

Good practice sourcebook

PREVENT network

AN URBACT II PROJECT



Involving parents in early school leaving



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CONTENT

WHAT KIND OF GUIDE IS THIS and how to use it.....	3-4
THEMATIC APPROACH; an introduction to Early school leaving and to the PREVENT project.....	5-9
WHAT IS “GOOD PRACTICE” REALLY?	10-16
GOOD EXAMPLES ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT; overview and ecology.....	17-21
ANALYSIS SECTION performance, added value	22-25
TRANSFER OF GOOD PRACTICE some food for thought.....	26-29
ABOUT URBACT	30
Appendix: Good Examples complete presentations.....	31-61

“ *While it is never too early for parents to be involved, it is also true that it is never too late, as children benefit from involvement at each and every stage of their lives. . .* ”

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WHAT KIND OF GUIDE IS THIS AND HOW TO USE IT

Introduction

First of all, let us introduce PREVENT; a European network project with ten cities as partners; Nantes (lead partner), Antwerp, Sofia, Gijon, Stockholm, Munich, the Hague, Usti nad Labem, Catania and Tallinn. The project's focus is on working with parents to prevent early school leaving. PREVENT is co-funded by the URBACT Programme, a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development (www.urbact.eu). This **Good Practice Guide** is one of the products delivered by the network.

One of the major activities of the first project phase of the PREVENT network has been the **mapping and sharing of good practices related to parental**

involvement in measures and processes to prevent early school leaving. The mapping done by cities have been underpinned by a serious ambition to find and disseminate actions, projects and policies that first and foremost are considered useful in the context where they are or have been running.

In parallel with the mapping process, two transnational meetings have been used to disseminate and assess the good examples given – a kind of “good practice shops” where each city has been able to learn more about the most interesting examples – according to diverse city needs and contextual situations.

The Guide of course offers **a comprehensive section (appendix) on good practices** related to the involvement of parents in preventing early school leaving. But it also offers some useful information, tools and recommendations related to;

- what early school leaving is about
- what good practice in general is about
- how good practice can be easily mapped
- how bilateral meetings could be prepared and assessed for good learning
- the ecology of “PREVENT good practices collection”

The Guide also touches **on the PREVENT network learning process**; how cities respond to the good practice mapping and dissemination process and what it means in terms of continuation. One part is that cities are encouraged to set up and manage bilateral exchange activities – where of course the good practices play an important role in the visits design and learning outcomes.

The Guide has one part dedicated to **analysis and reflection**, where thoughts on how the good practices delivered by the PREVENT network cities fit into an ecology of preventive measures, involving parents and aimed at fighting ESL. The discussion

uses the latest insight and recommendations from EU and the European Commission as a framework for the ecology way of thinking; after all, early school leaving is a process in a young person’s life, meaning that there are many opportunities to act and react along the way!

Last but not least the Guide introduces **the concept of Structural Indicators (SI)**; a set of indicators to raise cities’ awareness on the actions and strategies on different levels needed to prevent ESL in general, and parental involvement more specifically. The ambition is to support a more holistic approach when planning for actions and policies needed to address all dimensions in the prevention of Early School Leaving, not the least the systemic and structural ones. We believe that promoting a stronger focus on Structural Indicators could help in shifting focus – from dysfunctional individuals to holistic and flexible systems and structures.

The SI concept is now being tested and discussed within the network cities, and we are looking forward to analyse the answers. Hopefully, the SI concept could be used as a quite innovative approach to formulate Policy recommendations on how cities can work to invite and involve parents and carers, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to promote educational success for all children.





THE THEMATIC APPROACH

Early school leaving – sign of the times or simply a systemic failure?

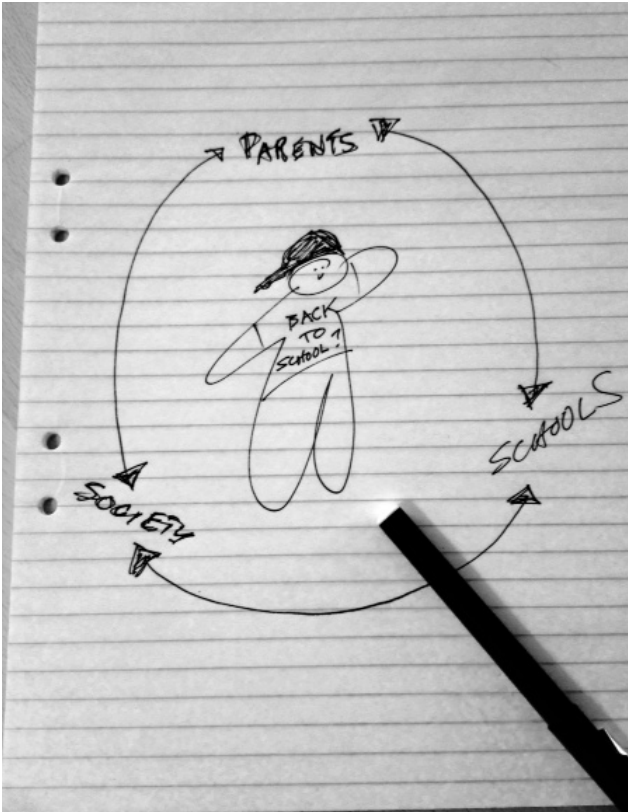
Leaving school without the skills and qualifications that are considered necessary to make a successful transition between school and work causes problems and restraints not only for the young and their families, but also for cities and societies as a whole. It is widely recognised that early school leaving (hereby ESL) has implications and negative consequences at many levels; the individual, the social and the economic. From an individual point of view, ESL:ers are more likely to be unemployed or in low-paid jobs, often leading to a dependency over time on welfare and social benefits. They are less likely to become “active citizens” and they are less often involved in life-long learning. Moreover, early school leavers run a higher risk of becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour than

those engaged in learning. ESL:ers on average are also supposed to earn less throughout their working life than those having a degree¹.

In recent times, early school leaving has become a major policy priority, not only in Europe but also across the developed world. In October 2013, Eurostat estimated that over 26 million people were unemployed in the EU-28, of whom over 19 million were in the Eurozone. Boosting employment in the EU is therefore, one of the main priorities of policymakers.

¹ - See for instance “Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda”, “Final Report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving”

In parallel, a main target of the Europe 2020 strategy is to reduce the general early school-leaving rate to less than 10% by 2020. Indeed, it is a target well motivated, also with reference to current unemployment rates, not the least for many of Europe's young; high rates of early school leavers mean a tremendous waste of potential and, as a consequence, a major barrier to individual, social as well as to economic development. One negative consequence of ESL, as highlighted in research, is the higher risk of ending up in unemployment.



From a general point of view, we know that challenges related to job creation, participation and inclusion are not easy to solve and manage. Thousands of projects all over the EU have already tried and failed. On the other hand, solutions do not have to be that mysterious; maybe “doing better” in solving issues like ESL and youth unemployment has to do with whether cities, nations and Europe will be able to engage the young in future planning and in finding acceptable ways to co-produce good ways to promote educational success – including a shift in focus from individual deficits to structural disorientation – together with the young and, in the case of the Prevent network, with parents and families. And even if it is true that most young people ‘find their way’, and that by today, knowledge, competencies and life skills can be found and acquired in many places, contexts and situations, far too many still experience the negative effects of early school leaving.

ESL definition

The European Union defines early school leavers as people aged 18-24 who have only lower secondary education or less and are no longer in education or training. More generally, ESL can also include young people who have dropped out of school before the end of compulsory education, those who have completed compulsory schooling but have not gained an upper secondary qualification, and those who have followed prevocational or vocational courses, which did not lead to a qualification equivalent to upper secondary level. Within the PREVENT network, we have translated early school leaving into including all forms of leaving education and training before completing upper secondary education or equivalents in vocational education and training. Using the PREVENT network definition above to describe early school leaving, we come close to bridging the two terms existing in the ongoing discussion; early school leaving and school drop-outs. The distinction is, according to the European Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Early School Leaving (Final report, 2013) that:

“...whilst the term early school leaving could include all forms of leaving education and training prematurely, the term ‘school drop-out’ often refers to discontinuing an on-going course, e.g. dropping out in the middle of the school term. Drop-out from education can occur at any time and can be experienced by different age groups”.

From a wider point of view it seems important to mention and clarify both terms, as the interpretation and understanding of them could lead to different policies, approaches and actions. Measures to prevent young people from dropping out of current education could be quite different from motivating those who have chosen not to enter



higher education in the first place. Nevertheless, being a proactive city, dealing with only one of the perspectives is not good enough. To tackle the issue of both individuals' and societies' wellbeing and prosperity, we have to build a holistic chain of performance – from the early support of an educational success for all children and families to the development of inclusive and flexible systems for lifelong learning, accessible for all people.

Who leaves school early – and why?

Causes for ESL on the individual level can be complex and not always easy to address. ESL:ers are not a homogenous group, and there is often more than one problem leading to the ESL situation. Nor is ESL a “sudden” action; from research we know that the decision to drop out or to not proceed to higher education could be the final step in a long process, where the young individual has faced several negative implications finally leading to the decision.

But still, there is a demand from different stakeholders in society to “better understand” what makes an early school leaver. A review through research over time contributes first and foremost with a perspective that focuses on **individual risks and protective factors** (who is he/she), mapping characteristics, backgrounds and situations of young people that have left the school system early or dropped out of school. The bullet points below offer some general guidance on ‘who ESL:ers might be’:

- may have experienced socio-economically marginalised backgrounds
- may have experienced trauma or stresses affecting mental health or wellbeing
- may have (single) parents with low or even no educational background
- may belong to vulnerable and excluded groups
- may have had a high level of disengagement and poor achievement in school
- have experienced a high level of residential as well as school mobility
- may live in areas where the concentration of families with certain backgrounds, problems and patterns that create a form of class and ethnic “ghetto-ism” could increase the risk for ESL

But as already mentioned, focussing only the individual aspects is not enough when trying to

understand an issue as complex as early school leaving. Thanks to a growing number of studies and projects, PREVENT definitely being one, a stronger focus on **structural and/or systemic causes** that could have an impact on, and hopefully also offer some additional explanation, on why young people leave school early are being discussed. This trend is definitely going in the right direction as it prevents stigmatising of individuals and groups and instead, promotes searching for, and adapting, existing structures and systems to be better equipped to deal with challenges related to the issue of early school leaving – and to the demands attached to it. Some examples of structural factors with a negative impact on ESL rates are:

- irrelevant and inflexible curricula, lock-in consequences
- double grading/retention systems
- parents-school relation/communication not adequately in place
- bullying in schools
- poor communication with teachers/staff as part of poor school or classroom climate
- lack of systems to identify and support educational and/or other needs (physical, psychological, social etc)

In a Swedish study published 2013, bullying was ranked as the number one cause for leaving school. Another high ranked cause referred to the level of (non) attention given by teachers and other staff in school; “...no one (from the adult world) did actually care...”. The feeling that no one cared, to not being seen and understood, eventually led to, or at least coincided with the decision to drop out of school. These examples works as a reminder that there is not one single “truth”, no one model, to describe ESL:ers or the ESL process. It is instead the ability to see and understand different causes, different contexts and coinciding structures that will give us the possibility to better prevent early school leaving in our cities – for the sake of the individual and, as a positive consequence, for the sake of our cities and communities. And no matter we choose to focus on ESL only or consider the more general aspects of youths now rioting even in countries that historically are measured organised and well off, we have to move away from trying to adapt individuals and groups to fit in existing systems, to doing it the other way around. We have to start using a more systemic oriented approach to why “things are as they are” instead of continuing to labelling individuals (drop-outs, target group-ing, young as problematic etc.). Such an approach will only promote and sustain a blame culture, as well as the stigmatising of groups and/or individuals. Instead we should look deeper into real roots and causes

and then use creativity, energy and resources to support frontrunners, cities and societies to work hard to set up and maintain sustainable, inclusive dialogue processes with the young, and for that sake, with all relevant stakeholders. Besides the human and democratic aspects of why people

must be involved, another driver is the growing need for rapid societal transition. As we have to find ways to develop sustainable systems to manage emerging complexity, we also face a tremendous but extremely interesting challenge to bridge policy to people, strategy with practice.

ESL means high costs on many levels...

Building from the negative social impact of ESL as addressed in previous texts, high rates of ESL means high restraint on public administration costs. While staying in school for one extra year could improve a young person's work life earnings with at least EUR 70 000, calculations in some countries (Finland, Netherlands, Ireland) on the other hand show public costs for ESL within the span of EUR 1-2 million on a lifetime basis². As ESL is proportionally higher in urban areas, many cities, especially with regards to the emerging crisis, will experience higher costs to the welfare/social systems as unemployment rates are most likely to rise for the period to come. In several countries (Netherlands, Sweden, Norway) one highly ranked reason for leaving school is mental/psycho-social problems, reasons that most likely are generating high costs to health, psychology, welfare and social services.

From the public cost perspective, ESL consequences on the cost side include:

- Lower income and economic growth
- Reduced tax revenues
- Higher costs of public services such as healthcare, criminal justice and social benefit payments

Looking at benefits from education across different

perspectives, the table below, offered by Belfield, gives a good understanding of why reducing ESL is a headline target in the EU 2020 strategy as well as one of five benchmarks of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (European Commission, 2010). With a broad perception that ESL affects both individuals and society negatively, building adequate policies to reduce it has become a highlighted focus. And without going any deeper with speculations on the different aspects of costs related to ESL, there is obviously a need for further evaluations and studies on the subject. Designing adequate policies to combat early school leaving requires the identification of causal links as well as evaluations of expected costs and benefits. In order to reduce both individual as well as institutional costs of early school leaving, the European policy debate should give more attention to how costs should be calculated, compared and assessed. There is a risk that costs, when being addressed as negative, are being constantly over-estimated – with increased guilt feelings and further negative consequences for ESL:ers and school dropouts, and with wrong ideas on policies and actions as another “costly” result.

P - Private benefits	(1) Gain in net earnings and wealth + (2) Improved health status / life expectancy + (3) Household productivity gains - (4) Fees for education
F - Fiscal or government (<i>state / local and federal / central</i>)	(5) Increased tax payments + (6) Lower reliance on government health programs + (7) Reduced expenditures on criminal justice + (8) Lower reliance on welfare - (9) Subsidies for education
S - Social	Private individual benefits + Fiscal benefits + (10) Productivity externalities + (11) Gains from reduced crime + (12) Social value of health

Source: Belfield 2008

The Prevent network – an innovative approach to prevent early school leaving

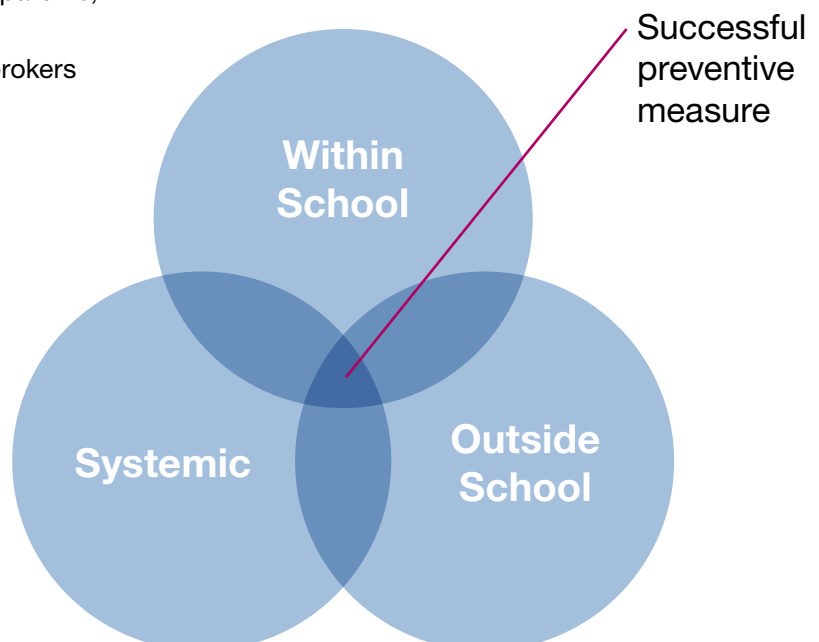
The prevention of ESL must be built on a holistic approach of the child. The PREVENT network adds to the holistic perspective by

- a) Considering parents as a key part of the solution to reduce ESL, and
- b) Considering cities as driving forces to create synergies, common understanding and to promote and develop innovative collaboration between stakeholders.

Research clearly stresses the involvement of parents and/or families and caretakers as a key element and a major success factor in reducing the rate of ESL. But many actions and projects aiming at ESL prevention are not addressing or including parents as a target group. As one answer to this gap, the PREVENT network was set up – with an idea to find already existing good practices of parental involvement that could be shared and disseminated on the one hand, and to develop new ways to involve parents in preventive measures on the other. More concrete, this means that the PREVENT network wants to bring schools, students and parents closer together in preventing ESL. Building strong links between multiple stakeholders, using and supporting a holistic approach, could have real impact on several areas, each one of great value to fight ESL:

- the way schools connect to parents and families
- the school climate
- the way support is being offered both to parents, teachers/schools and students
- the way other actors, stakeholders and brokers in society could be involved

Addressing the ESL issue by using the parental approach could be a way to find new solutions on the ESL topic as such, but could also bring added value to the fields of child/youth and parent relations, to enhanced school and educational performance, to stakeholder involvement in city planning and service delivery as well as to policy and decision making. Early school leaving is not an isolated matter; it is a multi-faceted problem with roots and causes on many levels. To better understand these, we need to make connections to all relevant stakeholders – to visualise the needs, the worries and the resources. In PREVENT we have a name for this approach; PREVENT-ODOLOGY (see above). The model will be used to coordinate good practices, gaps and ideas until the project period ends in April 2015. This way we will be able to present a map of ways, innovative as well as well established, that from a multi level approach should be useful for cities all over Europe interested in reducing and preventing ESL – with a clear focus and ambition to involve and support parents as one major success factor!





