

European Training Foundation (2014) *Skills 2020 Montenegro*. Working Document Version 02/09/2014, Torino: European Training Foundation.

Evangelou, M. et al (2008) *What makes a successful transition from primary to secondary school? Effective pre-school, primary and secondary education (EPPSE 3-14 project)*, London: Institute of Education.

Field, S., Kuczera, M., Pont, B. (2007) *No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education*, Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Finn, J. D. (1993) *School engagement and students at risk*. Washington, DC. National Center for Education Statistics.

Finnish National Board of Education (n.d.) *Support in Basic Education* [Online], available at: http://www.oph.fi/english/education_system/support_for_pupils_and_students/support_in_basic_education [Accessed 06/01/2016].

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, DOI: 10.1080/0305764X.2013.819068.

Fresnoe, J.M. (2010) *Promoting social inclusion of children in a disadvantaged rural environment – the micro-region of Szécsény*. Synthesis Report. Peer Review In Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2010, Budapest, 27-28.5.2010, Budapest: European Commission Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Friedman, E., Gallová Kriglerová, E., Herczog, M., Surdu, L. (2009) *Assessing conditional cash transfers as a tool for reducing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma*, Budapest: Roma Education Fund.

Frilseth, L. (2012) *The Norwegian Model for Education for All in Upper Secondary School*, Oslo: Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, available from <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Norway-L-Frilseth.pdf>

Galton et al. (2003) *Transfer and Transitions in the Middle Years of Schooling (7-14): Continuities and Discontinuities in Learning*. Research Report No 443, London: Department of Education and Skills UK.

Garcia, E. (2014) *The need to address noncognitive skills in the education policy agenda*. Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper #386, 2 December 2014. Economic Policy Institute. Washington.

GHK Consulting Ltd (2011) *Reducing Early School Leaving in the EU*, Brussels: European Parliament.

Goodall, J., Vorhaus, J., Carpentieri, J., Brooks, G., Akerman, R. and Harris, A. (2011) *Review of best practice in parental engagement*. Research report DFE-RR156, London: Department for Education.

Goodenow, C. (1993). *The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates*. *Psychology in the Schools*, 30, 70-90.

Gov.UK (2015) *Help paying for childcare: 5. Free childcare and education for 2 to 4-year-olds*, [Online]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

Gov.UK (2015b) *16 to 19 Bursary Fund* [Online], available at <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/overview> [Accessed 15/09/2015].

Gov.UK (2015c) *Children with special educational needs (SEN)* [Online], available at <https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help>

Gov.UK (2015d) *School attendance and absence* [Online], available from: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview> [Accessed 15/09/2015].

Government of Albania (2013) *Agreement on the Identification and Registration in School of all Compulsory School Age Children*. 02.08.2013.

Government of Kosovo (2009) National Action Plan against school dropout (2009-2014), Prishtina: Ministry of Education and Science.

Government of Kyrgyzstan (2015) Regulation on the identification and case management of children in difficult life circumstances, Bishkek, 22 July 2015, No 391.

Government of Portugal (2016) *Sistema Nacional de de Intervenção Precoce de la Infância* [Online], available at : <https://www.dgs.pt/ms/12/default.aspx?id=5525> [Accessed 25/01/2016].

Government of Romania (2009) Education and Research for a Knowledge Society: Strategy 2009-2015, Bucharest: Government of Romania.

Government of Romania (2012) Government Program, Education Chapter, available at: http://www.gov.ro/chapter-5-education__l2a1057.html [Accessed 10/09/2015].

Government of Romania (2015) Strategy to Reduce Early School Leaving in Romania [*Strategia privind reducerea părăsirii timpurii a școlii în România*], Bucharest: Ministry of Education and Scientific Research.

Guy, W. (2009) Peer Review: Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Roma – Synthesis Report. Greece. 27-28 May 2009. Peer review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2009, Greece: European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit.

Hamre, B. K., Pianta, R. C. (2008) Student-Teacher Relationships. University of Virginia, available at: <http://www.pearweb.org/conferences/sixth/pdfs/NAS-CBIII-05-1001-005-hamre%20&%20Pianta%20proof.pdf>

Hargreaves, A., Fullan, M. (2000) Mentoring in the New Milenium, Theory into Practice, Volume 39, Issue 1, 2000, pp 55-56.

