



Human Dimension Implementation Conference Warsaw, 29 September-10 October 2008

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Recommendations submitted during the Working Session 6 on Tolerance and non-discrimination, Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti

INCLUD-ED is an integrated project (IP) under priority 7 “Citizens and governance in the knowledge-based society” of the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6). The underlying ideas of the project involve the promotion of education as a tool to make the EU achieve the Lisbon objectives of becoming a competitive economy and to foster greater social cohesion for all European citizens. The development of high quality education systems that facilitate the acquisition of the skills needed in the knowledge-based society is a key element to guarantee the full social inclusion for all people. Social exclusion affects a part of the population in Europe and the need to intervene from education to address this situation has been highlighted.

In this context, INCLUD-ED aims at providing key elements and actions lines to improve educational and social policy. The **main objective is to analyse educational strategies that contribute to social cohesion and educational strategies that lead to social exclusion, in the context of the European knowledge society, providing key elements and action lines to improve educational and social policy.** The research focuses on the study of the interactions between educational systems, agents and policies, up to the compulsory level (i.e. pre-primary, primary, and secondary education, including vocational and special education programmes). Based on the premise that education and learning can contribute towards combating social exclusion, INCLUD-ED aims to provide an integrated level of understanding that looks into the theories, policies, practices and outcomes which are involved in educational attainment and social inclusion. INCLUD-ED pays attention not only to educational structures (educational systems, reforms and policies), but also to social agents (policy makers, teachers, students and communities), and especially focuses on vulnerable groups (i.e. migrants and cultural minorities i.e. Roma, youth, people with disabilities and women).

In order to respond to this aim, the research consortium was set up and integrates 60 experienced researchers from 15 universities or research centres and 14 European countries. This is an interdisciplinary team directed by Ramon Flecha (University of Barcelona) covering anthropology, economics, history, research methods, political sciences, linguistics, sociology and education. This multidisciplinary contributes towards developing an extensive expertise in the analysis of social exclusion and inclusion in different areas of society such as education, labour market and social policy. The team is supported by ten Working Groups, different Free Task Oriented Groups, a Panel of Experts and an Advisory Committee composed of representatives of vulnerable groups.

For the purpose of this statement, the following recommendations arise from the findings obtained through a 20 case study research conducted throughout Europe in schools that meet the following criteria: (a) **school success** (as reflected by children’s or

adolescents' progress in educational attainment) in relation to their context¹, and (b) located in **low SES** and students with **minority background**. These are the recommendations:

1. **To place all students in heterogeneous groups.** The scientific literature indicates the damaging effects for all students, not only for those located in the lower streams but for all students. Therefore, it is recommended to avoid any kind of students' segregation or streaming along language, ability, or ethnic lines. To encourage the interaction between students of different backgrounds and abilities, as it does not only increase the instrumental learning but also builds up a context of solidarity in which all the students are receiving the same quality education. Heterogeneous grouping require additional resources. Therefore, it is recommended **to include additional resources in the classroom to support heterogeneous groups**. They can be those specialists or teachers that are already used to separate low achievers or special education students. One way to obtain additional resources is to place all these resources in the classroom with the teacher. A second option is to open up the classroom to all the community.
2. **Community participation.** Families' participation in the students learning activities and decision making of the school contributes to the quality of education. It becomes a way of increasing the human resources which are available in the school and support the implementation of inclusive practices. This participation can thus also support students' school success, especially relevant for the case of students' with vulnerable backgrounds. Thus, family and community participation in schools contributes to a better coordination between the home and the school.
3. **Community education.** The scientific community has extensively demonstrated that family educational background correlates with students' performance. While many efforts have been made to support teachers training, community education can be also a strategy to enhance and support students' learning. Community education contributes to enriching the children's environment by raising the level of education of all agents that interact with students (families, community members etc.)
4. **To give more and better to those who have less.** Extend the students learning time, hold high expectations and provide quality education for all students.

¹ When referring to "school success in relation to the context" we mean that students in the educational centres selected obtain higher levels of educational attainment in comparison to students in educational centres located in similar socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts.

For more information:

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