WHAT IS “GOOD PRACTICE” REALLY?

About definitions and criteria

There is no doubt we are living in a time where the search (looking for shortcuts) and urge (need for societal change) for services and products that could help us solve problems and challenges is of vital concern. One of the main drivers in the huge amount of projects, of which many co-funded by the European Union, is for partners, cities and organisations to “get out there” to learn from each other to, hopefully, be able to bring bits and pieces back home to be implemented in existing services and actions. The process could be referred to as the “good practice game” – a powerful tool if properly used and managed and, on the other hand, an enormous waste of money and effort if misused and poorly planned.

Therefore, let us – before looking at the good practices chosen by PREVENT cities on how to involve parents in preventing early school leaving – have a closer look at the “good practice” definition. Who and what define good practice? Is it up to anyone to label anything a good practice? Is it something in the good practice itself that either promotes or prohibits a transfer process?

Note: Many external sources still often use “best practice” instead of good practice as title. In this guide we have deliberately chosen to use “good practice”, as from our understanding many of the complex challenges we face today will be dependent on a multitude of connected practices to solve them. And as best practices always are

awarded from criteria arising from a local context, most times they will have to be adapted and transformed to fit into other contexts with different criteria and different conditions.

The following definition (using good and best practice as synonyms) is offered by wikipreneurship.eu:

"A best practice can be defined as a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven to reliably lead to a desired result. A more detailed definition is the following:

Best practices are those documented, accessible, effective, appropriate, and widely accepted strategies, plans, tactics, processes, methodologies, activities, and approaches developed by knowledgeable bodies and carried out by adequately trained personnel which are in compliance with existing laws and regulations and that have been shown over time through research, evaluation, and practice to be effective at providing reasonable assurance of desired outcomes, and which are continually reviewed and improved upon as circumstances dictate."

wikipreneurship.eu also offers criteria for the selection of good/best practices:

1. Well documented
2. Accessible
3. Based on a process and a methodology
4. Tested and practised
5. Able to provide assurance to reach a defined result
6. A continual process of improvement, including continual training, education, and certification
7. Replicable
8. Efficient → benefits outweigh costs / relation between inputs and outputs is better than practices of peers
9. Effective → lead to desired outcomes or impact / relation between output and outcome is better than practices of peers
10. Adaptable and able to address contingencies
11. Providing benchmarks and frameworks
12. Addressing the human, administrative, technical, and physical aspects of a practice. This includes people, processes and procedures, policies and plans, systems, networks, technologies, and facilities that make the implementation of practices possible.

These attributes constitute the main criteria for the selection of good practices.

From definitions to reality check – good practice according to Prevent partners

From the definition and indicators above, we can imagine that good practice is closely connected both to a process and to a methodology, and that a methodology in turn can be a system of practices. Coming back to the work of the Prevent network, looking at good practice from a more pragmatic and "daily work" point of view, how do Prevent partners think about GP's in general and more specifically, good practices regarding how to involve parents in

the prevention of ESL? The question was part of the agenda of the first PREVENT transnational meeting, and the output was indeed part of a learning process, a starting point for the network concerning the way we think of, map, present and disseminate good practice. Having in mind the general definition above, this is what PREVENT city representatives suggested as good practice:

- Knowledge
- Theory based
- Experience
- Maintainable
- Effective
- Non-oppressive
- Appropriate according to different environments
- Simple and cheap
- Recognising and incorporating the needs of the target groups
- Facilitating relationships between experts, institutions, beneficiaries
- Effective ways for transferring and sharing
- General
- Good for whom?
- Good where and when?
- You learn something – good or bad
- Good for practical and policy level
- Methods
- General
- Simple

- Product
- Process
- Involving all stakeholders
- Indicators of success
- Something that works and gives results to answer a certain need
- Pride
- Something that can be adapted in other situations, countries, cultures and contexts
- Evaluation
- Even bad practice can be good practice if you learn from it
- Success
- Realistic and practical
- Engagement
- Transferability
- Realistic
- Involvement of stakeholders
- Flow
- Feedback
- Tackle difficult situations and challenges
- Networking
- Diversity
- Transferable
- Improvement
- Added value
- Problem definition and goal setting
- Target group involvement
- Evaluation
- Expectations defined
- Involvement of stakeholders
- Analysis of local situation
- Evaluation
- Communication of results
- Skip the p-word (project)
- Solution to a problem
- Results orientated
- Meaningful
- New and innovative
- Practical

When comparing the definition given in wikipreneurship.eu with the suggestions from PREVENT city representatives, they show a remarkable overlapping result. Good practice, according to the PREVENT team, must be about flexibility, transparency, transferability and stakeholder involvement. It has to be realistic and

practical, built upon needs, possible to sustain. It should promote networking, innovation, diversity – and it must be results oriented, built on knowledge, theory and/or experiences. In short, for an action to be labelled good practice, it must be a really good answer to a really tricky problem...

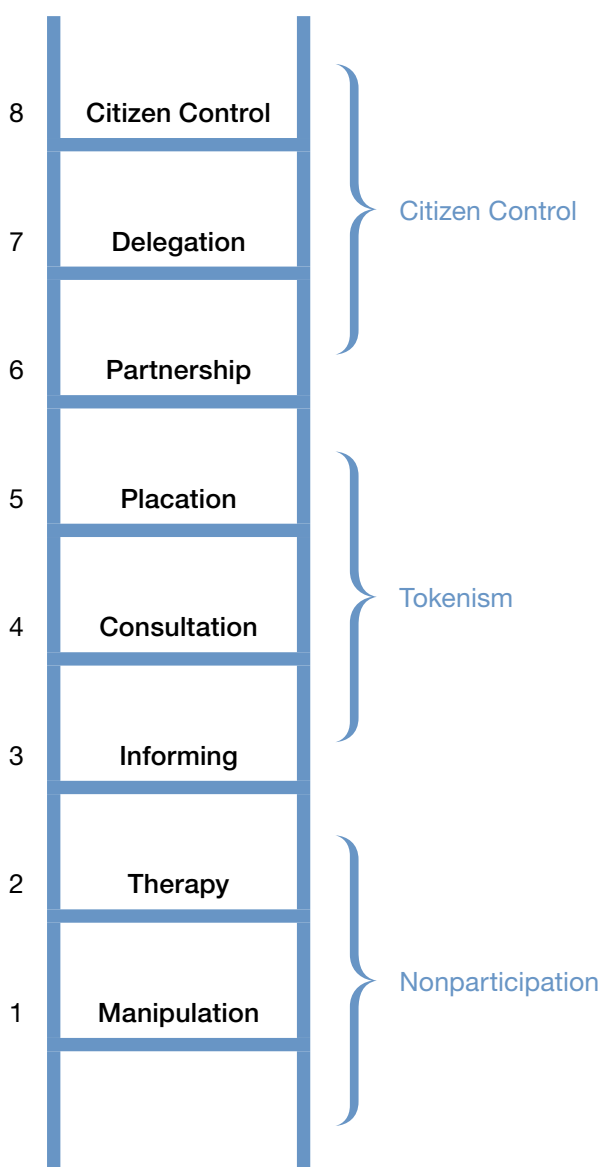
How to validate good practice in relation to parental involvement in reducing ESL?

The list of good practice criteria suggested by PREVENT cities above was addressing good practices in general, not specifically carving out indicators that could guarantee good practices on parental involvement in ESL prevention. Instead, the selected practices do themselves offer some guidance on why they should be considered good practice, and given the fact that evaluating them according to existing city (and regional, national) specific conditions in each city, especially as some of the examples are not in use anymore would be too great challenge, we used the opportunity to choose a more 'open' and subjective definition of good examples. And even without a thorough assessment, the added value of searching for perceived good practices is that people involved now have better knowledge and understanding of the range of local policies, actions, projects and resources in each city, what kinds of cooperation are in place – and also, thinking about further development of services, what gaps and challenges that still have to be solved. While PREVENT, as all URBACT networks, are managing their own learning and development process, (see figure) also the

bilateral exchange actions will feed in naturally in the on-going discussions and reflections on relevant indicators when evaluating good practice on parental involvement in ESL prevention.

But looking at the PREVENT process of addressing and assessing good practices, an important distinction is that when we are using the term 'good practice' in this guide, it is not related to a result of an assessment process towards given criteria or indicators. In fact, we have found it difficult to find relevant and established indicators that could be used for the purpose. Building on this insight, we will address the challenge and try to, as one output from the expert team of the network, to come up with a set of indicators that could be useful when putting policy and actions in place trying to approach and involve parents, and hopefully, also transparent enough to be of good use also when approaching other groups in society. Already in this guide we launch the concept of Structural Indicators (see page 17) that could be one important input to such an attempt.

Another angle that would be useful in the assessment of good practice aiming at involving stakeholders is the ‘Arnstein ladder of participation’ model. The model could work as a ‘lowest level of quality assurance’ for PREVENT cities in their ambition to connect and engage parents on an equal basis to be part of a sustainable chain of ESL prevention. The ladder is a guide to seeing who has power when important decisions are being made. The reason the model still is being referred to, is because people continue to confront processes that refuse to consider anything beyond the bottom steps.



Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
Degrees of Citizen Participation

About mapping, sharing and adding to “good practice” – the way we did it

To ensure joint learning and a starting point for the mapping process, we proposed ten questions to the cities to present and analyse their own good practices. The format was then used for knowledge sharing and peer review activities throughout the two first transnational meetings. The questions used were:

- Start with the “skinny”! That is, introduce your project or good practice
- What was the need/problem addressed? The context?
- Who formulated the need /problem/challenge?
- Who initiated the project /practise?
- Who is the target group (s)/end users?
- How does it work?
- Challenges along the way?
- How were they tackled/solved?
- Why do you consider it to be a “good practice”?
- What about evidence/results? Evaluations?

The questions have proved to be of good use to ‘start the learning and transfer process’. As cities involved in URBACT networks are facing differences in legislative frameworks, structures and policies, helping cities to explore possibilities to further develop as well as to promote the transfer of good practices was considered useful. Using the PREVENT project as an example, good practices were presented and explored at the two first transnational meetings, using easy tools as posters, swot analysis and speed dating to offer possibilities to “go a bit deeper” into the understanding of each good practice. After all, transfer of good practice is a process, not a copy and paste exercise; therefore using two meetings was a worthwhile investment to raise the joint understanding of city structures and situations as well as on the examples themselves. It has also proven to be a good incentive to promote the bilateral actions; processes where two or more cities jointly explore and learn from each other based on a common interest and/or good practices. And even though the level of understanding was quite high among PREVENT cities, we supported them with two simple tools to help preparing the bilateral actions to come. As the main idea is to build a good learning and reflection capacity, the first tool, The **Constructive friends’ manual**, is a

peer-learning tool developed to support capacity building, innovation transfer and problem solving. To be successful, each participant has to do its homework, be well prepared and participate with an open and non-defending attitude towards other participants.

It is best used when there is a thematic overlap – like in the case of PREVENT, involving parents in the prevention of ESL. The manual is presented as an optional possibility for cities to use. The following steps briefly make up a “Constructive friends” workshop:

Step one: Introduction from Moderator (5-15 minutes depending on situation / theme)

Step two: Introducing the presenter (15 minutes)

Step Three: Questions from Constructive Friends Group to presenter (5 minutes)

Step Four: Discussion of and suggestions and ideas from Critical Friends Group (15 minutes)

Step Five: Feedback from presenter (10 minutes)

Step Six: Summary by workshop facilitator (15 minutes)

The other tool – a minimum requirement to use for PREVENT cities involved in bilateral activities – is the **Bilateral meetings matrix (BMM)**, see figure above. By using this simple tool to assess the joint learning, both the hosting network city as well as the one visiting will be involved in transfer as well as in further development. Besides providing useful input to the visiting city both to the Local action plan work as well as to new, concrete actions it provides new ideas for improvement and development for the hosting city, service and/or organisation). All BMM's produced by cities will, in due time, be collected and analysed by the PREVENT expert team. The output from this exercise will give a good contribution to how PREVENT cities have collaborated in transferring, implementing and developing good practices related to parental involvement in ESL prevention.

PREVENT Network : Bilateral Meeting Matrix

Visiting city: _____ Hosting city: _____ Date(s): _____ Activity: _____

Visiting site basic info <small>(name, type of organisation, funding, sources, main activities, basic values, strategies, objectives, etc.)</small>	Key learning points? <small>(aha's, ideas, worries, difficulties, parents' focus, multi dimensional approach, systemic approach)</small>	What could be utilised in your own organisation/Local Action Plan? <small>(new approaches, ideas, activities, tools, strategies/policies, etc.)</small>	Contribution to the hosting organisation/ activity? <small>(ideas for improvement, joint development plans, information etc.)</small>

Moving beyond target group thinking – introducing Structural Indicators

In addition to the more general information provided by the questions above, the Prevent expert team has discussed and developed a **“Structural indicator matrix”**, SIM, that could be used as a complementary tool to enhance strategic thinking and thus, to promote a successful process of the development of sustainable Local action plans, LAP’s. More concretely, the SIM aims at introducing core structural indicators as part of a strategic systemic approach in partner cities to discover and overcome gaps. Whereas outcome indicators in the Prevent context could be ‘reduced rates of ESL’ and ‘increased school attendance’ (i.e. evidence of effects), structural indicators are key conditions and/or enablers for system success, enduring features of a system that are malleable, thus going beyond the traditional qualitative and quantitative distinction.

Using structural indicators will help cities understand if necessary key structures and mechanisms are in place to really combat ESL, and more specific, to involve parents in the process. SIM will focus on aspects like the level of ESL prevention in a city (universal, selected or indicated),

on the level of collaboration with core target groups (from information to real co-production), on level of systemic change (individual, school, family, community). The main idea of introducing Structural indicators within the PREVENT network is firstly for comparison of the cities’ own progress over time compared with itself, and secondly to compare with other cities.

To summarise **the role of Structural indicators**:

- Yes and no-questions, something that can be changed (laws, spaces, roles and responsibilities, key guiding principles, potentially malleable dimensions to a school and/or community system)
- SI’s can operate flexibly at different levels of a system and at different levels of concreteness and abstraction (i.e., physical spaces and designated jobs, guiding principles for action/strategy etc.)
- A way to challenge network cities to, in their Local Action Planning work, address both existing and missing features (gaps) in current systems and policies and thus, to “think outside the box” when outlining the need of services, actions and strategies for the future.





GOOD EXAMPLES ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

PREVENT network The Good Practice Overview

CITY	GOOD PRACTICE	TYPE OF INTERVENTION
Antwerp	Kaap	Language training for parents in children's school
	Choose well project	Information to parents on study choices and opportunities – to support transition and career paths
Catania	'Call for Paper' pilot	Promoting social dialogue between schools, families and students to prevent early school leaving
	Music at School project	Opening up of schools to citizens by involving teachers, young and families in music and cultural activities

Gijon	Transition plans	Enhance the transition process between Primary and Secondary Schools
	Truancy prevention	Actions to reduce truancy (Romanian students focus)
The Hague	Partnership	Parental involvement in secondary schools
	The Transfer project	Prevent ESL by involving parents in the transfer from secondary school to a follow-up education
Munich	Parents-active and Islands of Competence	Partnership collaboration (building trust) at Primary school level, disadvantaged neighbourhoods
	School counsellors and the Advisory centre	Information points/resources to parents and students to support career guidance, problem solving, transitions
Nantes	Pilot on parents-professionals collaboration	Building trust and cooperation between schools, professionals and parents in nursery schools
	Club 'Coup de pouce'	Reading support after school to children (5-6 years), support to parents so they can support their children
Sofia	Schools of inclusion	Pilot municipal model for the inclusion of Roma families in general and, specifically, an increase in pre school enrolment of Roma children
	Pilot: Breaking the cycle of violence	Capacity building process to prevent risk behaviour and promote social inclusion
Stockholm	ABC project	Study groups for parents on the role of parents
	Promoting parental involvement in study support for immigrant students	Recruitment of Swedish speaking volunteers as support to parents in homework, integration and network building processes
Tallinn	The school reconciliation model – round table talks	An alternative intervention method between school, parents and the young. A conciliator (broker) helps in solving conflicts and truancy issues
	e-Kool (e-School)	A role based web application used to track grades and credits, get homework assignments, enable parents' communication with the school and monitor the students' attendance in the school
Usti nad Labem	Reverse scholarships	Monetary support by scholarship contests aimed at socially excluded children and their families to obtain secondary school
	Supporting education	Increasing school success through tutoring and support to both children and parents by volunteers

Prevent'ecology – a holistic chain of performance to address parental involvement

Generally, ESL prevention could be divided into three levels of intervention;

- universal (all or at least all of those in areas designated as at risk of ESL)
- selected (some targeted groups of families or young people) and
- indicated prevention approaches (intensive work with individual children and/or families)

A comprehensive effort – whether in a city, region or nation – can never focus on one level alone.