Harvard Family Research Project (2006) Family involvement in early childhood education. N.1. Spring 2006. Available online at: www.hfrp.org/content/download/1181/48685/file/earlychildhood.pdf [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

Hattie, J. (2009). Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to Achievement. New York: Routledge.

Heckman and Masterov (2004) The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children, Working Paper 5, Invest in Kids Working Group Committee for Economic Development, October 2004. Available online at: http://jenni.uchicago.edu/Invest/FILES/dugger_2004-12-02_dvm.pdf

Henwejer, L. (2009) OECD Thematic Review of Migrant Education – Country Background Report for the Netherlands, Paris: OECD, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/42485352.pdf>

Heppen, J. B., (2010) Using Early Warning Systems for Progress Monitoring and Dropout Prevention. Southeast Comprehensive Center. RTI Summit. February 25, 2010.

Hornby, G., Lafaele, R. (2011) Barriers to parental involvement in education: an explanatory model, Educational Review, Vol. 63, No. 1, February 2011, 37-52.

Hungarian Government, Prime Minister's Office (2014) Aid worth HUF 1.8 billion provided as part of the "Provisions" scholarship programme, October 7, 2014 [Online], available at <http://www.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/news/aid-worth-huf-1-8-billion-provided-as-part-of-the-provisions-scholarship-programme> [Accessed 06/01/2016].

ICF-GHK (2013) Peer Review on Early School Leaving. Background Paper: Portugal. March 2013, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/events/2013/documents/peer-backpt_en.pdf

Illinois State Board of Education (2015) Registration Guidance for the 2015-2016 School Year. Residency & Enrollment, Immigrant Pupils, Homeless Pupils and School Fees & Waivers. August 2015. Available at: <http://www.book.dislib.info/b1-juristic/4179563-1-registration-guidance-for-the-2015-2016-school-year-residency-enr.php> [Accessed 14/09/2015].

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2007) IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings. Geneva: IASC.

International Initiative for Impact Evaluation-3iE (2010) Conditional cash transfer programmes: A magic bullet to improve people's health and education? Impact Evaluation 01 – May 2010.

Irwin, A. (2010) Moving from rhetoric to a real focus on poverty, social exclusion and inequality: the role of Services of General Interest, in European Anti Poverty Network Ireland(2010) Ireland and the European Social Inclusion Strategy: Lessons Learned and the Road Ahead, pp. 112-129.

Jewish Virtual Library (n.d.) YACHAD – Children Tutoring Children in Reading in Learning Together: Chapter I - Programs for Youth At-Risk & Dropout Prevention [Online], available from <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Learning/one.html> [Accessed 06/01/2016].

Kautz, T., Heckman, J., Diris, R., ter Weel, B., Borghans, L. (2014) Fostering and Measuring Skills: Improving Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Skills to Promote Lifetime Success, Paris: OECD.

Kelly, C. (2012) Early warning systems on early school leaving. Questionnaire for the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving. Internal document.

Kent County Council (n.d.) School Age [Online], available at: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-age> [Accessed 06/01/2016].

Kilic, R. (2009) A Significant Step Forward: The web-based career information system in Turkey, Ankara: Directorate General for Special Education Guidance and Counselling Services. Ministry of National Education.

Ladd, F.H, Fiske, E.B. (2010) Weighted Student Funding in the Netherlands: A Model for the US? May 2010. Paper prepared for the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Conference, November 5-7 2010, Washington. Available online at: <http://www.iga.ucdavis.edu/Research/EJS/seminars/Ladd%20paper.pdf>

Lefter, L. (2015) Psycho-pedagogical mobile teams, Email to Antonowicz, L., 18 November 2015.

Lehr, C.A., Johnson, D.R., Bremer, C.D., Cosio, A., Thompson, M. (2004) Essential tools: Increasing Rates of School Completion: Moving From Policy and Research to Practice A Manual for Policymakers, Administrators, and Educators, Minneapolis: National Center on Secondary Education and Transition.

Lewis, M. (n.d.) Foundations of Social Work Policy: Practice Social Problem and Policy Analysis Frameworks. Available on 'Classroom to Capitol', <http://melindaklewis.com/policyanalysis/> [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

Longden, K. (2013) Accelerated Learning Programmes: What can we learn from them about curriculum reform? UNESCO Global Monitoring Report Background paper 2013, Paris: UNESCO.

Lyche, C. S. (2010) Taking on the Completion Challenge. A Literature Review on Policies to Prevent Dropout and Early School Leaving. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 53, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5km4m2t59cmr-en>

Macpherson, S., Goodlad, R., McKenzie, C. (2007) Learning Lessons from thematic social inclusion partnerships, Edinburgh: Communities Scotland.

Maranda Where you live (2015) Special school gives migrant students a head start, Maranda Where you live, Wotv4Women, available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsCynYFPyGI> Published in 2015 [Accessed 06/01/2016].

Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale (2012) Le GAIN une démarche collective pour prévenir le décrochage scolaire. Académie de Créteil, Créteil : Copas.

Ministry of Education and Employment of Malta (2014) A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta, Valletta: Ministry of Education and Employment.

Ministry of Education Norway and Council of Europe (2004) Language Education Policy Profile: Norway, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands (2014) The approach to Early School Leaving. Policy in the Netherlands and the provisional figures of the 2012-2013 performance agreements. *Directie MBO, kwaliteitsafpraak VSV*. [Accessed on 06/01/2016]

Ministry of Social and Family Development of Singapore (2012) Parent Education in Pre-School (PEPS): Guide on Set-up and Management, Singapore: Family Education Department, Ministry of Social and Family Development.

Mitchell, D. (2014) What Really Works in Special and Inclusive education. Using evidence-based teaching strategies. Second Edition. London: Routledge.

Morisson Gutman, L., Shoon, I. (2013) The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people. Literature review, London: Institute of Education. Commissioned by Education Endowment Foundation. 21 November 2013.

National Dropout Prevention Centre (n.d.) Early Literacy Development [Online], available from: <http://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/early-literacy-development/> [Accessed 06/01/2016].

National Educational Welfare Board (2012) One Child, One Team, One Plan: The Practice Model for The Home School Community Liaison Scheme, The School Completion Programme, The Educational Welfare Service, Dublin: National Educational Welfare Board. Available online at: http://most.ie/webreports/2014/TP/NEWB_OCOTOP_Practice_Model.pdf [Accessed on 06/01/2016]

National Educational Welfare Board (2012) One Child-One Team-One Plan Practice Model: Training for the pilots [Presentation PowerPoint], Dublin: Education Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency. Accessible from: <http://slideplayer.com/slide/3030383/> [Accessed 06/01/2016].

National School Climate Center (2016) School Climate [Online]. Available at: <http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/> [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

Nowak, I. (n.d.) Monheim für Kinder (Mo.Ki) [Online], Available from www.monheim.de/moki [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

Nusche, D. (2009), What Works in Migrant Education?: A Review of Evidence and Policy Options, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 22, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/227131784531>

Nusche, D., Wurzburg, G., Naughton, D. (2010) OECD Reviews of Migrant Education. Denmark, Paris: OECD, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/denmark/44855206.pdf>

OECD (1999) Inclusive Education at Work: Students with Disabilities in Mainstream Schools, Paris: OECD.

OECD (2006) Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care, Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

OECD (2010) School Level Policies for Migrant Education Pointers for policy development, Paris: OECD, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/46679158.pdf> [Accessed 22/07/2015].