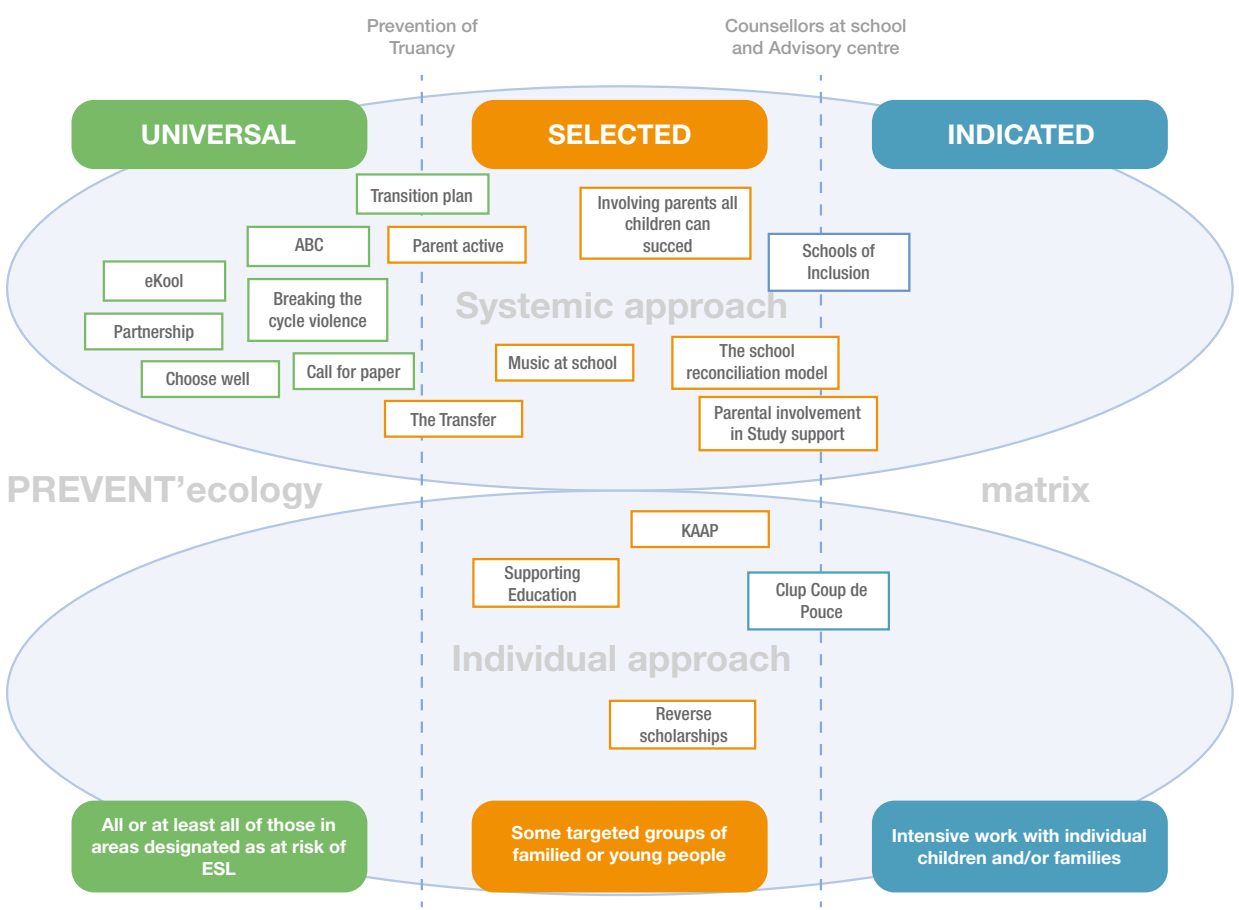
A real, strategic preventive approach uses a combination of actions, based on a holistic perspective on children's and families' needs and abilities. The fact that ALL three levels need to be focused on in a city strategy means:

- Sustained interventions of sufficient intensity depending on need - beyond ad hoc ('little bits here and there') interventions to recognising that needs will vary at different points in time
- Optimised services to maximise efficiency and avoid duplication
- Recognising that mapping and sharing of good practice involves analysis of gaps

The intention to use the three dimensions of intervention above was to try to find a "home" for each of the 20 good practices and thus, to give readers a holistic ESL prevention road map of good practice to start from. In addition, another idea was to provide not only an overview of target group focus, but also a clear division between on which level of impact each practice is implemented. This results in a Prevent'ecology map (see figure below) – that:

- a** - tries to maps out the level of intervention (universal, selected or indicated) of each practice
- b** - tries to conclude whether practices are single actions/interventions, carried out locally – or if they are part of a more general policy or strategy (individual or systemic axes)

The Prevent'ology map should be considered an overview, knowing that categorisation is always difficult. Nevertheless, the map offers some guidance on the PREVENT experience based on the examples presented. In some cases, information provided has not been enough to do a proper categorisation. In others, there are overlapping features that make single categorisation difficult.



But still, some interesting conclusions derive from the overview;

- the examples in total cover more or less all areas and aspects of the matrix
- as far as we are able to understand, many (most) practices are implemented on the systemic level, which should mean a higher level of sustainability and support
- there is a need to further clarify dimensions such as intervention focus, targeted groups etc to be able to categorise all practices according to the map structure

In the following section, the 20 practices are mapped individually according to the categorisation underpinned in the Prevent'ecology map. In section 5, we give a brief review of each example that could give further understanding of both the examples and choices for categorisation.

UNIVERSAL APPROACH:

Catania 1st good practice: “Call for paper”:

Pilot action to move students into debate on civics, culture, heritage, history, European citizenship, awareness of their role to build into society.

Target groups: Teachers, children and parents.

Gijon 2nd good practice: “Transition plan”:

Transition plan between Primary school and Secondary School.

Target groups: Children and parents in the transition phase from primary to secondary school.

Munich 1st good practice: “Counsellors at school and the advisory centre”.

To help all students and parents navigate in the complex German school system.

Target group: Everyone who needs help concerning current or future decisions.

Tallinn 1st good practice: “The school reconciliation model”.

Round table talks with specialists – an alternative intervention method that could be used in addressing and solving conflicts and truancy situations.

Target groups: Students, teachers and parents.

Tallinn 2nd good practice: “eKool”.

Role based web application to track grades and credits, get homework assignments, enable parents' communication with the school and monitor the students' attendance in school.

Target groups: school administration, teachers, students and parents.

The Hague 1st good practice: “The transfer”.

A project to prevent ESL at the moment students make the transfer from secondary school to a follow-up education.

Target group: All exam candidates of schools for pre-vocational education in The Hague.

Sofia 2nd good practice: “Breaking the cycle of violence”.

Pilot municipal model for prevention of risk behaviour through capacity building, scaling up activities, field work/community involvement and parents' activities/and institutional support in order to create conditions for social inclusion.

Target group: students aged 9 to 18 from all regions of Sofia.

Stockholm 1st good practice: “ABC – all children in focus”.

A general parental support program for all parents with children between 3-12 years. The aim is to promote children's positive development by promoting a positive relationship between parents and children.

Target group: All parents with children between 3-12 years.

Antwerp 1st good practice: “Choose well project”.

A project to help parents and students to make well-informed choices of school or studies; in consultation with the child, in accordance with the child's interests and possibilities.

Target group: Parents and students of the 5th and 6th year of primary education or the second year of secondary education that will take the step to secondary education or who have to choose a new study programme next school year.

SELECTED APPROACH

Usti nad Labem 1st good practice: “Reverse scholarships”.

Reverse scholarships are aimed at the support to children growing up in an environment of social exclusion in targeted deprived areas in Usti nad Labem.

Target groups: Children, the whole families.

Usti nad Labem 2nd good practice: “Supporting education”.

Social integrational program, increasing school success through tutoring children in families by volunteers.

Target groups: Parents, children.

Munich 2nd good practice: “Parents active”.

A program for parents, teachers and child care workers to improve their skills in order to cooperate in any kind of partnership.

Target groups: all parents of children in Munich's primary schools, and especially the parents in regions with high social impacts.

The Hague 2nd good practice: “PARTNERSHIP”.

Changing relationships, changing the culture within the school in order to reach parents.

Target group: Parents from a non-Dutch origin with children at secondary schools.

Nantes 1st good practice: “Involving parents, all children can succeed”.

A project to increase the possibility for families to be more active, co-education by getting together, to mix professionals and parents, and giving a new meaning and a good reputation to collective action in the district of “Bottière/Pin Sec”, the second lowest income area within the city.

Target groups: Parents, professionals, teachers.

Stockholm 2nd good practice: “Parental involvement in study support for students”.

Improving conversation skills within smaller groups of immigrants, language support to newly arrived youths, help with homework.

Target group: Parents with poor Swedish that have children in the schools in the neighbourhood of Tensta and who have difficulties to help their child in school.

Antwerp 2nd good practice: “Kaap: Language training and parental involvement”.

A project for parents to learn Dutch in the school of their children, also about linking language training with parental involvement.

Target group: Parents with a migrant background with no or limited knowledge of Dutch with children in the school.

INDICATED APPROACH**Gijon 1st good practice: “Prevention of truancy”.**

Programme for the coexistence and meeting of cultures in a primary school with an important Romanian population.

Target group: 30 students and families.

Nantes 2nd good practice: “Club Coup de pouce”.

Small groups of five, six years old pupils who are learning to read at school. To avoid ESL by promoting the pleasure of reading, dedicated to children where family environment does not allow practising at home after school.

Target groups: Children (13 groups consisting of 65 children), parents.

Sofia 1st good practice: “Schools of inclusion”.

A pilot municipal model for social integration of Roma children in educational institutions through capacity building, scaling up activities, in order to achieve high pre-school enrolment for Roma children.

Target groups: Roma children from district “Fakulteta”, Roma parents from the same district, school staff of the project schools, Roma mediators.



ANALYSIS SECTION

Why the work of PREVENT is **important**

As the set up of the PREVENT action plan has been focussed, at least for its first half, on collecting and disseminating good practice from partner cities on how parents are involved and/or approached with the objective to decrease early school leaving, the examples presented in this guide are there because of two reasons; first, most of them were already either in progress or finished and secondly, they have been considered to work well in the city and context – needs, groups, neighbourhoods etc – where they were developed. The ten cities are quite different in structural, economical as well as sociological terms, and maybe the good examples somehow reflect how the issue of early school leaving is looked upon and managed from city to city. But regardless of starting point, there is no doubt that ESL prevention in general and the parental aspect specifically, has become even more targeted, even higher on the agenda, within

the network cities. Nor is there any doubt that time spent on mapping, sharing and discussing the good practices has become a boost to the city work processes. The local work process of each city, in Local support groups and Local action planning, reveals collaborative and innovative actions, ‘non-usual suspect’ thinking on stakeholder participation and cross-sectorial approaches to avoid silo thinking and organising. And as the network currently is in a position of bilateral exchanges to further examine possibilities of knowledge, practices and methodology, the good process will continue; first and foremost throughout the life span of the project, but hopefully also on an informal networking basis in the future.

Highlighting the fact that the idea of the PREVENT project is somewhat narrow (not just preventing ESL in general but preventing ESL by involving parents

in all aspects of ESL prevention) may eventually also affect the work process. To be considered an innovative approach on one hand could from time to time also be experienced as a quite lonely and confusing path on the other. So despite the fact that the PREVENT work package on Good practice management could be considered long and time consuming, there is no doubt it has served its purpose well to bring both confidence and curiosity to the whole team; cities, experts and external stakeholders included. The time frame allocated has been long enough to establish a platform of trust, insight and high ambition that will promote good results and good relations.

In November 2013, the European Thematic working group (TWG) on early school leaving launched its Final report on the subject. Based on the work of the group, the following key policy messages, amongst many directly addressing results deriving from the work of PREVENT, were identified as critical conditions for successful policies against ESL:

- a** - Ensure long-term political and financial commitment to reducing ESL and keep it high on the political agenda.
- b** - Ensure children and young people are at the centre of all policies aimed at reducing ESL, and ensuring their voices are taken into account when developing and implementing such policies.
- c** - Develop and implement a sustainable national strategy to reduce ESL. This strategy should address all levels of education and training and encompass the right mixture of preventative, intervention and compensation measures.
- d** - Invest in the knowledge base of ESL, through regular and timely collection of accurate data and information. Ensure that data and information on ESL is accessible and used effectively in policy development. Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of ESL measures steers policy development.
- e** - Ensure policy development and implementation is based on strong, long-term cooperation between national, regional/ local authorities and stakeholders, as well as between different policies, through for example establishing a coordinating body.
- f** - Remove obstacles within the school education system that may hinder young people in completing upper secondary education. Ensure smooth transition between different levels of education. Ensure access to high quality education throughout life (including early childhood education and care), and the provision of high quality Vocational Education and Training (VET).
- g** - Support schools to develop conducive and supportive learning environments that focus on the needs of individual pupils. Promote a curriculum that is relevant and engaging.
- h** - Promote and support multi-professional teams in schools to address ESL.
- i** - Support cooperation between schools, local communities, parents and pupils in school development and in initiatives to reduce ESL. Promote strong commitment from all stakeholders in efforts to reduce ESL at local levels, including local businesses.
- j** - Promote a better understanding of ESL in initial education and continuous professional development for all school staff, especially teachers. Enable staff to provide differentiated learning support for pupils in an inclusive and individualised way.
- k** - Strengthen guidance to ensure young people are aware of the different study options and employment prospects available to them. Ensure counselling systems provide young people with both emotional and practical support.
- l** - Reinforce accessibility to second chance schemes for all young people. Make second chance schemes distinctive and ensure they provide a positive learning experience. Support teachers who work in second chance schemes in their specific role.

Brief feedback on Good practices

Instead of assessing the examples using a scale of performance – thus giving them the credit of being good enough to disseminate also outside the PREVENT network – we have briefly analysed the examples by using, as far as possible, the two dimensional matrix explained in section 4.2 above.

Here, the brief feedback is delivered city by city. Questions arising as well as ideas for improvement emerging from the analysis process will of course be properly discussed with cities in the process that follows.

Antwerp:

Antwerp 1st good practice: “Choose well project”.

Mainly universal, systems focus, service coordinated by an NGO, strong emphasis on collaboration between and empowerment of parents, the child, schools.

Antwerp 2nd good practice: “Kaap: Language training and parental involvement”.

Selected – but individual more than system change focused as not impact on school policy etc.

Catania:

Catania 1st good practice: “Call for paper”:

Universal, clearly system focused, outreach approach.

Catania 2nd good practice: “Music at school”.

Selected, system level, good practice on outreach models. Could young people be involved in managing the outreach process, or are adults using a target group perspective simply approaching them?.

Gijon:

Gijon 1st good practice: “Prevention of truancy”.

System change focused, not simply individual. More information is needed on whether it is intensive enough an intervention to be indicated. Its aims appear to be indicated, selected and universal but the question arises as to whether it is falling between all three stools or whether each level is adequately addressed. Is it only tokenistically engaging with all these three levels but insufficiently focused on any of them?

Gijon 2nd good practice: “Transition plan”:

Universal and selected, but weak on indicated level where it arguably ought also to be focusing.

The Hague:

The Hague 1st good practice: “The transfer”.

Mainly a selected focus though with some universal prevention – needs more strategic focus to differentiate chronic/indicated from targeted/selected.

The Hague 2nd good practice: “PARTNERSHIP”.

Strong system change focus, seems to be universal as all parents targeted though in areas of high ethnic mix.

Munich:

Munich 1st good practice: “Counsellors at school and the advisory centre”.

Not clear if it is universal, selected or indicated – information on who uses the service has to be better explained. Some discussion of referral to other services but unclear if these other services include for those with chronic needs.

Munich 2nd good practice: “Parents active”.

Universal and selected, not intended/designed for chronic needs only, indicated prevention – do parents lead the process over time?

Nantes:

Nantes 1st good practice: “Involving parents, all children can succeed”.

Selected, not the chronic need parents – a system change focus.

Nantes 2nd good practice: “Club Coup de pouce”.

Both indicated and selected? If indicated then such small groups or even smaller are justified, if selected it may be more efficient to have larger groups – need arguably to include both levels with variety of group numbers.

Sofia:

Sofia 1st good practice: “Schools of inclusion”.

Selected and indicated – not focusing on chronic need level within the Roma particularly nor on intensive individual supports makes it also fit in the selected section. Very good developmental focus on age needs of children that could work as a model for other projects.

Sofia 2nd good practice: “Breaking the cycle of violence”.

Universal and good focus on system change.

Stockholm:

Stockholm 1st good practice: “ABC – all children in focus”.

Universal and good focus on system change. More strategic focus and clarity could be given to the different developmental needs of different age ranges.

Stockholm 2nd good practice: “Parental involvement in study support for students”.

Selected, but may also be including chronic need, indicated level without realising it. Therefore it needs to include also a strategic chronic need vision of intervention in addition, non Swedish speakers are a diverse large group, which requires a differentiated focus.

Tallinn:

Tallinn 1st good practice: “The school reconciliation model”.

Selected and probably also indicated. Are all conflict situations the same, needs to have an explicit chronic needs/mental health focus as well.

Tallinn 2nd good practice: “eKool”.

Universal but arguably would benefit as an integrated strategy to also include outreach at selected and indicated levels. Is it done in Russian language also for chronic need level?

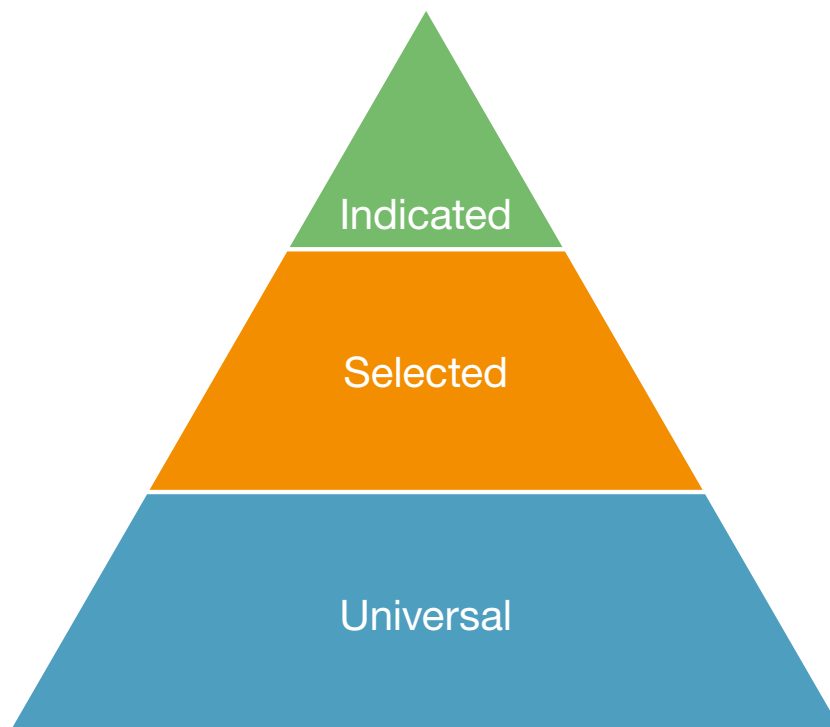
Usti nad Labem:

Usti nad Labem 1st good practice: “Reverse scholarships”.