OECD (2012a) Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools, Paris: OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264130852-en>

OECD (2012b) Let's Read Them a Story! The Parent Factor in Education, PISA, Paris: OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264176232-en>

OECD (2013) Ready to Learn: Students' Engagement, Drive and Self-beliefs, Volume III, Paris: OECD, available from: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/PISA2012-Vol3-Chap2.pdf>

OECD (2014) Education Policy Outlook. Portugal. October 2014, Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, available at: http://www.oecd.org/edu/EDUCATION%20POLICY%20OUTLOOK_PORTUGAL_EN.pdf

OECD (2015) Parental involvement, Last updated January 16th 2015 [Online], Available from: <http://gpseducation.oecd.org/revieweducationpolicies/#!node=41727&filter=all>, Paris: Education GPS, the world at your fingerprints, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

OECD and The European Commission (2004) Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/34060761.pdf>

OFMDFM-Northern Ireland Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2007a) Effective Policy Making. Workbook Three: Identifying the Way Forward, HIA Gateway, West Midlands Public Health Observatory. Available online at <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/effective-policy-making-workbook-four-practical-guide-impact-assessment> [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

OFMDFM-Northern Ireland Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2007b) Effective Policy Making. Workbook Four: A Practical Guide to Impact Assessment, The Policy Toolkit Guide of Impact Assessment for Northern Ireland, HIA Gateway, West Midlands Public Health Observatory. Available online at <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=69807> [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

Ofsted (2008) Good practice in re-engaging disaffected and reluctant students in secondary schools. Reference no: 070255, London: Office for Standards in Education /Crown.

Ofsted (2010) Children missing from education. The actions taken to prevent children from missing education or becoming 'lost to the system', London: Office for Standards in Education/Crown.

Ofsted (2013) Unseen children: access and achievement 20 years on. Evidence report, London: Office for Standards in Education /Crown.

Ofsted (2014) Early Years. Annual report: 2012/2013, London: Office for Standards in Education /Crown.

Ofsted (2015a) The Framework for School Inspection. January 2015, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457194/The_framework_for_school_inspection-.pdf

Ofsted (2015b) Improving relations with parents to raise achievement and improve attendance of Traveller pupils: Kingsmead Primary School. Good practice example: Schools: Kingsmead Primary School. March 2015, 150023, London: Ofsted.

OHCHR/Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2012) Norway: Information on the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of indigenous peoples, available at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/StudyLanguages/Norway.doc

- Ontario Ministry of Education (2015) 2015-2016: Education Funding: A Guide to Grants for Students' Needs, Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education.
- Oomen, A., Plant, P. (2014) Early School Leaving and Lifelong Guidance. ELGPN Concept Note No. 6, *Jyväsylä*: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.
- Pearson (2012) What makes good career guidance?, London: Pearson.
- Peters, S. J. (2004) Inclusive Education: An EFA Strategy for All Children. November 2004, Washington: World Bank.
- Pfaffe et al. (2014) UNICEF Multi-Country Evaluation, RKLA 4: Including All Children in Quality Learning in CEE/CIS, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, available from: http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_81157.html
- Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (2008) Undocumented Children in Europe: Invisible Victims of Immigration Restrictions, Brussels: PICUM.
- Price, M. (2013) Alternative education and transition pathways for early school-leavers. Evaluating a DECD flexible learning program for young people in regional South Australia, Milton: BoysTown.
- RAND Europe (2013) Support for children with special educational needs (SEN), Brussels: European Commission.
- Rankovic, T. (2015) Network for Support to Inclusive Education, Email to Antonowicz, L. 15/12/2015.
- Rankovic, T. (2016) Email to L. Antonowicz, 14 January 2016.
- Reddy, R. Rhodes, J., Mulhall, P. (2003) The influence of teacher support on student adjustment in the middle school years: A latent growth curve study. *Development and Psychopathology*, 15 (2003), 119–138. Cambridge University Press.
- Republic of Albania (2015) Common Guideline for the Improvement of the Regulation for the Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement Dt 02/08/2013 on 'The Identification and Registration in School of All Compulsory School Age Children', Nr 2, Dt 05/01/2015, Tirana: Republic of Albania, available at: http://www.unicef.org/albania/U3M_Agreement_OOSC_5Jan2015_English.pdf
- Republic of Armenia (2015) Law of the Republic of Armenia On making an Amendment to the Law on Education. [Accepted on 08.04.2015].
- Republic of Serbia (2010) Education Quality Standards, Belgrade: Republic of Serbia.
- Roma Education Fund (2013) Mainstreaming the Access of Disadvantaged Romani Children to Quality Early Childhood Education and Care. A Good Start's Implementation Model, Budapest: Roma Education Fund.
- Roma Education Fund (n.d.) Launching the Serbian Romani Secondary School Scholarship and Mentorship Program [Online], available at <http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/news/ref/news-and-events/launching-serbian-romani-secondary-school-scholarship-and-mentorship-progra> [Accessed 06/01/2016].
- Roma Education Fund Romania (2011) Project 'School after school – the first step towards school and professional success' Presentation for the EURoma meeting, 10-11 November 2011.
- Rourke, S. (1999) A Learning Experience: Case Studies on Local Integrated Strategies to Tackle Education Disadvantage. YouthStart-funded project, Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.
- Rumberger, R. (1995) Dropping out of Middle School: A Multilevel Analysis of Students and Schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Autumn, 1995), pp. 583-625.

Ryan, C., Brattman, M. (2012) Workshop Two: It takes a village to raise a child – cross-sectoral and local co-operation. The School Completion Programme in Ireland. Early School Leaving EU Conference, Brussels, March 2012.

School Completion Programme (2006) School Completion Programme. Administrative, Financial and Employment Guidelines, Revised Edition, Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Scott, M. (2013) Migrant summer program: Kent City looks to catch students up academically from five districts [Online], available at http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2013/07/migrant_summer_program_kent_ci.html [Accessed 06/01/2016].

Smit, F., Driessen, G., Felling, B. (2009) The functioning of the Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents in the Netherlands, in Diversity in education, Publisher: Malmö University, Editors: G. Johansson, M. Kristoffersson, pp.121-130., available at: http://www.researchgate.net/publication/235968139_The_functioning_of_the_Platform_for_Ethnic_Minority_Parents_in_the_Netherlands

Spahiu, A. (2015) Email to Laetitia Antonowicz, 11 December 2015.

Spielhofer, T. Marson-Smith, H., Evans, K. (2009) Non Formal Learning: good practices in re-engaging young people who are NEET. Slough: NFER.

Steady, A., Roberts, R. (n.d.) Moving up: Supporting Transitions from Primary to Secondary School for Pupils on the Autism Spectrum. Resource Pack for Parents and Carers. Leicestershire Autism Outreach Service. Available at: http://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/resource/ASD-Transitions-Report_Eng.pdf [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

Stehlik, T. P. (2006) Levels of engagement. Report of findings of the School Retention Action Plan. Action Research Project. Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies. University of South Australia. January 2006.

Swedish Ministry of Education and Research (2009) OECD Thematic Review of Migrant Education. Country Background Report for Sweden, Paris: OECD, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/sweden/42485410.pdf>

Sylva et al. (2004) Final Report: Effective Pre-School Education. Technical Paper 12: The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education [EPPE] Project, London: Institute of Education and Department for Education and Skills. ISBN 085473 603 4.

Taguma, M., Shewbridge, C., Huttova, J., Hoffman, N. (2009) OECD Reviews of Migrant Education: Norway, Paris, OECD, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/43723539.pdf>

Taplin, D., Clark, H. (2012) Theory of Change Basics: a primer on Theory of Change, New York: ActKnowledge.

TÁRKI Social Research Institute (2014a) Study on Conditional cash transfers and their impact on children. Final Report. Volume I, Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

TÁRKI Social Research Institute (2014b) Study on Conditional cash transfers and their impact on children. Final Report. Volume II – Case Studies, Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2009) KIDS COUNT Indicator Brief. Reducing the High School Dropout Rate. July 2009, Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The Integration of the European Second Generation (n.d.) Website [Online], available from: <http://www.tiesproject.eu/index9ed2.html?lang=en> [Accessed 15/11/2015].

The Lego Foundation (2015) UNICEF and LEGO Foundation provide conflict-affected children a chance to play and learn, 7 September 2015, [Online], Available from: <http://www.legofoundation.com/en-us/newsroom/articles/2015/donation-to-unicef-ukraine>

Tilleczek, K. Ferguson, B. (2007) Transitions and Pathways from Elementary to Secondary School: A review of selected Literature, Toronto: Community Health Systems Resource Group – The Hospital for Sick Children for the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Togerson, D., Togerson, C. (2014) Improving Writing Quality. Evaluation Report, London: Education Endowment Foundation.