Selected but individual rather than systemic. It offers intensive level of support usually associated with chronic need level of indicated but not evidence of why risk level of students requires such intensive support approach.

Usti nad Labem 2nd good practice: “Supporting education”.

Selected, individual focus – more variety in Usti’s strategic approaches could be a good idea to also engage other prevention levels.





TRANSFER OF GOOD PRACTICE

From good...

Transfer of good practice has been widely recognised and promoted by funding agencies, practitioners and decision makers as a tool to improve quality of services, to enhance mutual learning and to deepen transnational understanding. Nevertheless, many good examples do not travel far; dissemination ambitions and activities differ tremendously, both in quality and format. Initially let us agree the transfer process is at least a two step process; one being the method good examples are mapped, delivered and validated (see questioning matrix below as one example), the other one being the aspects of transferability. Transferability refers to the possibilities of using an existing practice and applying it in a new location, situation, environment or configuration. In a transnational context, a network of cities, partners, organisations etc, the possibility to implement good examples from other partners could be put on a scale from “hard to

implement” to “easy to implement”. Given the fact that the good example as such would be judged “exactly the one needed” to solve a need or problem in another place, city or organisation, there will still often be a range of factors that affect the possibility to implement it:

- if the need for new methods and/or tools is widely recognised and sought for
- if environmental and contextual factors such as legislation, regulations and culture support the transfer
- if there is a readiness for change and a will to learn and develop within the organisation
- if there is a leadership based on continuous improvement, courage and innovation.

...to great!

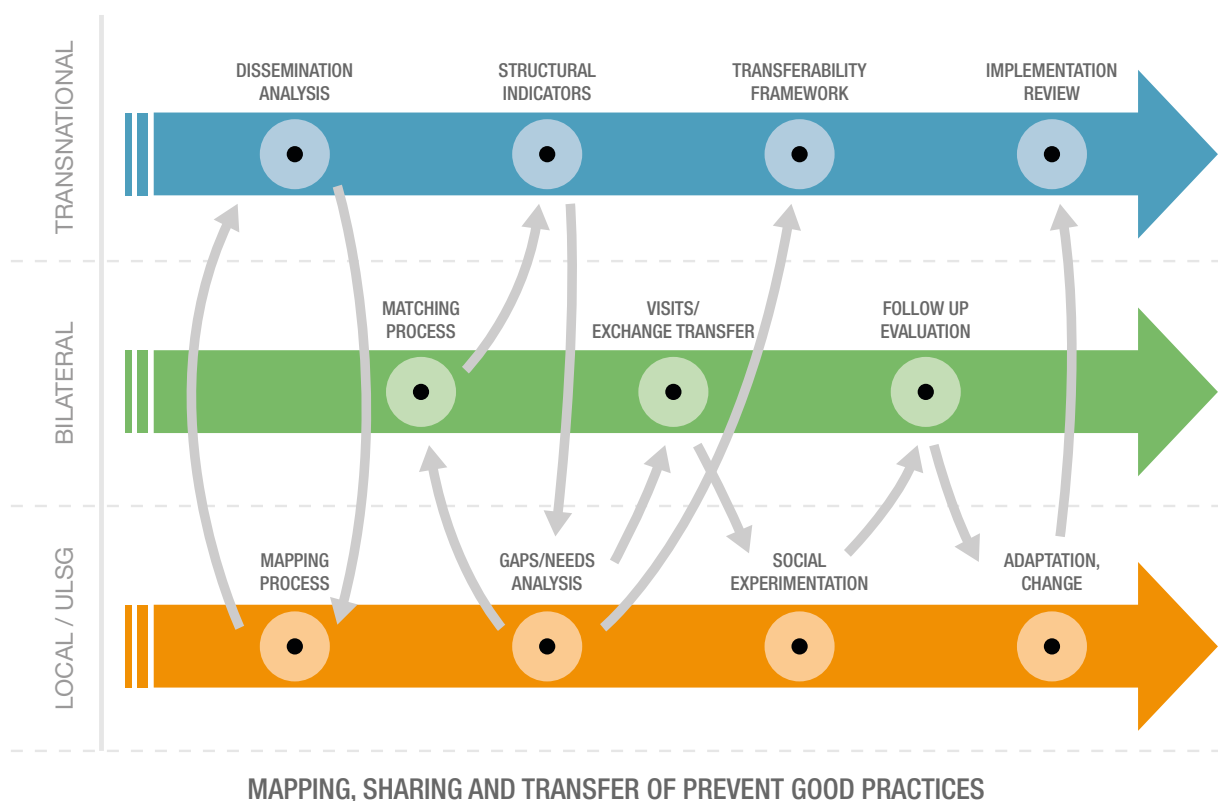
It is important to remind oneself that both transfer and implementation of good practices demand changes in performance, communication and behaviour. The process will inevitably lead to consequences that often were not foreseen by the recipient. Therefore, a great transfer model (that will do wonders for the level of transferability) is when the source of good practice and the recipient work together; on continuous innovation and learning and on jointly improving the process in order to adopt it to the new setting. As all URBACT networks are encouraged to build bilateral relations where knowledge transfer is the ultimate objective, there is a good opportunity to reach the higher level of transfer of good practices – and as an added value, a deeper understanding of what facilitates transferability. After all, ULSG:s – as well as cities, organisations and companies – that offer an environment that facilitates the transfer of good practices are more likely to succeed, both on a short and on a long term basis.

To strengthen the level of success in transfer of good practice between PREVENT cities, the following recommendations have been presented as a good starting point:

- a common goal that links the good practice to the organisation/city's objectives – and, ultimately, to the LAP strategy of partner cities
- good communication between cities as well as within the city/ULSG

- a clear definition of organisational as well as strategic needs
- a joint understanding of the importance of new working methods/good practice
- an environment that encourages sharing and dissemination (we're all in it together)
- a functional and realistic relationship between data, people and practice (relevant ideas on why and how to implement, how to communicate and how to sustain a good development process)

The figure below is an attempt to visualise the PREVENT process of mapping, sharing, assessing and adapting good practices. The process connects the three action levels; city/ULSG level, the bilateral level and the general transnational meetings level, where the sequential steps form a logical learning and experimentation journey – from local mapping exercises via transnational assessments, local gap analysis, expert feedback and support, individual matchmaking and exchange to collaborative social experimentation. And even if some steps of the model are still in progress, the 'three level approach' is already found attractive by the network cities. If also the recommendations offered in this section on how good transfer are well managed, both the cities of PREVENT as well as any other city interested in the noble art of sharing and implementing good practice would have an easy and yet fully workable model to start from.



Transfer of Good practice – one important piece in the puzzle of Social innovation!

Let's be honest. There is something tricky related to implementation of good practice, being it results and services developed internally or developed by external actors, cities, organisations. In many areas, not even the best results are successfully picked up and implemented. We keep on re-inventing the wheel – over and over again, and in many cases we do not even bother to look over or shoulder to see if there is or has been something going on that could act as a short cut or, even better, to help us avoid mistakes. As we are facing a reality where the foundations underlying historical modernisation (growth, efficiency, specialisation, optimisation) are at the end of their life-cycle, when unpredictable and shockwise change seems inevitable and when current crises are symptoms of non-linear systemic shifts happening, most administrations, organisations and companies already struggle to invent smart and sustainable ways to manage transitions. Just knowing that most other organisations are, and already have been, working constantly, everywhere, to solve the issues should be a considerable relief to both politicians, managers and practitioners. Attaching a bit of technical knowledge on where to find the

relevant examples would add another vital piece of the puzzle of a functional, continuous improvement model. And if leaders on top of that considered these challenges and needs for transition as windows of opportunity for major change towards sustainability, we would have a great platform for the modernisation of societies, cities and services.

But still, these steps do not seem to be enough. So what more must be in place? Christian Bason, director of innovation at MindLab⁽³⁾, a Danish a cross-governmental innovation unit, offer an interesting approach to why public institutions are "notoriously bad" at coping each other's ideas. According to Bason, public managers and their employees seem to be extremely unwilling to take up ideas that others have already used. They would much rather prefer to have their own.

His conclusions are simplistic yet logical; we will not take interest in what others have done before we ourselves have started thinking in new ways. And there are good examples as well, mainly about the issue of good timing.

So what could be the concluded from this? What ideas for politicians and practitioners, all there anyway to find ways to cope with and manage necessary transition processes? Let's give it a try:

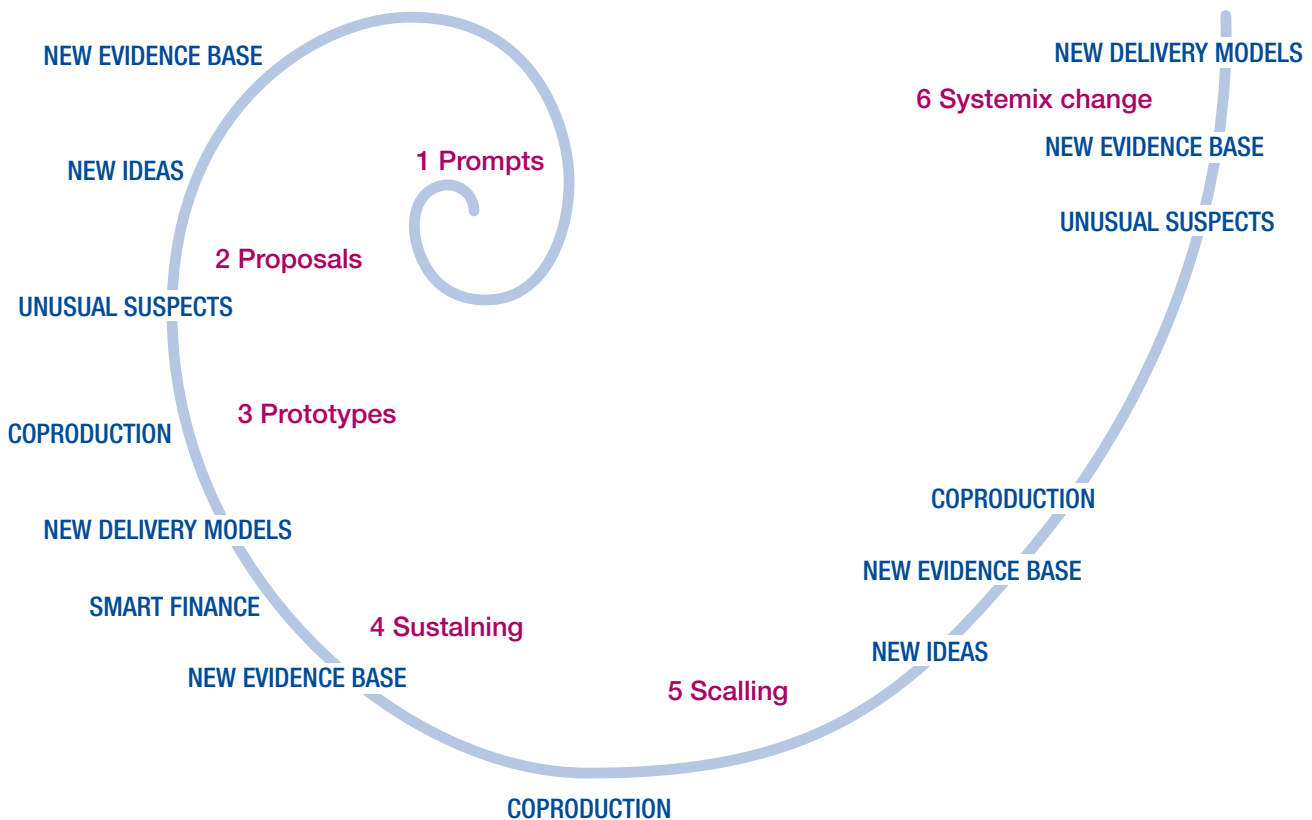
- First of all, be clear of what needs to change, and why; organisations are willing to learn from others if they find themselves in a situation so desperate that there are no other alternatives
- Drop 'good example thinking' as a first step; instead, initiate processes that support local innovation and the sharing of processes
- In most situations, people (including managers and employees) listen to and trust politicians. Even if the two groups do not always agree, in times of crisis and difficult decision-making, people show support and 'do as they are told'
- When managers and employees are fully engaged in a process of change, they will 'automatically' go looking for good practice as that will contribute to favourable outcomes such as good governance, sustainability and short term actions



(3) - <http://www.mind-lab.dk/en>

This way we will move from sharing examples to sharing processes. The idea would be to help organisations and people finding and developing their own solutions - to get inspiration to look into what others have done, and are currently doing, and, as an added value, to build new collaborative networks along the way. The twist could also be the starting point for a wave of local, Social Innovation hubs.

This way of thinking is also great inspiration to Urbact networks and ULSG:s, to continue developing mind-blowing social innovation models, both at local and transnational levels. In fact, Urbact is already supporting the ideas of Local social innovation processes. In the report “Supporting urban youth through social innovation: stronger together”⁽⁴⁾ the authors present a model for local social innovation processes (model adapted from the Young Foundation):



According to the authors, “ideas need to be embedded in practice, as the spiral illustrates. An innovation is an innovation only if it works in practice. It is not enough to get it working as an exception, for instance on a temporary project basis – it needs to be scaled up and sustained”.

And while using a model could be a breakthrough to enter a shift in focus and/or approach, it is rarely enough to maintain sustainability. A model could be a driver to promote developmental cultures and attitudes, but responsibility for sustainability must be in the hands of politicians and management. Nevertheless, as long as we realise that the

transition arena consists of two teams – the regular and the transition one – we could make it work. The role of management in this process should, according to some research, be to:

- Establish transition arenas, share problem definitions and visions
- Develop images coalitions and transition-agendas
- Mobilise actors and executing projects and experiments
- Monitor, evaluate and promote learning

(4) - http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general_library/19765_Urbact_WS3_YOUTH_low_Final.pdf



ABOUT URBACT

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT consists of 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants.

URBACT is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Member States.

Within the current round of URBACT, 15 city networks are funded. Each network addresses urban issues of great importance for the future sustainability of European cities and urban regions. Besides transnational exchange and learning, each city involved has to set up an URBACT Local

support group, ULSG, using a broad stakeholder and participative approach. The working process of each ULSG has to be concluded in a Local action plan, a LAP that must be connected to wider policies and strategies in the city.

One of the trademarks of the URBACT Programme is its comprehensive focus on continuous capacity building of people involved. This includes actions like:

- Access to external expertise in all networks
- Thematic pole coordinators
- Training of ULSG members, policy makers, stakeholders
- URBACT Summer University
- Meetings with Lead partners and Lead experts
- The URBACT web platform
- Toolbox

For more information about URBACT, please visit urbact.eu

APPENDIX

Good practices on parental involvement in ESL prevention

City of Antwerp

1st good practice – choose well project by de schoolbrug

> TARGET GROUP:

Parents and students of the 5th and 6th year of primary education or the second year of secondary education who will take the step to secondary education or who have to choose a new study programme next school year.

> PARTNERS:

CLB & De Studiewijzer

> TARGETS AND ACTIVITIES:

Targets

Parents: Make a well-informed choice of school or study, i.e.

- in consultation with the child
- in accordance with the child's interests and possibilities
- start thinking in time about their decision on a school or a study

- enrol their child in time
- know their rights upon enrolment in a new school and also get enrolled.

School, Student Guidance Centre and De Studiewijzer: give sufficient adequate information to the target group so that parents can make a well-informed choice. Support the embedding of activities at school.

Activities

Introduction of activities in the school such as:

- Talent search
- Job market
- Testimonies
- Information on secondary education
- School visits
- Statements on the choice of school
- With multimedia: video, website De Studiewijzer and De Stapper...

2nd Good Practice – Kaap: Language training and parental involvement

> INTRODUCTION

The Flemish community and the city of Antwerp organize courses Dutch for new citizens. But many people find barriers to participate in these courses: it 's a difficult combination with the children, the lessons are in the evening or in another city district. KAAP is a project for parents to learn Dutch in the school of their children. But knowing Dutch is not enough for parents to be a partner in the triangle

school – child – parent. Therefore the KAAP-project also is about linking language training with parental involvement.

> THE CONTEXT

More than 180 nationalities live in Antwerp. The mother tongue for more than 50 % of the children in Antwerp schools is not Dutch. Many newcomers are obliged to learn Dutch but are put on a waiting list.

> THE CHALLENGE

The network tries to:

- tackle the problem of low-educated parents to get involved in the school of their children
- organise Dutch classes or this group with content based on the school

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT?

Parents in (interaction) is an embedded language course on the communication between parents and schools. This needs-based project is developed by The Center for Language and Education (university of Leuven). It is introduced in 5 Flemish cities. The city of Antwerp and the KAAP partners transformed it in KAAP.

> WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUPS?

A KAAP-course is organized in the school and during school time. The target group are parents with a migrant background with no or limited knowledge of Dutch with children in the school.

KAAP courses can be organized in elementary schools (2,5 – 12 years old children).

In 2012-2013 we organized two Kaap courses in the first grade of a secondary school.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

Kaap is a network with seven partners:

PARTNER	ROLE
General education policy Antwerp	- Coordination - Organisation - Financing
Center for language & education	- Methodology - Support of language teachers - Evaluation
Centre for adult education (CBE & CVO)	- Language teachers
House of the Dutch language	- Screening of the parents
Schoolbridge	- Childcare - Publicity - Bridge between parents and school - Bridge between language teachers and school - Screening of the schools
Schools	- Promoting Kaap - Teacher who is bridge between Kaap and school
Parents	- Being engaged to Kaap

Timing

PARTNER	ROLE
January	Schools apply for Kaap
March/April	screening of the candidate-schools
May	selection of the Kaap-schools
September	screening of the parents
October	start of Kaap-lessons (2 X 3 hours/ week during the school year)
March	meeting with Kaap-schools: how to work with parents when Kaap is finished
Parents	- Being engaged to Kaap

The task-based and embedded approach has a double goal. First, the parents learn to communicate directly with the school community and about relevant things concerning the school career of their children in order to improve communication between parents and school in the long term.