Trickey, S., Coldwell, M., Holland, M., Close, P., Rybinski, D. (2005) Evaluation of Valued Youth: A National Peer-Tutoring Programme To Increase Self Confidence And Motivation. Paper presented to the European Conference on Educational Research, University College Dublin, 7-10 Sep 2005.

UIS and UNICEF (2015). Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. Montreal: UIS. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15220/978-92-9189-161-0-en>

UNESCO (2005) Guidelines for Inclusion: ensuring access to education for all, Paris.

UNESCO (2012a) Expanding equitable early childhood care and education is an urgent need. Education for All Global Monitoring Report. Policy Paper N.3, Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO and R4D (2015) Innovative Financing for Out-of-School Children and Youth, Bangkok: Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific.

UNESCO and UIS (2012) International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011, Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

UNESCO Bangkok (2014) Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education: Lessons Learned from a Decade of Research and Practice, Bangkok: Multilingual Education Working Group Asia-Pacific/UNESCO Bangkok.

UNESCO-IBE (2012) World Data on Education 2010/11 – the Netherlands, Geneva: UNESCO-IBE.

UNICEF (2009) Learning Achievement in the CEE/CIS Region, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF (2010) Towards Roma Inclusion. A Review of Roma Education Initiatives in Central and South-eastern Europe, February 2010, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF (2011a) The Right of Roma Children to Education: Position Paper. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF (2011b) Demand for Education Innovation: Adolescent and youth perspectives on education quality in the CEE/CIS Region, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF (2012a) The Right of Children with Disabilities to Education: A Rights-Based Approach to Inclusive Education. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF (2012b) School Readiness and Transitions. A Companion to the Child-Friendly School Manual, New-York: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2012c) Equity in Learning? A Comparative Analysis of the PISA 2009 Results in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS.

UNICEF (2013a) Education Equity Now! A regional analysis of the situation of out of school children in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Geneva, UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF (2013b) Final Report to UK National Committee. August 2013, Amman: UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa.

UNICEF (2013c) Call for Action 'Education Equity Now! All Children Included in Quality Learning'. Regional Ministerial Education Conference, Istanbul, 10-13 December 2013.

UNICEF (2014a) Policy Brief, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244) Ensuring all children enrol, attend and complete education, Prishtina: UNICEF Office for Kosovo (UNSCR 1244).

UNICEF (2014b) Case studies from schools involved in the UNICEF's Inclusive Education Training of Trainers Programme (2012-2014), Skopje: UNICEF Office for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, available from: http://www.unicef.org/tfymacedonia/Inclusive_Education_-_ang%281%29.pdf

UNICEF (2015a) A Rights-Based Approach to Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities. UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. <http://www.inclusive-education.org/basic-page/inclusive-education-booklets-and-webinars>

UNICEF (2015b) The Investment Case for Education and Equity, New York: UNICEF. http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Investment_Case_for_Education_and_Equity_FINAL.pdf

UNICEF (2015c) Regional Education Agenda: Including All Children in Early Learning and Inclusive Quality Education. Theory of Change for RCLA 3&4 2014-2017. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF (2015d) Financing Inclusive Education. Booklet 8, in A Rights-Based Approach to Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Available online: <http://www.inclusive-education.org/basic-page/inclusive-education-booklets-and-webinars>

UNICEF (2015e) Programme Handbook. Prevention of peer violence. For a Safe and Enabling Environment in School, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF (2015f) Improving Learning Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy: the Experience of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Skopje: UNICEF Office for the the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, available at: <http://www.unicef.org/tfymacedonia/Documentation-LitNumMacedonia-FINAL.pdf>

UNICEF (2015g) Access to School and the Learning Environment II – Universal Design for Learning. Inclusive Education Webinar 11: Companion Technical Booklet, in A Rights-Based Approach to Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, available from http://www.inclusive-education.org/sites/default/files/uploads/booklets/IE_Webinar_Booklet_11.pdf

UNICEF (forthcoming) A Fair Start: Strategic directions in early learning and school readiness for UNICEF CEE/CIS, Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF (n.d.) Preventing and combating school dropout, [Online], available at: http://www.unicef.org/romania/media_15625.html [Accessed 10/09/2015].

UNICEF and the Centre for Education Policy (2015) *Korak ka održivim promenama u praksi kroz sistem mentorstva - Sistem mentorstva u projektu Sprečavanje osipanja učenika iz obrazovnog sistema Republike Srbije*, Belgrade: UNICEF Serbia and the Centre for Education Policy.

UNICEF and UIS (2012a). All Children in School by 2015: Global initiative on out-of-school children – Kyrgyzstan country study, Bishkek: UNICEF Country Office.

UNICEF and UIS (2012b). Romania Country Study: Analysing the situation of out-of-school children in Romania, Bucharest: UNICEF Country Office.

UNICEF and UIS (2012c). All Children in School by 2015: Global initiative on out-of-school children – Turkey Country Study, Ankara. UNICEF Country Office.

UNICEF and UIS (2013), All Children in School by 2015: Global initiative on out-of-school children – Tajikistan country study, Dushanbe: UNICEF Country Office.

UNICEF and UIS (2015) Global Out-of-School Children Initiative Operational Manual, New York: UNICEF.

UNICEF and UIS (2016). Monitoring Education Participation: Framework for Monitoring Children and Adolescents who are Out of School or at Risk of Dropping Out. UNICEF Series on Education Participation and Dropout Prevention, Vol I. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan (2015) Children not attending school: guidance for schools, Bishkek: UNICEF Kyrgyzstan.

UNICEF Romania (2016) Parents' involvement component – School Attendance Initiative Model and Quality Inclusive Education Model (unpublished).

United Kingdom Department for Education and Skills (2004) Identifying and Maintaining Contact with Children Missing or At Risk of Going Missing from Education Process Steps Good Practice Guide LEA/0225/2004. 30 July 2004, London. Available online at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/LEA-0225-2004.pdf> [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

University of Oxford (2011) Strengthening Youth Opportunities: A pilot impact and process study of empowerment-based non-formal education for out-of-school youth in Amman, Jordan, Oxford: University of Oxford.

USAID (2012) Bishkek : USAID.

Väestöliitto (n.d.) Creating a culture of schooling at home, Helsinki: Väestöliitto, the Family Federation of Finland.

Van der Klei (2014) Approach of school absenteeism – Youth probation, Presentation at UNICEF Study Tour on Early School Leaving in the Netherlands, The Hague, 13 November 2014.

Vogel, I. (2012) Review of the use of 'Theory of Change' in international development. DFID Research Paper. UK Department of International Development.

Voncken, F. (2013a) Presentation at the Regional Ministerial Education Conference, Including All Children in Quality Learning, Istanbul, 10-13 December 2013. Available online at: http://education-equity.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/3.2_Netherlands_FredVoncken_ENG.pdf

Voncken, F. (2013b) Presentation at the Regional Ministerial Education Conference, Including All Children in Quality Learning, Istanbul, 10-13 December 2013. Available online at: http://education-equity.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/8.3_Netherlands_FredVoncken_ENG.pdf [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

Watts, A.G. (2002) Policy and Practice in Career Guidance: An International Perspective. A keynote speech delivered to the Institute of Career Guidance Annual Conference held at Ashford, Kent, on 5-7 September 2002.

Watts, A.G. (2013) Career Guidance and Orientation. Chapter 7 in UNESCO-UNEVOC (2013) Revisiting Global Trends in TVET: reflections on theory and practice, Bonn: UNESCO-UNEVOC, 239-274.

Weare, K., Gray, G. (2003) What Works in Developing Children's Emotional and Social Competence and Wellbeing? Research Report, London: Department for Education and Skills ISBN 1 84478 054 6.

Welsh Assembly Government (2011) Strategies for Schools to Improve Attendance and Manage Lateness, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government, available from <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/2945/3/110308section3en.pdf> [Accessed on 11/06/2015].

WHO (2012) Developmental Difficulties in Early Childhood: Prevention, early identification, assessment and intervention in low- and middle-income countries. A review, Geneva: World Health Organisation.