Second, KAAP leads to (more) parental involvement by allowing the parents to get to know the school better.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

There are several challenges:

- a** - Finding qualified language teachers (Adult education)
- b** - Motivating parents to engage themselves during two sessions each week during one school year
- c** - Select schools, which are really motivated to invest time in this project
- d** - The day after: what happens with the KAAP-group when Kaap is finished?
- e** - Finding schools with space is nowadays also a challenge
- f** - People without legal status are not allowed in the language classes by a Flemish decree

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED?

- a** - Working together with adult education and try to convince them to engage more teachers
- b** - Time investment of educational welfare workers (Schoolbridge)
- c** - Make in advance engagement of the school very concrete (on paper)
- d** - Idem 3
- e** - Find classroom for parents in the very close neighbourhood of the school
- f** - This is really a problem...

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A “GOOD PRACTICE?”

KAAP offers an answer to problems of parents: learning about school and learning Dutch in a ‘safe’ environment.

This project can be transferred to other municipalities.

A researcher of the university has positively evaluated KAAP.

> EVALUATION

Last year, researchers at the University of Leuven investigated if Kaap reach these goals from the point of view of the parents. In interviews with 70 parents who followed Kaap we asked:

- if they communicate more and better with the school community in comparison with the period before the course
- if the involvement between the school and the parents has been influenced by the course.

> CONCLUSIONS

KAAP has impact on

- giving information, paying attention to the school agenda and helping the child at home;
- contacts with teachers, parent contact and written communication with the school.

Parents emphasize KAAP made the difference. But KAAP makes just a little difference on parental involvement on school level: participation in school activities and school policy.

City of Catania

1st Good practice - "Call for Paper"

> INTRODUCTION

"Call for Paper" – a pilot action to move students into debate on civiness, culture, heritage, history, European citizenship, awareness of their role to build into society. The initiative moves from the opportunity of the European Commission decision for 2013 as EUROPEAN YEARS OF CITIZENS, using this as a tool to create debate within schools. The way to improve this debate is use text and visibility on social media to create attention and audience inside the world of the educational system. Some meetings with Teachers and School's Functionary have been held to qualify the kind of needs that are more evident in the context. Some Teachers evidenced the opportunity to use this practice within the framework of Comenius programs, to give a more international framework to the initiative. Of course, such typology of initiative is focused towards promoting excellence, but in an inclusive perspective, specially referred to the motivational side and the objectives of the Prevent project. The core objective is to diffuse a social use and meaning of the creative act of writing, creating attention of students on main topics of civic life, and public moments with the function to generate link between family (especially parents, but not just them) and schools (especially teachers, but not just them). In synergy with the other best practice suggested by Catania, to open the school as physical place to the use and understanding of the whole population,

giving to the institution a stronger presence in the territorial framework, with particular reference to those quarter inside the town that have more problem of deviance and school leavers.

> WHAT WAS THE NEED/ PROBLEM TO ADDRESS? THE CONTEXT?

- The call has been conceived as something very open to the general context of the Catania school system. Relevant interests have been expressed by schools of the territorial system, giving a large framework of interest, improved by the European added value coming from the adhesion of several schools to European programs like Comenius or National Operational Programmes.

> WHO FORMULATED THE NEED/ PROBLEM/ CHALLENGE?

The challenge was defined by the Mayor, with the intention to extend to neighbourhood municipalities in a metropolitan framework to prevent the school drop-out through the improving of the School-Families link.

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT/ PRACTICE?

The initiative came from the Municipality, and it was implemented by the European Affairs Office, with the aim to listen to teachers and school's functionaries.

> WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUPS/ END USERS?

Teachers, children and parents, approximately 25 000 citizens.

Methods for selecting the target group:

- Direct communication-focus-groups and round table discussions between Municipality and teachers and school boards to identify needs.

Methods for activities' implementation:

- Direct work with the target groups to define strategies to improve parental involvement.

Methods for monitoring and evaluation:

- Collecting writings and works.

Methods for conducting the training:

- Promote intellectual development through debate on civic matters.
- Inclusion of a theme to be developed in English as work language.
- PPP, printed materials, involvement of EU networks at local level.
- Principles for choosing the methods and the implementation of activities: accessibility, gender equality, economical expedience, informed consent, tolerance, partnership of all key actors, direct participation of the target group.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

The following activities were implemented:

1st stage:

Pilot action shared among teachers, children and parents, with the support of EU territorial networks, on thematic focuses, needs analysis.

Educational Support Environment:

- Text at school initiative as generator of meetings to diffuse information and promotion of social rights and benefits related to education, employment and qualification;
- A guide for parents: containing information about procedures for school enrolment, school rules, staff, traditions, and requirements. Advice to parents how to grow up and communicate with their children;
- Information and promotion of activities of public and private centres providing services, non-formal and extra curriculum education;
- Information and promotion of schools, which implement activities in a multicultural environment.

2nd stage:

Community public hearings, through questionnaires and direct meeting; the "Call for Papers" achieve its objectives through:

- event creation; training of project schools' personnel; online network of schools of inclusion for information and good practices exchange and partnership;

- information about drug-assumption risks and education to citizenship rights and duties;
- conducting awareness raising educational school campaigns, parents meetings, round table for drafting municipal program-activities.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

- Motivate parents /students, teachers/ to become active participants in school-life
- Difficulties in gaining trust through hearing-involvement practices
- Increase ownership feeling of citizens towards school and perception of the presence of Institutions. The need for expanding the network of schools and kindergartens including activities for working and studying in multicultural environment, with European added value
- The need to avoid segregation and to change the institutionalized model of separate educational patterns
- Conduct an active communication strategy to include a wider range of partners for planning and implementing activities in a multicultural and open environment
- Support educational environment- extracurricular activities, centres for work with children and their families
- Improve the capacity of teachers and school boards to plan and implement activities for creating friendly, multicultural environment and to involve parents in school life

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED/ SOLVED?

- Formal and non-formal education
- Teach and help parents how to understand and communicate with they children Initiate and conduct common activities "parents-children" through arts as intervention instrument

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

"The call for papers", as pilot municipal model, involves all key actors in the process of educational integration: schools, administrations, parents and the community.

The project:

- aims to expand the network of educational institutions situated close or bordering areas, also through other European projects intersection;
- aims to mobilize local communities' resources and all key actors/ responsible institutions, parents, NGOs, school boards/ to work together for the implementation of the local strategy for educational integration and social inclusion.

> WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? EVALUATIONS?

- Keeping the enrolled at least 2500 children numbers at the beginning and at the end of the project
- Informed and motivated parents and community members

- Considerable increased number of people attending the parents meetings and community open forums, different types of information
- Final book (and e-book) as evidence of a reply-able model

Catania: 2nd Good practice – "Music at School"

> INTRODUCTION

"Music at School" – is a pilot municipal model for social integration, which uses the universal language of music as social link. The project aims to diffuse a social use and meaning of musical instruments and concerto moment in their function of link between family (especially parents, but not just them) and schools (especially teachers, but not just them).

The idea inside the project is to open the school as physical place to the use and understanding of the whole population. This is given to promote the institution as a stronger presence in the territorial framework. Subsidiary policies are the framework for reference to those neighbourhoods inside the town that have more problems of deviance and school leavers. The experience gets substance from the Abreu methodology, referred to the special context of application. The general framework is given by the project "Città Policentrica", realized by the Social Services Department of the Local Government in Catania with EU funds, with the aim – as the title states – to create an effective poli-centric urban system, with peripheral quarters not just to be considered as suburban dimension where to go to sleep, but active and functional parts of a metropolitan integrated system. The role of Municipalities (the leader town and the neighbours in a metropolitan integrated dimension) is to create a civic arena where to implement new methodologies to create social links and transferring European added value.

> WHAT WAS THE NEED/ PROBLEM TO ADDRESS? THE CONTEXT?

A pilot action was conceived for Librino, a district located in the south-western part of Catania, whose population is about 60,000 people, with severe problem of social inclusion and deviant socialization, especially related to drugs use and commerce. Talking about public transport, the Librino district is linked with other parts of the city in a not satisfying level, with a public system that at the present is not sufficiently communicative and functional, with few buses that leads from a so intensively populated area to the centre of the town. With this aim, Local Government has been trying to get additional financial resources from the State level and from the EU programs.

Several projects, with different level or realization and advancement, have been given for this district, starting from the increasing of the buses fleet, and going on with the rehabilitation of important (and symbolic) buildings (among these, the "Palazzo di cemento", an abandoned structure where too often the police has been discovering traffic or weapons and drugs).

> WHO FORMULATED THE NEED/ PROBLEM/ CHALLENGE?

The challenge was a priority of the Municipality' Assessor, through indicators and result of sociological studies, planning of different program documents, capacity building-resources, discussion with local support group, experience.

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT/ PRACTICE?

The initiative came from the Municipality, and it was implemented by the European Affairs Office. Detail: Social Services Department in cooperation with Education Department, together with local support groups, support from government institutions.

> WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUPS/ END USERS?

Teachers, children and parents from district "Librino"- approximately 5000 citizens.

Methods for selecting the target group: analysis of the demographic and social infrastructure of the district "Librino"; direct communication-focus-groups and round table discussions between Municipality and teachers and school boards.

Methods for activities' implementation: direct work with the target groups, which are at the same time beneficiaries in order to involve them in the whole process.

Methods for monitoring and evaluation: regular accountancy, strategic planning of common goals and drafting action plans, monitoring of documentation, consultancy and supervision for risk prevention.

Methods for conducting the training: seminar activities/lectures, exchange of good practices/, training /discussion and testing/, interactive presentation/role plays, brain storming, PPP, printed materials, involvement of EU networks at local level.

Principles for choosing the methods and the implementation of activities: accessibility, gender equality, economical expedience, informed consent, tolerance, partnership of all key actors, direct participation of the target group.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

The following activities were implemented:

1st stage

Analysis of the demographic and social infrastructure, analysis of the result of sociological study to map the needs of this area.

Pilot action shared among teachers, children and parents, with the support of EU territorial networks (Europe Direct, Eures) with thematic focuses.

Educational Support Environment

- Music at school initiative as meetings where diffuse information and promotion of social rights and benefits related to education, employment and qualification;
- A guide for parents: containing information about procedures for school enrollment, school rules, staff, traditions, and requirements. Advices for the parents how to grow up and communicate with their children;
- Information and promotion of activities of public and private centres providing services, non-formal and extra curriculum education;
- Information and promotion of schools, which implement activities in multicultural environment.

2nd stage:

Parents' school meetings; information, awareness raising, promotion; 30 meetings, 3 for each school in each school level.

Community public hearings, through questionnaires and direct meetings.

"Music at School" achieves its objectives through:

- Event creation;
- Training of project schools' personnel
- Online network of schools of inclusion for information and good practices exchange and partnership
- Information about drug-assumption risks and education to citizenship rights and duties
- Conducting awareness raising educational school campaigns, parents meetings, round table for drafting municipal program-activities

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

- Motivate parents /students, teachers/ to become active participants in school-life;
- Difficulties in gaining trust through hearing-involvement practices;
- Increase ownership feeling of citizens towards

school and perception of the presence of Institutions. The need for expanding the network of schools and kindergartens including activities for working and studying in multicultural environment;

- The need to avoid segregation and to change the institutionalized model of separate educational patterns;
- Conduct an active communication strategy to include a wider range of partners for planning and implementing activities in a multicultural and open environment;
- Support educational environment- extracurricular activities, centres for work with children and their families;
- Improve the capacity of teachers and school boards to plan and implement activities for creating friendly, multicultural environment and to involve parents in school life.

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED/ SOLVED?

- Collaboration with Catania Municipal Children Centre using the methods of formal and non-formal education
- Teach and help parents how to understand and communicate with they children
- Initiate and conduct common activities "parents-children" through arts as intervention instrument

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

"Music at School" pilot municipal model involves all key actors in the process of educational integration: schools, administrations, parents and the community.

The project:

- aims to expand the network of educational institutions situated close or bordering areas;
- aims to mobilize local communities' resources and all key actors/ responsible institutions, parents, NGOs, school boards to work together for the implementation of the local strategy for educational integration and social inclusion.

> WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? EVALUATIONS?

- Keeping the enrolled Librino quarter's children in school and prevent drop outs (at least 500 children) numbers at the beginning and at the end of the project
- Secured and trained 5 qualified Roma mediators to facilitate communication and dialogue
- Informed and motivated parents and community members; considerably increased number of people attending the parents meetings and community open forums, different types of information.

1st Good practice – Prevention of truancy at a state-owned primary school with an important Romanian population

> INTRODUCTION

- It's a comprehensive programme for the coexistence and meeting of cultures
- It is in a primary school with 25% of immigrant children; 43% out of them being Romanian
- The Romanian population is characterized by an irregular attendance to school and lack of competence in Spanish, factors associated with school failure and drop out.
- The fundamental idea is that the joint responsibility between families and school improve academic performance of children and prevent early school leaving.
- It's about attracting less involved families (belonging to a specific collective) to school through sharing their leisure and cultural activities.
- Another goal is to maintain the Romanian identity and to encourage the inclusion of all students.
- It's a Communitarian intervention in the territory (participation of the school, parents' associations, social entities that work with minorities, the Romanian Embassy, the local and regional authorities).

> CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMME:

- More flexible attendance
- Language immersion and compensatory education project
- Specific project on Romanian culture and civilization open to all students and their families with special Romanian festivals and leisure activities
- Family Education Guidance project carried out by Social Services to support parents in bringing up their children

Aimed at: all students 3/12 years of age and their families

Starting date: September 2012

Number of participants: 30 students and families

Assessment: at the end of the course (June)

> IT'S A GOOD PRACTICE FOR:

- Improving the academic performance and preventing truancy in a specific population through cooperation between families and school
- Encouraging inclusion of all students and families

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent Involvement through their culture and language - Communitary intervention Inclusion of all students 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nomadic population - Lack of experience of the programme
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration of immigrant families - To generate links among nationalities 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget Instability - Negative Assessment

2nd Good practice - Transition Plan between Primary School and Secondary School, Instituto de Educación Secundaria Mata Jove

> INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN SPAIN

- Compulsory Education until 16 years old
- Primary school (6-12)
- Secondary School (13-16)
- There are several primary school centres linked to one I.E.S (Instituto de Educacion Secundaria)

> TARGET GROUP

This plan is to support children and parents through the change from primary to secondary school.

> NEED AND CONTEXT

It is a transition procedure for a warm welcome between the possible centres of precedence and the centre of reception of the student.

This school has a living together plan that includes a group of students who receive training in conflicts resolution, negotiation, and they build a bridge with the new students. This group is called mediation group.

Dedication and coordination by all involved are needed.

> GENERAL AIMS OF THE PLAN:

- To make sure the school continuity
- To work in school failure
- To make the information exchange easier among the stages
- To identify and value the needs of the students

- To orientate and guide families
- To strengthen Tutorial Action measures
- To promote resources, materials and experiences exchanges between professionals of the area
- To prevent early school leaving
- To design common criteria to work with specific needs and children at risk.

> HOW IT WORKS

The plan starts to be developed in the last term of the last course before the transition and it lasts the first term of the new course.

This plan is coordinated by the Teacher of the Community Services.

AIMS	ACTIVITIES	TIME	RESPONSIBLE
To give information to the families and students about the secondary compulsory education.	- Informative session for parents and students in last year of primary centers. - Visits to the secondary center - Open days	Last school term in Primary school Before choices of center	Principals and guidance team of secondary school in coordination with staff of primary school
	- Visits to the different departments of the new centre, classes, gymnasium, lab. - Several activities are organized for all the students of last year of primary school - And talks given by the group of mediation about the dairy life in the centre	- Last school term - Before registration period	- Tutors and group of mediation
To give a warm welcome and promote the integration of the students	- Specific and personal information of the registered students. - Meetings between teachers of primary and secondary school for information exchange. - Exchange of students files - To held periodical meetings among old/new school	- Last school term - After registration period	- Tutors, Guidance department
	- The first day of school there are only activities for leisure to link the new students and the second day there is an excursion of all studentst	- At the beginning of the new course	- These activities are organized for the mediation group
To make sure the continuity of all and specifically students with special needs	- Special meetings with guidance teachers, send reports with specific information of the students at risk, - Personal welcome to families at risk - Fill a personal report for each student	- At the end of last term - At the first beginning of new course	- Guidance teachers and tutors primary/secondary school. - Specific teams for students with special needs
To prevent early school leaving	- Specific meetings between guidance tutors and teachers, - Specific information about the pupils at risk and effective measures to deal with - Coordination with social services to know more about the children	- At the end of last term - At the beginning of the new course	- Guidance teachers, tutors, social workers, teams for specific needs
To create a good school climate	- Meeting with entities and social and school resources in the area - Day care centers, support centers, centers for families, roma secretariat, parents associations	- At the beginning of the new course	

It's a good practice because it's a way to facilitate the transition between different school steps and make sure to support the children and overall with difficulties. It is a work of all the community in the area.

The challenges are related to the different circumstances of the children and the need to have coordination with many agents.

Evaluations are not done yet.

1st Good Practice - 'The transfer'

> INTRODUCTION

'The transfer' is a project to prevent early school leaving (ESL) at the moment that students make the transfer from secondary school to a follow-up education. In the 4 big cities in the Netherlands, among which The Hague is one, a relatively large group of students does not go to a follow-up education after having their diploma of the pre-vocational education (+/- 15%). This means that they have no basic qualification and are early school leavers. It turned out that this group of students only was in the picture, when it was too late to undertake action. To make sure that these potential ESL's are mapped on time, the project 'The transfer' was started in 2006.

> THE TARGET GROUP

The project is targeted at all exam candidates of schools for pre-vocational education in The Hague (+/- 16 years old). For their position at the labour market, having a basic qualification and hence moving on to a follow-up education (a senior secondary vocational education) is highly important.

> THE AIM OF THE PROJECT

The aim of the project is to prevent ESL at the transfer from pre-vocational education ('vmbo') to senior secondary vocational education ('mbo'). The project has a special attention for those students who, without extra help and despite of all efforts of school and parents, won't make a successful transition from vmbo to mbo: the so-called high-risk students. By knowing this group on time and offering extra coaching during the summer break, a lot of students show to make a well-considered and appropriate choice for a follow-up education eventually. As a result, the student can regularly start with the follow-up education at the beginning of the school year. To sum up, the targets are:

- having all students 'in view'
- signaling and coaching the high risk-students
- decreasing ESL and more students a basic qualification
- increasing the inflow in senior secondary vocational education
- providing a balanced care network for students who need extra care
- clear responsibility for the city council, the schools and parents

> ACTIVITIES

- letters to (the parents of) the students: why is obtaining a basic qualification so important?
- tracking system: all registrations for follow-up education are monitored.
- reporting of high risk students by the school.
- coaching and house calls: after the exam-period these high risked students are called for coaching. By no response, house calls are made.
- career orientation.
- 'warm transfer'.

> STAKEHOLDERS

The project is commissioned by the city council of The Hague and executed by the Learner Affairs product group (by 'case managers'). Other partners are schools for secondary vocational education, schools for senior secondary education, other regional city councils, Spirit4You (trade association) and 'RMC Haaglanden'.

> RESULTS

This project started in 2006. Results are clearly visible. The number of students marked as 'high-risk students' evidently decreased. Moreover, in 2012 88% of the high-risk students went back to school and succeeded in finding a suitable follow-up education (see tables below).

Year	High risk students
2012	312
2011	274
2010	339
2009	599
2008	600
2007	390
2006	449

TRANSFER TO CITY COUNCIL	TOTAL	%
Back to school	274	87.82
Detention	1	0.32
Special care	2	0.64
Work	7	2.24
Temporary work	1	0.32
No-show	7	2.24
Transfer to city council (18- compulsory education)	10	3.21
Transfer to city council (18+ case managers ESL)	1	0.32
Moved to another city	5	1.60
Pregnant	2	0.64
Other	2	0.64
Total	312	100

> INTRODUCTION

The Hague is a multi-ethnic city. Over 50% of the 500.000 inhabitants are non-Dutch from origin. This includes second and third generation descendants of migrants. The discourse on school-parent relationships in most countries of origin differ from the Dutch discourse. Dutch schools expect parents to regularly attend and assist the school of their children and to support the children at home with schoolwork and school life. Many parents are used to uphold a hierarchical distance concerning school life and personal life (sometimes because of their migrant background, but certainly not always). This difference in discourse causes misunderstanding and disinterest between schools and parents. Parents do not understand and act as a partner of school; schools are disappointed and misinterpret this behaviour as disinterest of the parents in school.

Since school-parent relationships are essential in *preventing* absence and dropout, the City council felt responsible to address this problem. The starting point was not an action-oriented analysis, but a *scientific analysis* of the problem and root causes. This was conducted by a local institute for higher education. The results showed the difference in discourse as mentioned above. This was discussed with schools, civil servants and the scientist. A project was developed in common agreement and on scientific base. This project appeared a major turning point in school-parent relationships at participating schools, and over the next 10 years more than 60 primary schools and more than 10 secondary schools participated in this project.

The project is named "More Chances With Parents" (Meer Kansen Met Ouders). It focused on schools as a starting point for changing relationships. Participating schools undergo a project on changing the culture within the school. The culture-change program focused on the images, goals and roles the schools wish to see parents in. Complaints on parents and their 'bad' behaviour were explicitly not the starting point; you yourself are the key to change. The project consisted of team-analysis, -trainings, the formation of an internal work-group on parental involvement, including a member of the management of the school, and the appointment of a parent-coordinator. This person was responsible of making a school policy plan on parental involvement, in cooperation with the working group, and where possible, with parents. The project was guided by the scientific institution. After two year a mental change was constituted and action plan delivered. The result was a more open attitude from

school to the parents, which resulted in more and better relationships between parents and school. Parents felt welcome, and learned at school what their roles of supporter of the school could consist of, and was highly appreciated. All the schools who participated in this programme have a highly active parent population both regarding institutional activities as well as regarding their involvement in their children's school-life.

This good practice zooms in on how *Heldring VMBO*, one of the few secondary schools who managed to participate in this project, successfully implemented More Chances With Parents.

> THE CONTEXT

Heldring VMBO is a secondary school for basic theoretical and practical vocational training in The Hague. It is one of 96 secondary school locations in The Hague. The population of the school mainly consists of children with a non-Western background. The Social Economic Status (SES) of students, parents and their social environment is on average low. The students come from the whole area, with travel time varying from 10 minutes to more an hour by public transport. At other secondary schools this travel barrier prevents physical involvements of parents in school life of their children. Heldring VMBO broke this barrier, en created intense relationships with parents. This leads to parental involvement in school life of the children at school and in their homes. Heldring is one of the few secondary schools who realised that taking up this challenge is less difficult than imagined, especially since most primary schools already had similar projects about parental involvement. The parents already were open to an intense relationship with school. The ground was fertile. Heldring VMBO seeded this ground with their own tailor-made programme for parents, within the framework of the More Chances With Parents-programme. Heldring VMBO is now one of the most successful secondary schools regarding parental involvement in The Hague.

> THE CHALLENGE

The overall challenge for The Hague is keeping up the good work that is done at primary education: how can we keep parents involved when their children make the transition from primary school to secondary education? In primary education lots of investments are made to involve parents in school and the learning process of the child. In secondary education, this parental involvement is however

not so self-evident anymore. The city council of The Hague supports schools that want to invest in parental involvement. 90% of primary schools apply for this budget, compared to only 15% of the secondary schools.

Secondary schools feel more independent from the City Council than primary schools and spend less time on parents, since the range of subjects they do invest is already large in itself. However, parents of students at secondary schools do request more information and a more intense relationship with the school. They lose track of the educational development of their child as soon as it leaves primary for secondary school. Possible consequences are higher ESL-rates, less intense study rates amongst the students and disappointed and disinterested parents, who started to be involved in primary school so enthusiastically, but who are disappointed by the openness of secondary schools.

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT?

The local government in close cooperation with Heldring VMBO (secondary school) and the Haagse Hogeschool (local scientific institute).

The city council subsidised the change-programme for two years. After finishing it, the school can get finance for four labour-hours meant for keeping up the internal and external agenda of the school on parental involvement.

The 'Haagse Hogeschool' developed and guided the project 'More Chances With Parents'. This project is scientifically based. It takes into account the reality of the school, sets the school as starting point for change, involves the whole team and management, sets one person as liaison officer within the school to keep colleagues on track, and makes long-term investments in a cultural change.

Heldring VMBO is one of the secondary schools in the city who successfully implemented this programme.

> WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUPS?

Parents with children at secondary schools, in this case Heldring VMBO.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

Point of departure of Heldring VMBO is: 'every parent wants to be involved in the school life of his/her child' (so also the 'difficult parents'). Key words in the approach toward parental involvement:

- **PARTNERSHIP:** 'your child is our student'. School and parents are equal partners with both a responsibility in the success of the child. This partnership is the basis for success. It means that parents are taken seriously. In creating parental

involvement it is important that parents feel that the school listens to them, that their opinion is important and that the school is also their school.

- **POSITIVITY:** The school doesn't tell parents what they don't do well enough, they emphasize the importance of their role in the success of the child. In this, they clearly communicate what the parents may expect from the school and what the school expects of the parents (that they show up at the three or four awards of the school-reports, that they support their child at home in the educational program and that they participate in the decision making in and around the school).
- **SAFETY:** It is essential that parents consider school to be a safe haven, for their children as well as for themselves. Below, you see the logo of the school. The three circles represent the vision that school, parents and children are partners. Moreover, it should express safety.

What does this partnership between school and parents look like in practice?

1. Heldring VMBO has a very active Parents Council

- The Parents Council consists of **30 parents** (26 mothers and 4 fathers) having meetings frequently.
- The Parents Council is involved in **planning and decision-making**. For example, the school wanted all children to get the same schoolbag, which they then get for free. This idea is put to the Parents Council and they have to approve it and choose the schoolbag that is ordered.
- At meetings of the Parents Council always a member of the board is present, so the parents can use his/her expertise when necessary.
- Parents of the Parents Council receive business cards just like other staff-members of the school, so they feel equal partners and connected to the school.
- The Parents Council **supports the staff** in reaching the parents that are difficult to reach. For this group of parents it is easier to talk to another parent, instead of to a teacher or directive.
- The Parents Council facilitates the organisation of **thematic meetings**, for example on alcohol, drugs, sex and reaching adulthood. By organising these meetings in the safe environment of the school and with representatives of the Parents Council (no teachers or board members are present), these taboo topics are discussed. This is a huge step forward.
- The Parents Council organises **activities for parents, by parents**. For example the Summer Celebration. All parents are invited to bring some food from their own culture and these are shared together. In this way, parents learn about each

other's background and it is an accessible way to visit the school and have a positive experience with it, so they will visit more easily the next time.

- The Parents Council is present at all the **information meetings** for parents, so they are visible (and become familiar) and accessible for questions of the parents. In this way, they can recruit new parents to join the Parents Council. Moreover, difficult questions are more easily asked to another parent, than to a teacher or board member.
- In school the only **language** that is spoken, is Dutch. Parents often are ashamed to recognise they don't speak the language well enough and the step to apply for a language course is huge (because they than admit their shortcoming). Parents of the Parents Council stimulate other parents via-via to learn the language and they facilitate language courses, so that it is easier for parents to take this step.

2. Heldring VMBO has a Parents Coordinator

The Parents Coordinator is one staff-member (no teacher) from within the school. The parents coordinator has a clear job description. She keeps in touch with parents at the micro-level: she calls them if they do not show up and she visited them even at home. Besides, she is also the person dealing with absence. If children regularly are late or when they don't show up in the lessons, she immediately contacts the parents to ask what's going on. It is important that this is not an external person, but someone who has a true connection with the school. In this way, she has a familiar face to all parents, so that they have easy access to her and don't experience barriers in this contact.

3. Heldring VMBO frequently organises meetings ('Contact-moments')

- Award of the pupils' school-reports (3 or 4 times a year): the school communicates very clearly (in a positive way) that parents are expected in school at these moments. If they don't show up, the parent coordinator is involved, to find out what is going on. These meetings are important to bind parents to the school, in showing that it is important and fun to be involved.
- Thematic meetings: meetings about 'difficult' themes, such as alcohol and drugs and about themes that parents have suggested themselves, because these are important to them. Show-up is higher than at other schools.
- Information meetings:
 - Intake of the new pupil: expectations are clearly communicated towards the parent.
 - Before the start of the school year: all parents of pupils who start at the school next year (who are

finishing primary education) are invited to come to school for an information meeting. The board expressly appreciates the importance of their presence and parents of the Parents Council tell about the role of parents in the school life of their child.

- Just after the start of the school year there is another meeting for parents. This meeting has the informal character of a 'high-tea'. The parents are invited, together with the last teacher of the primary school of their child and the mentor of the child at the new school. In this way, the school wants to secure the transition of the child from primary to secondary school.

Point of departure at this information meeting: it is very important to involve parents *from the beginning* (or even before the actual start) of the child's school career, because keeping them involved is much easier then.

- Informal activities for all parents, most of the time organised by the Parents Council.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY & HOW THEY WERE TACKLED

- Involving all parents, since they live across the whole city and so a lot of them are physically far away. *The school invested a lot in building a relationship indirectly between parents with the school as centre of this relationship (via the Parents Council).*
- Dealing with differences in expectations: because of their different (cultural) background, a certain group of parents has a different perspective on the relationship between schools and parents. In their vision school and home are two worlds apart and hence, they do not interfere in the school-world.

The school invests in inviting the parents personally and keeps trying to get in touch with them to build on a relation. This is done by the parents coordinator and the Parents Council.

- Language, especially communication in writing: do parents understand the message in a letter? Do they even open the letter?

Parents from the Parents Council produce the text, so it connects more to the parent's perception.

- Involving parents with a low socio-economic status: they have a lot of other things to worry about (financial problems, aggression, housing, etc.). They want to be involved, but do not have the time or opportunity to do so.

The school tries to facilitate parents as much as possible, for example, they serve a simple dinner, pay for public transfer costs, etc.

- Lack of (human) resources in the school to contact all parents personally.

Heldring successfully applied for funding of the City Council which they used for coordination of

all activities concerning parental involvement (i.e. the parents coordinator) and developing a policy plan, so that parental participation has become embedded in the school instead of a number of separated activities.

- Dealing with negative images that staff members of the school have about ‘complicated’ parents. They pictured that it costs many efforts to keep in touch with this difficult group of parents and hence they did not have a welcoming attitude towards them.

More Chances With Parents and the guidance from the scientist addressed these negative images, which resulted in a cultural change programme which showed the staff members the advantages of having a close relationship with these parents.

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A “GOOD PRACTICE?”

- Heldring VMBO has a vision on parental involvement and acts accordingly. This means that parents are regularly contacted and invited to the school. The school does not accept a ‘NO’. This results in parents building a relationship with teachers about their children.
- The Parents Council has wide support in the whole organisation: not only teachers, also the board takes parental participation very seriously.
- The number of parents in the Parents Council is increasing every year.
- All parents visit the school minimal 3 to 4 times a year at the award of the school-reports.
- Two-way contact: school is not only sending information one-way, parents also know their way to school. They ask questions and pose dilemmas

too.

- Taboo-topics are discussed during thematic meetings.
- Heldring VMBO has a significantly higher turn-out at information meetings than other schools.
- Parents are satisfied with the school as indicated by survey results and conversations of parents with the Dutch Education Inspectorate).
- Because of the relationship with the school, parents feel also responsible at home to discuss school life with their children. The school stimulates this by investing in educating parents on how to stimulate and support their children in schoolwork.

AND MOST IMPORTANT: This parental participation forms the basis of an early warning system on problems that may lead to absence and dropout. The preventive approach resulted in significant lesser absence and dropout rates compared to other secondary schools, despite the low SES of the students and their parents.

> EVALUATION

- The way to get parents participation embedded in the whole school system was very labour-intensive. However, costs are relatively low;
- The whole school team and board is needed to make the project work: when all is clustered around one or two enthusiastic teachers, the project is not effective;
- Key players are needed in the community of parents to ‘spread the message’ among the parents

City of Munich

1st Good Practice – Counsellors at school and the advisory centre

> INTRODUCTION

In Munich parental work starts very early, in the kindergarten. Teachers and counsellors at school actively keep contact to parents. School system makes help necessary with transitions and decisions of every kind, so there’s a continuous contact between parents and schools showing alternatives, ways to further education and give advice starting into working life. Due to the big influence parents have on job decisions, it is important to start as early as possible. Depending

on the qualification adolescents leave school at the age of 15/16 and either go to further education schools or enter the job market as applicants. Every school provides specially qualified teachers who studied this subject additionally and therefore are experts accompanying pupils and parents. For further problems there are also school psychologists available. Further institutions are for example the advisory centre of the city of Munich where a team of teachers whose responsibility is to advise people about school problems or alternatives (every kind

of school, every kind of age – secondary schools, vocational schools, further education schools, studies,...) and specialists for further education who offer help to find alternatives concerning education, better/ different qualifications and re-entry into working life. Special advisors provide help for people with handicap or for the question of inclusion. Additionally there are psychologists, and the advisor centre international who advise in 16 different languages, so that many people with migration background can get help in their native tongue. One big part is the cooperation with the adult education centre of Munich.

> **WHAT WAS THE NEED/ PROBLEM TO ADDRESS? THE CONTEXT?**

The variety and complexity of the German/ Bavarian school system makes people confused and unsure so they seek for help. The advisory centre is not known to all people who need help. We work preventative, but we don't find people or youth a job. There are many different institutions and people need to find out the right one. Moving to a different state makes the problem bigger for many families because of the various school systems and curriculums.

> **WHO FORMULATED THE NEED/ PROBLEM/ CHALLENGE?**

Parents often come to us with their children because they have problems at school or don't know how to get a qualification. They are often in despair and were given the information to contact us. Many don't really know the opportunities the system offers. Sometimes it's about school laws and duties. Prevent 2013 Munich best practice.

> **WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT/PRACTICE?**

The state of Bavaria is responsible for the education of teachers and their qualifications. The City of Munich installed the municipal advice centre in cooperation with the Munich adult education centre.

> **WHO IS THE TARGET GROUP/END USER?**

It's an offer for everyone who needs help concerning current or future decisions no matter what age group, nationality they are or qualification/ education they have.

> **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

At every school there is a team with special qualifications - school psychologists (second school subject) and counsellors (2 years study with graduation) who are also teachers. They actively keep contact to parents and pupils and help them in the jungle of transitions and decisions. It contains vocational counselling, help with psychological

or performance problems, advice concerning transitions or further education. There are also other institutions who can give further help like the municipal advice centre which contains all these specialists as well as experts on further education (for adults, too), getting qualifications and an international branch which gives advice in 17 different languages for people with migration background.

> **CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?**

Problems within the family hinder cooperation between school and parents. For people with migration background it's hard to understand the school system, there is often a culture clash and language is an obstacle, too.

> **HOW WERE THEY TACKLED/ SOLVED?**

Teachers try to keep contact actively. There are institutions which can help with languages and the school systems (international advice centre – see above) and can be invited for parents' evenings, too. For dispelling fear or doubts a tried and tested method is visualization.