Work in Sweden (n.d.) Social Benefits [Online], available at <http://work.sweden.se/living-in-sweden/social-benefits/> [Accessed 15/09/2015].

World Bank (2012) Toward an Equal Start: Closing the Early Learning Gap for Roma Children in Eastern Europe. World Bank Europe and Central Asia. 4 June 2012. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/RomaECD_FinalReport.pdf [Accessed on 06/01/2016].

Wroblewski, A., B. Herzog-Punzenberger (2009) OECD Review of Migrant Education – Country Background Report for Austria, OECD Publishing, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/innovation-education/42485003.pdf>

Yang, J. (2015) Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning in UNESCO Member States, Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Youth Employment Inventory (n.d.) Non Formal Education Program for School Drop Outs, Informal Education Program for Street Kids.

Zelloth, H. (2009) In Demand: Career Guidance in EU Neighbouring Countries, Torino: European Training Foundation.

Zelloth, H. (2012) 'The demand and recent development of lifelong guidance in EU neighbouring countries'. Presentation at the EU Presidency Conference – Lifelong Guidance 2020, Lanarca, Cyprus, October 2012.

Zelloth, H. (2014) Career Guidance – International trends. Presentation at Egyptian Forum for Youth Employment Promotion, Cairo, 25 June 2014.

Annex 5 | Endnotes

1. The ISCED distinguishes informal learning from “incidental” or “random” learning which are not organised or structured and “involve communication not designed to bring about learning” (such as meetings, radio programmes not designed for education purposes) (UNESCO and UIS, 2012).
2. In some countries there is legal provision for parents to postpone by one year the entrance of their child in Grade 1.
3. A useful methodology for studies on out-of-school children is presented in the Operational Manual of the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (UNICEF and UIS, 2015).
4. Examples of the latter are available in OECD (2012a).
5. *Kosovo Security Council Resolution 1244.
6. Upper-secondary is generally neither free nor compulsory in the region, although some policies are in place to reduce the financial burden on families through scholarships and a few countries have also started making upper-secondary fully or partially compulsory.
7. European Union has been: “services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers”. (OECD and The European Commission, 2004).
8. Information on education pathways and careers and support tools such as self-assessment tools can easily and cost-effectively be provided online. This, however, requires a high degree of collaboration across sectors and regions, so as to accurately capture formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities for young people. Online and remote information delivery solutions, such as help-lines, enable services to be equitable across regions (OECD and The European Union, 2004).
9. Within the European Union, second-chance education is usually understood as education and training opportunities for young people “excluded and who lack the skills and qualifications to enter further training or the job market” (European Commission, 2001). Recently, the term has been more specifically used to refer to education provision for “18-24 year olds who have disengaged with their education and training, and who do not hold the equivalent of upper-secondary qualifications” (Ecorys, 2013).
10. Refers to school support for the personal and social wellbeing of students – covering health and social issues as well as behaviour management and emotional support.
11. Refers to school support for the personal and social wellbeing of students – covering health and social issues as well as behaviour management and emotional support.
12. The terminology used here is the one used by the programme.
13. Refers to school support for the personal and social wellbeing of students – covering health and social issues as well as behaviour management and emotional support.
14. See “Step 5: Close gaps in horizontal information flows through cross-sector collaboration” in the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016).
15. PISA 2012 reveals that: “On average across OECD countries, arriving late for school is associated with a 27-point lower score in mathematics, while skipping classes or days of school is associated with a 37-point lower score in mathematics – the equivalent of almost one full year of formal schooling.” (OECD, 2013)
16. See Step 6 and Step 7 of the *Monitoring Education Participation Framework* (UNICEF and UIS, 2016).
17. <http://masht.rks-gov.net/en/prinderit>; https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/12/doracak-per-ekipet-shkollore-per-parandalim_1.pdf

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and
the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS)

Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Tel.: +41 22 909 5000 Fax: +41 22 909 5909

Email: ceecis@unicef.org

www.unicef.org/ceecis

www.facebook.com/unicefceecis

www.twitter.com/unicefceecis