> **WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?**

It starts early and actively at school and continues in adulthood. Parents and pupils are accompanied on their way by specialists throughout their schooldays and beyond. Additionally there are institutions with special, additional further qualifications that offer help in many directions. Teachers at school are always available, are close to the pupils' concerns and problems and have a better access to their pupils. Advice is practically oriented and it's easier to establish a basis of trust as they are bound to maintain confidentiality. Another possibility is to send clients to various institutions to give them support for their individual problems. One important aspect is that it's free of charge and open to everyone. Meanwhile it's a big network with various organizations that profit from each other.

> **WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? EVALUATIONS?**

Clients give a positive feedback. Many pupils/ parents come to school events and give positive feedback mostly about successful transitions or the results of the given advice. At the advice centre we have feedback sheets, which are 99% full of praise. More and more people use these offers and are satisfied with the results as they feel taken seriously.

> INTRODUCTION

"Parents-Active" is a program for parents, teachers and child care workers to improve their skills in order to cooperate in a kind of partnership. In 2007 the city of Munich decided to provide 150.000€ each year for this project. It started in September 2008 as a project for 4 years and was evaluated by the State Institute of Pre-School-Education. Based on the evaluation, the concept has been revised and since September 2012 the program is well established.

There are 133 primary schools in Munich, most of them offer day care for the children in the afternoon. The new concept splits the money into two categories:

- 75.000€ for all primary schools for short-term activities;
- 70.000€ for the "islands of competence" (3 new schools every two years get programs with a lasting effect for themselves and their neighbour-schools);
- 5.000€ for aftercare of the former "islands of competence".

> THE CONTEXT

The Munich report of education from 2006 becomes aware of the fact that a lot of children are disadvantaged just by the area they live in, a poor neighbourhood with a high social impact. This problem passed down generations, children grew up and stayed in the same neighbourhood as their parents did. So there was a need to find activities to mediate between parents and social actors, like teachers and child care workers to reduce prejudices and contact anxiety.

> THE CHALLENGE

- to find a private agency to perform the project
- to bring the government of Bavaria in
- to find appropriate schools with motivated actors (parents, teachers, child care workers) for the islands of competence

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT?

The project was initiated by the unit for education and sports of the city of Munich in agreement with the governmental school authority.

> WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUPS?

All parents of children in Munich's primary schools, and especially the parents in regions with high social impacts.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

All primary schools (parents' association, headmaster, head of day care)

- get an index of issues of activities (activities terms: parents-education-evenings; parents meeting parents - parents-child-actions)
- can call up these issues whenever they want in agreement with parents-mentoring

Islands of competence

- obligate themselves to appoint one teacher and one child care worker as parents partners for the minimum of one year.
- obligate themselves to guarantee an information evening for the whole college.
- provide the contact between the parents' association and the private agency.
- are the presenter of all in-house-activities with the parents.
- obligate themselves to copy all invitations for the parents.
- allocate adequate rooms for activities.
- deliver insight to dates (under permission of data protection), which are necessary for analysis and strategy of the private agency.
- obligate themselves to advise the neighbour schools
- get an analysis of demands and interests of all local players.
- based on this analysis, they get a concept with consideration of personal, temporal and space resources.
- can use the whole index of issues of activities.

Binding elements for the Islands of competence:

- building of an competence-island regulation-group (2 teachers, 2 child care worker, 2 parents from the school, optional 2 parents from the day-care offer, leading by the private agency)
- counselling interviews with local people in power
- starting Workshop with all actors at the facility
- coaching the parents' association to rights and duties and his working structure
- coaching the parents' association to reachability of the parents
- coaching the parents' association intercultural communication
- advanced training for teachers and child care workers for advising the neighbour schools

Optional elements for the Islands of competence:

- Parents-education-evenings
- Parents-child-actions
- Parents-training
- Coaching for special terms elected by the parents
- Advising for the local actors
- Vacation-activities for children and parents (one week Monday-Friday per year)

Professional attendance of the Islands of competence

- One person of the private agency with experience in adult-education (contact-person / preparation of an analysis of the status quo / continuing information for local panels and persons / leading of the competence-island-regulation-group / organisation of the processes / formulation of education-aims, annual-plan, concept of cooperation of all actors / mediacy of consultants to special terms / evaluation and documentation of the process and the results of the project / interface to the project management of the private agency).

Structure for the work with the Islands of competence

- Base concept and placing of the mandate: Unit of education and sports.
- Choice of the islands: unit of education and sports in agreement with the governmental school authority.
- Coordination of the mandate: unit of education and sports with the private agency.
- Overall regulation: Unit of education and sports, private agency, governmental school authority, representatives of the school.
- Competence-island-regulation-group.
- Competence-island.
- Advising for the neighbour schools.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

The challenge in the project phase (2008-2012) was, that the local players did not have enough information about their part in the project. We did not ask for liability from the local players. So we get no sustainability in the project, neither for the school, nor for the neighbour schools.

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED?

After the evaluation, we decided to rename the "model-schools" in "islands of competence" and to bring in the local players with a detailed information before they decided to become an "island of competence".

We want an intentional decision from all players (parents, school and day care) to work together and advise the neighbour schools.

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

Since the start of new phase in September 2012, we find no more challenges.

The motivation of the actors is still on a high level and we have reliable methods to guarantee a sustained yield for all players and also a lot of players in neighbourhood schools.

Every two years, 3 more islands of competence will be selected, until we have one island in every part of Munich.

> EVALUATION

The private agency is in the liability to submit a performance report every half year, and also to submit a programme documentation at the end of a school year.

Every two years the unit of education and sports and the private agency arrange a symposium for parents, teachers, childcare workers and many others. It shows the results and good practice examples from the local players and give space for encouragement basic questions.

1st Good Practice - Involving parents, all children can succeed

> INTRODUCTION

This project is based on two postulations:

Academic failure of children who are more and more frequently getting out of school without any qualification, which has an impact on their future and impacts on their successful integration in modern society which may result in their developing violent reactions.

How some professionals look upon their parents: resigned or responsible, but never considered as actors or partners.

...two convictions:

A whole “village” is necessary for breeding a child (African proverb).

All children can succeed in life.

...and one desire:

To accumulate experiences, successes but also failure in order to be able to create mutual benefit and offer good practice.

> THE CONTEXT

“Bottière/Pin Sec” district is the second lowest income area within the city; with 60% under the poverty line, 42,60% one-parent families, 17% children (+15 old) have not graduate studies. At the beginning of the project, there were no parents’ associations, with very little use of existing services to help youngsters.

> THE CHALLENGE

- By changing the professionals’ attitude in order to increase the possibility for families to be more active,
- By working on the representation of the various people in order to act together, to create some space where they can meet, to mix professionals and parents,
- By getting together in a sort of co-education,
- By increasing the value of cooperation as a starting point to build the local educational action,
- By giving a new meaning and a good reputation to collective action.

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT?

The association ATD Quart Monde experimented in Rennes with very low-income parents about their

relationship with school (primary and secondary schools) from 2007.

ATD Quart Monde wanted to transfer this good practice in other cities. In 2009, it made an appeal to other cities to experiment the same technique.

The project in “Bottière / Pin Sec” district was accepted, as well as 22 other cities among which Brest (3 sites), Lorient and Rennes.

> WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUPS?

Parents’ group:

From 2010, they met once every 6 weeks with the “development agent” and/or the Families Department of Nantes Municipality. As the time went by, this basic group declined.

Some mothers put a lot of effort to make this work known whereas it was difficult for others to integrate. Today, other parents participate thanks to a new boost in the parents’ association, with the setting up of “parents’ cafés” in two nursery schools, with the presence of social workers (ADPs) and the involvement of elected parents from the councils of schools

Professionals’ group:

They meet once every 6 weeks with Catherine Sellenet, a Teacher of Sociology at the University of Nantes. During this time, a situation showing a problem of understanding between parents and professionals is put forward. Catherine Sellenet then brings a theoretical indication and some avenues of thought to improve it.

Teachers’ group:

They received 18 hours’ training with a representative from ATD Quart Monde and 2 Teachers from the University of Nantes about Family and Institution.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

Meetings are held every 6 weeks on a group basis to discuss a common agenda which could be the child’s personalized report acting as a link between all parties (adults) responsible for his/her development.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

- That all parties involved in the child’s development understand the same language – this may involve

the use of diagrams or drawings to communicate rather than the standard written word.

- Getting groups of people who don't appear to have anything in common to work together for a common goal.

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED?

This is still a pilot project that is subject to continuous improvement as a result of on-going communication between the families, the professionals involved and the teachers.

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE?"

There are 7 parents and 7 professionals involved in the pilot group; they have developed an open working relationship with each other where they are able to openly discuss their concerns in order for the project to continue at a speed that is acceptable to all involved.

> EVALUATION

At present, no evaluation has yet been carried out as this is still a pilot. However, it is hoped that once the pilot is concluded, all parties will continue to keep the channels of communication open for the benefit of the child.

2nd Good Practice - Club Coup de pouce

> INTRODUCTION

A "Club Coup de pouce" is a small group of five six years old pupils who are learning to read at school. As almost everywhere in the world, children are learning to read at school, with different methods. The concept of "Club Coup de pouce" was created in 1993 by an association and developed in France. The idea is to avoid early school failure by promoting the pleasure of reading among children who are just learning to read. It is dedicated to children where family environment does not allow practicing at home after school.

There are now 243 cities that organise some Clubs coup de pouce in France (total of 9 300 children) and 13 in Nantes (65 children).

> THE CONTEXT

The city of Nantes is engaged in an educational success politic with a department dedicated.

The first clubs were created in 2004-2005. The city organizes, with schools, the course of each club.

One person in the department is especially dedicated to the organization of the clubs.

> THE CHALLENGE

- By helping children after school to give them the key of good reading for the rest of their schooling
- By helping parents in order to increase the possibility for families to be more active even if they have difficulties to read,
- By getting together in a sort of co-education,
- By increasing the value of cooperation as a starting point to build the local educational action,

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT?

Some teachers have created the association APFEE (Association to promote equity of chance at school) in 1993. The "club coup de pouce" is one of their actions.

The city of Nantes has decided to join this program in 2004.

> WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUPS?

Childrens' group:

6 years old Children who are learning to read ant to write at school but need some help after school.

Parents' group:

The idea is to show the parents that they can help their children to read.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

Pupils have got the Club Coup de pouce training every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday after class during one hour and half, from November to June.

There is five children per group, no more.

The activity leader is not a teacher.

The process is each time the same:

- eating a little snack: children talk about what they want about school "like at home" (25 min);
- doing the reading homework given by the teacher (15min);
- games and exercises around sounds, reading writing small texts all together: the idea is to show pupils that they can read, win the game and be in success situation. The adult congratulates them. (30 min);

- the “beautiful story” is the last time : the adult read a story every day to show how it is good to learn to read : children learn the pleasure to read.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

Children could be tired to stay at school to practice in a group but because it is based on games and short activities, we don't lose them.

Parents could not think they should be involved.

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED?

We are thinking about a new organization with only two days in order to involve parents the other days.

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A “GOOD PRACTICE”?

Learning to read is regarding not only like the school “job” but the commitment of all: children and parents, school, the city, the association,

It is sometimes difficult to work all together: the organisation of the “club” gives a place and a role to everyone and not disqualifies school.

> EVALUATION

An evaluation is done at the end of the school year for each club: children, parents, teacher and the club leader are questioned. The association gives a national evaluation.

City of Sofia

1st Good practice" - "Schools of Inclusion"

> INTRODUCTION

"Schools of Inclusion" is a pilot municipal model for social integration of Roma children in educational institutions through capacity building, scaling up activities, in order to achieve high pre-school enrolment for Roma children developing at the same time conditions for adaptation and skills for living and studying in multicultural environment, field work/community involvement and parents' activities/ and institutional support in order to create conditions for social inclusion.

District “Krasna Poljana” is located in the western part of Sofia. It has an area of 920 ha and borders the areas “Vazrajdane”, Ilinden”, Liulin”, “Ovcha Kupel” and “Krasno selo”. The population is about 60,000 people of which approximately 15,000 are Roma living mainly in the district “Fakulteta”. On the territory of the region “Krasna Polyana” there are 8 children facilities and 8 schools but the Roma children go to only one school which is located in district “Fakulteta” and is segregated – 75 Basic Schools. Thus children go to school up to 7th grade and then drop out.

Transportation: The district Krasna Polyana has transport links with other parts of the city, but they are not sufficiently communicative and functional. Trans BB4, 11 and 22 buses NN60, 77 and 83, travel from Krasna Polyana to other part of Sofia but they are not enough and do not provide good connections with other areas of the capital city.

The need is for a transport scheme with clearly defined route-designed according to the density of Roma children in the region and other regions in Sofia.

The methodology for project implementation includes methods and principles:

- **Methods for selecting the target group:** analysis of the demographic and social infrastructure of the district “Fakulteta”; direct communication-focus-groups and round table discussions with teachers and school boards.
- **Methods for activities' implementation:** direct work with the target groups, which are at the same time beneficiaries in order to involve them in the whole process.
- **Methods for monitoring and evaluation:** regular accountancy, strategic planning of common goals and drafting action plans, monitoring of documentation, consultancy and supervision for risk prevention.
- **Methods for conducting the training:** seminar activities/lectures, exchange of good practices/, training /discussion and testing/, interactive presentation/role plays, brain storming, PPP, printed materials.
- **Principles for choosing the methods and the implementation of activities:** accessibility, gender equality, economical expedience, informed consent, tolerance, partnership of all key actors, direct participation of the target groups

The "Schools of Inclusion" achieve its objectives through:

- training of project schools' personnel;
- online network of schools of inclusion for information and good practices exchange and partnership;
- securing regular transportation of Roma children from their community to other schools, out of the district "Fakulteta", securing support by appointing mediators and supervisors whit Roma ethnicity;
- conducting awareness raising educational school campaigns, parents meetings, round table for drafting municipal program activities all planned to create sustainable model for desegregation influencing not only the Roma minority but the majority too.

> WHAT WAS THE NEED/PROBLEM TO ADDRESS? THE CONTEXT?

- The need for expanding the network of schools and kindergartens, which have school programs that include activities for working and studying in multicultural environment.
- The need to create conditions for bringing Roma children out of areas with a concentration of Roma population, in order to avoid segregation and to change the institutionalized model of separate educational institutions for Roma children.
- The need to increase the enrolment of Roma children in pre-school education and to keep the students enrolled.
- The need to conduct an active communication strategy to include a wider range of stakeholders and partners for planning and implementing activities in a multicultural environment.
- The need to support educational environment, extracurricular activities, centres for work with children and his families.
- The need to improve the capacity of teachers and school boards to plan and implement activities for creating friendly, multicultural environment and to involve Roma parents in school life.

> WHO FORMULATED THE NEED/PROBLEM/ CHALLENGE?

On policy level: result of sociological study, planning of different programme documents, capacity building-resources, and discussions with local support group, experience.

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT/PRACTICE?

The administration of Sofia municipality-Directorate of education together with local support group, support from government institutions, Advisory Council "The Children of Sofia", local support group.

> TARGET GROUP/END USERS?

Roma children from district "Fakulteta" (approximately 5000), Roma parents of children from District Fakulteta (approximately 8000), the school staff of the project schools (237 people), five Roma mediators.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

The following activities were implemented:

1st stage

- 1 - Analysis of the demographic and social infrastructure, analysis of the result of sociological study
- 2 - Training of Roma mediators, training of pedagogical staff, training of expert of institutions, 20 persons, 3 days training in "Family Involvement", "Effective models for interaction, awareness raising and multilateral partnership", "Conflict management", "Communication with institutions". After passing a test the best 5 mediators will be invited to join the project on a contract basis.
- 3 - Educational Support Environment
 - Information and promotion of social rights and benefits related to education, employment and qualification;
 - A guide for parents: containing information about procedures for school enrolment, school rules, staff, traditions, and requirements. Advices for the parents how to grow up and communicate with their children;
 - Information and promotion of activities of public and private centres providing services, non-formal and extra curriculum education for free;
 - Information and promotion of sport clubs and centres, which offer sport trainings and classes for free;
 - Information and promotion of schools that implement activities in multicultural environment;

2nd stage

- 1 - Securing daily transportation for Roma children from district "Fakulteta" to the 5 project schools and back during the time when children attend school
- 2 - Parents' school meetings; information, awareness raising, promotion, 30 meetings, 3 for each school in each school level
- 3 - Community public hearings
- 4 - The online network of "Schools of Inclusion"
- 5 - Developing Municipal Program for Roma educational integration and social inclusion in Sofia based on the current project results

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

- Motivate parents /students, teachers/ to become active participants in school-life
- Difficulties in gaining trust from Roma parents

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED/SOLVED?

- Collaboration with Sofia Municipal Children Center using the methods of formal and non-formal education.
- Teach and help parents how to understand and communicate with they children with the help of roma school mediators.
- Initiate and conduct common activities "parents-children" through arts as intervention instrument.

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

Because "Schools of Inclusion" pilot municipal model involved all key actors in the process of Roma educational integration: schools, administrations, parents and the community. The project:

- Expanded the network of educational institutions- situated close or bordering areas with concentration of Roma population- which can welcome and integrate Roma children, starting from pre-school age;

- Developed an effective and sustainable municipal program for bringing children out of regions in Sofia Municipality with a concentration of Roma population /district "Fakulteta"/ and transporting them to schools in other districts in order to keep them in school and to prevent drop- outs.
- Mobilized local communities' resources and all key actors/ responsible institutions, parents, NGOs, school boards/ to work together for the implementation of the local strategy for Roma educational integration and social inclusion.

> WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? EVALUATIONS?

- Keeping the enrolled Roma children in school and prevent dropouts - at least 548 children -numbers at the beginning and at the end of the project.
- Secured and trained 5 qualified Roma mediators to facilitate the communication between Roma community and the educational institutions.
- Secured programmatic support of the integration process, extra curricular activities. Municipal program developed.
- Informed and motivated parents and community members, considerably increased number of people attending the parents meetings and community open forums, different types of information.

2nd Good practice - Breaking the cycle of violence

> INTRODUCTION

- Pilot municipal model for prevention of risk behaviour through capacity building, scaling up activities, field work/community involvement and parents' activities/ and institutional support in order to create conditions for social inclusion
- Training teachers about causes and effects of aggression and harassment among students, about the ways for identifying children-victims of domestic violence
- Involving the community in educational programmes and campaigns - parents, NGOs, local governments, media etc.
- Encouraging children and parents to seek help when they have become witnesses or victims of violence
- Creating a mechanism for inter-institutional dialogue for prevention of risk behaviour

Who formulated the need/ problem/challenge?

Conducting a representative sociological study and introducing monitoring indicators in implementing the programme in the following areas – education, healthcare, social environment and safety, sport, culture and free time, social activities.

> WHO FORMULATED THE NEED/ PROBLEM/ CHALLENGE?

Conducting a representative sociological study and introducing monitoring indicators in implementing the programme in the following areas – education, healthcare, social environment and safety, sport, culture and free time, social activities.

The goal of the study was:

- Identifying concrete needs of students in planning the municipality policy for child protection – aged 9 to 18
- Assessment of environment /educational, family, urban/ in terms of its role and importance as a prevention of risky behaviour
- Analysis of possibilities for social inclusion and partnership in implementing educational programmes for prevention of risky behaviour – including all interested parties and audiences
- Creating conditions for introducing relevant forms for prevention of risky behaviour

Methods of Conducting the Study:

The study was conducted within 3 months (January-March), taking in consideration target group

age specificities (students aged 9 to 18) and the selection of schools was made to include all regions in Sofia

- Questionnaires for students 3-5 grade;
- Questionnaires for students 5-8 grade;
- Questionnaires for students 8-12 grade;
- Interviews with parents;
- Interviews with teachers;
- Interviews with representatives of regional and state institutions

> WHAT WAS THE NEED/ PROBLEM TO ADDRESS? THE CONTEXT?

Policy level:

Results of sociological study, planning of different programme documents, capacity building-resources, and discussions with local support group, experience.

Aggression and violence are “form of communication” between children/students at school, in the street, in the family;

Declared fears and impossibility to manage the development dynamics of that process;

Need of educational policy for prevention of risk behaviour among the growing up at all levels – students, parents and teachers

Parents:

Determine school and children’s education as a basic factor in their development – at personal and professional level

They need a more effective dialogue with teachers and other parents

They get information about their children’s behaviour mostly through specialists - teachers, doctors, and other experts

Show concern about their children’s free time and environment – friends, informal communication routines

As a problem they identify lack of time for a full value contact with their children – conversations, family rituals and celebrations etc.

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT/ PRACTISE?

The administration of Sofia municipality-Directorate of education together with local support group, support from government institutions, Advisory Council “The Children of Sofia”, local support group.

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

Because "BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE" pilot municipal model involved all key actors in the process for prevention of risk behavior: schools, administrations, parents and the community.

The project:

- Expanded the network of educational institutions
- Developed an effective and sustainable municipal program for prevention of risk behavior and to prevent drop- outs.
- Mobilized local communities’ resources and all key actors/ responsible institutions, parents, NGOs, school boards/ to work together for the implementation of the pilot municipal model
- How were they tackled/ solved?
- Collaboration with Sofia Municipal Children Center using the methods of formal and non-formal education.
- Training teachers about causes and effects of aggression and harassment among students, about the ways for identifying children-victims of domestic violence
- Teach and help parents how to understand and communicate with they children
- Initiate and conduct common activities "parents-children" through arts as intervention instrument
- Encouraging children and parents to seek help when they have become witnesses or victims of violence

> WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? EVALUATIONS?

Deficits in communication between generations, institutions, and among all interested parties.

School and Family are not successful in developing an effective model for prevention of risk behaviour among the students growing up; despite the common goal they realize their concrete steps in a “parallel” way.

Children and parents declare confidence in and necessity of support on the side of educational institutions.

Urgent necessity of introducing educational programmes for social skills, health and civic education.

1st Good Practice ABC, All children in focus

> INTRODUCTION

"ABC – All children in focus" is a general parent support program for all parents with children between 3 -12 years. The ABC-program was developed in 2010 and 2011 in the Spånga- Tensta City district and 10 other municipalities around Stockholm in collaboration with group leaders, parents and researchers.

The aim of "ABC - All children in focus" is to promote children's positive development

by promoting a positive relationship between parents and children. ABC consists of four meetings with an optional of a fifth follow-up meeting. The first meeting is titled show your love, the second take part, the third show the way and the fourth choose your battles.

The starting point of the program was a combination of knowledge gained from scientific research, parent's needs and the requests from the municipalities/city districts, all with the intention to incorporate the child's perspective in every part. The design of the program is informed by results since 4000 interviews were conducted with parents. These were aimed at get a picture of what parents would like to discuss about the parental role and how they would like to discuss the topics.

> THE CONTEXT

In 2010, 56% of the people living in Spånga-Tensta had a migrant background. There are high rates of unemployment in Tensta. Many children have no role models active in the labour market. Many of the parents are confident in their parent role when the children are very young but they feel worried about how they will cope as their children get older, and will need to fit in with the preschool, the school culture and the wider society.

Spånga-Tensta is a segregated city district. In Spånga most inhabitants are native swedes living in villas or detached houses. Many of them are born and raised in the neighbourhood since generations. In Tensta on the other hand, many families are newly arrived immigrants from all over the world. Some of them stay in Tensta, other moves on to other neighbourhoods as they find jobs and feel more integrated in the swedish society. Compared to Spånga, childgroups in preschools and schools in Tensta are not the same for more than one year, due to families moving in and out in the neighbourhood.

The parent counselors at the The Family center in Spånga-Tensta saw the need of a short program

for all parents where they could discuss their parenthood. The aim was to form groups where all kinds of parents could meet and discuss common challenges at home. The group itself could be the meetingpoint where parents from different backgrounds could get to know each other and find out that there are more similarities than differences between. Another aim was to invite parents to ABC at places where parents felt at ease and were used to visit.

> THE CHALLENGE

Prior to implementing the ABC-program, the major challenge was convincing the local district authority managers to invest in this type of initiative.

The aim was:

To integrate general parent support as a task and a service for parents in the ordinary and every day work, everywhere where parents visit to show the benefits for the preschool, school, social service itself when they make an effort to invite parents in general.

To create a program that was interesting for all parents

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT?

The background of ABC was an initiative from the government to the Swedish National Institute of Public Health to develop the general parent support in Sweden. The Spånga-Tensta City district became a part of this initiative as we wanted to create a focused parent support program and we set out to create ABC – "All children in focus" together with other municipalities and researchers.

> TARGET GROUP?

All parents with children between 3-12 years.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

ABC is now offered by ABC group leaders with different professional background in preschools, schools, the family center and other places, which are natural meeting points for parents. The Swedish for immigrants (SFI) language service also offers the program. There are 25 group leaders in Spånga-Tensta, they are preschool teachers, teachers, native language teachers, pupils social welfare staff, social workers and some other professions. There are networking, training and mentoring activities to support them.

In 2012 the political leadership in Stockholm decided that all parents in Stockholm will be offered the opportunity to participate in an ABC-group. A letter was sent out to all parents – and 5000 parents answered that they wanted to join a group

All city districts in Stockholm are now offering ABC. During 2012 and 2013 it is free of charge to attend courses to become an ABC group leader.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

To get the preschools and the schools to assign and train group leaders and make it possible for them to have groups.

To recruit parents to the groups and find good ways to reach all parents in the city district.

To integrate the parent support in our ordinary activities after the project period 2010-2011

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED?

Our city district already has a structured network for co-operation around children and youth on several organizational levels. The steering committee in the network is also the head for strategy and support for the general parents support, ABC. As the top management level had good knowledge about the program, they were highly motivated to spread information about ABC, train network parties and invite to parents groups. After a while also part of the good practice between organisations and positive results from inviting to parent groups.

Members of different management teams were also given an opportunity to try parts of the speaking and after that it was much easier to get more organisations involved.

> WHY IS IT CONSIDERED TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

We believe that every parent is the most important person in every child's life. The basis is that all

parents want the best for their child but some parents have a lack of confidence, to take a leading part of raising their child. We want to make them more confident, let them find and build strong and loving bonds between themselves and the child from an early stage to last through out the years. We want them to discover that it is not too complicated and if they feel they are not alone in that situation and are able to get help from others. ABC is a structured way of talking about difficult matters as a parent. The theme show your love, take part, show the way and choose your battles are the same irrespective of the child age and are basic for raising and supporting children to be responsible grown-ups.

According to ABC group leaders who hold the ABC-programme the meetings give opportunities to point out how important the parents are for the children's development. Discussions about the importance of being involved in the every day life of the children, how to find positive ways to have a dialogue about school and how to prevent conflicts strengthen parents abilities to support the children in school.

As ABC is directed to all parents and is easy to invite to, the meetings work as door openers to parents who need more help.

We believe that it is easy for other cities or countries to understand the concept and use it for the same purpose in their own districts.

> EVALUATION

Participation satisfaction and feedback are collected in on-going follow-ups and adjustments of the programme content have been done. Generally the participants are very satisfied. The Karolinska Institutet (Medical university in Stockholm) is conducting a randomised controlled trial of ABC. The extensive evaluation of ABC (conducted by Karolinska Institutet) will be published in 2014 but hopefully there would be some results at an earlier stage.

2nd Good practice - Parental involvement in study support for students

> INTRODUCTION

The idea of the NGO International Acquaintances (Internationella Bekantskaper, IB) was started in the spring of 2008 by a teacher at Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) in Tensta. The organisation arranges activities such as:

- Improving conversation skills within smaller groups during classes at the courses "Swedish for Immigrants" and "Swedish as second language", ("medpratare" in Swedish)
- Language support to newly arrived youths in the age 16-20 years

- Homework help ("läxhjälp" in Swedish) in the outer city suburbs
- International walks and other activities outside of normal work- or class time
- "Swedish with your baby" for parents on maternity leave who wants to practice Swedish and make intercultural meetings

> THE VISION IS:

A Sweden where the fellowship between all citizens is characterized by consensus, respect and trust.

A Sweden where all people can thrive and feel secure.

> ONE SWEDEN!

The underlying belief is that an important path towards this future is through one common language.

> CONTEXT

There are 17 000 people living in Tensta who come from all over the world. Some of them have been educated in their homeland, but many have no education and some are illiterate without any knowledge of what it takes to complete school. The majority of them study Swedish for foreign adults at SFI in Tensta.

During the spring of 2007 there was one teacher who had been employed in SFI for one year. During this time he met and taught students who had very limited contact with Swedish speaking people. Through conversations with many of these students, it became clear to him that almost all of them lacked any Swedish acquaintances regardless of how long time they had lived in Sweden. Many of them had lived in Sweden for several years, but despite this fact they did not achieve more contact with Swedish speaking people than they had when they had arrived here.

With the intention to remedy this situation, the teacher has, since the spring of 2008, worked with and built a network of Swedish people, who are interested in helping to counteract this lack of connectivity between large parts of Stockholm's inhabitants. The recruiting of these Swedish participants is mainly carried out through "Voluntärbyrå" (the Volunteer bureau) but also with the help of posters on bulletin boards within libraries and other public places in the inner city. Currently there are approximately 300 Swedish people who, on a non-profit basis, participate regularly in some of the activities that are coordinate.

> THE CHALLENGES?

There are several challenges to be faced:

- To find good and interested volunteers.
- To organize staffing during homework evenings.
- To find a partner in Tensta which will promote "läxhjälpen".
- To find appropriate premises in the area.

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT?

An interested teacher with an idea. In Tensta there are more or less good functioning homework intermediaries but the demand is bigger than the supply.

> WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUPS?

Parents with poor Swedish that have children in the schools in Tensta and who have difficulties to help their child in school.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

In collaboration with SFI in Tensta and with a very engaged father from the area we have begun in two places, two nights a week, in SFI's premises and in a youth club.

Through a special non-profit organisation we try to find interested and educated Swedish citizens who want to contribute by becoming homework support volunteers. We also make advertising at libraries, university and at working places. People that register are contacted by our person responsible for the study support ("läxhjälpen") and can be booked for one or more occasions during a term. Many people sign up for once a week. The teachers at SFI and the contact person in Tensta promote the homework support to parents in the area. All children/youths participating must also have a parent with them. This is to ensure to have a calm and study friendly atmosphere while at the same time give the parent a chance to understand what the child is working on in school and to learn more Swedish.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

There are several challenges:

- 1 - Find someone who could be responsible for organization in Tensta
- 2 - Finding qualified volunteers and make the schedule for each time.
- 3 - Motivating parents to come along with their child.
- 4 - Find suitable places to meet in and where our material could be stored between the occasions.
- 5 - We want to expand and have a closer cooperation with certain schools around certain pupils and students.

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED?

- 1 - An interested retired woman with administration skills.
- 2 - Working together with the volunteer bureau and advertising in different spots where Swedes live.
- 3 - A very energetic father living in Tensta.
- 4 - Cooperation with SFI-school and Spånga-Tensta community to find good spots to be in.
- 5 - Joining PREVENT network.

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A “GOOD PRACTICE?”

- It is a simple form of help between citizens.
- Anyone can join in for as many times they want, both as a student and study support.
- It creates values and knowledge both for the people giving and receiving support.
- We hope that parents who become involved also participate in our other activities and trips.
- It is a good way to integrate into Swedish society and possibly find friends for life.

> EVALUATION

No specific evaluation has been performed. But the demand continues to increase steadily and we regularly receive positive feedback from participating parents and student about improved school results. We made one evaluation among the group who helps out in 2012. They had several ideas to make the study support better that we have used to change things for the better.

We want to develop “läxhjälp” for specific schools’ students in their own schools’ premises during the evenings. In this way we could contribute with feedback to teachers and help to develop good relationships between students/parents and teachers that would benefit the collaboration between the school and the parent.

City of Tallinn

1st Good practice - Cooperation between the school, parents and local government

> INTRODUCTION

The round table with the specialists – the school reconciliation model is an alternative intervention method, which gives an opportunity to reconcile (to bring back to harmony) the student with the student, the teacher with the student or the student with the teacher, the teacher with the parent or the parent with the teacher in the school environment if there is a need. The precondition for the successful reconciliation is that all parties are interested in the reconciliation and motivated to give their contribution for the cooperation.

The model is practiced according to the respective situation and characteristics of the problem:

- Class observation, if needed and mapping chart of the problems by conciliator (i.e. head teacher, teacher, student or specialist according to the concrete case);
- Analysis on the situation and action plan will be done by the specialist (team leader of the case) together with the school social pedagogue, class teacher and head teacher;
- Round table/ reconciliation meeting 1 (teacher, student, parents) where all parties have the opportunity to describe the reality situation from their subjective perspective, to agree initial agreements and timetable to implement them.
- Round table/ reconciliation meeting 2 to discuss which ones of the initial agreements have been

fulfilled and which are not and why they were not fulfilled. Agreements for further activities and action plan (continuing intervention).

- Continuing intervention – individual counselling, if needed (approach based on the concrete case, problem), counselling for the support services, team trainings for supportive class atmosphere, workshops with parents, sharing and exchanging information via eSchool etc.)

> WHAT WAS THE NEED/ PROBLEM TO ADDRESS? THE CONTEXT?

- Conflict situations in the class (for example in the Form 7 or 8) that interfere learning and there was a need for neutral person who helped to discuss the problem, to find the specialist (team leader) to reconcile the parties.
- Truancy of the students, a misunderstanding between the student and teacher and there was a need for neutral person who helped to understand the problem between the family (parent and child) and teacher and to search the possible proceeding solutions.

> WHO FORMULATED THE NEED/ PROBLEM/ CHALLENGE?

The school formulates the need for reconciliation and sends the information to the conciliator.

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT/ PRACTICE?

The local government of Tallinn in cooperation with a non-profit organisation – The advisory centre for families and children (MTÜ Perede ja laste nõuandekeskus).

> WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUPS/ END USERS?

Beneficiaries are the students, teachers and parents.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

The school pedagogue, class teacher and if needed, the head teacher cooperate with the conciliator. The students are involved in the process with their parents and other teachers.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

The challenge of the conciliation is the mapping of the subjective reality of the participants in the problem situation and others. All participants have their own subjective reality what has to be accepted and taking into account when searching the solutions. The result depends on the emotionality, frustration, withstands for the stress of the

participants and how big is actually the wish to find out suitable solutions and conciliation.

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED/SOLVED?

With the discussions lead by the conciliator in cooperation with the participants and where the more or less suitable agreement were reached for all participants that helped to solve conflict situation.

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

This practice has been one of the effective practices taking into account the children's law regulation in Estonia. The school conciliation model, which is adjusted according to the needs of the school, has ensured the best possible result of the intervention. The result is most effective, if the discussion process takes place directly after the problem situation.

> WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? EVALUATIONS?

Positive result when the situation has been solved, the class atmosphere has been improved and it allows concentration on the learning or the truant-student has turned back to the learning process.

2nd Good practice – eKool

> INTRODUCTION

eKool (eSchool) is a role based web application used by 98% of Tallinn schools to: track grades and credits, get homework assignments, enable parents' communication with the school and monitor the students' attendance in the school.

eKool gives the feedback to the student and parent. It enables for the parent to see the development of his/her child and be involved in the learning process personally. The student can quickly find out his/her learning results, homework assignments and other messages from the teachers. The school head receives the operative overview about the school attendance by the students and about the students' results per classes. eKool enables to forward information to all users or only personally.

> WHAT WAS THE NEED/ PROBLEM TO ADDRESS? THE CONTEXT?

By the year 2002 it was obvious that school diary on paper and system of exchanging information cannot be the same anymore as it was. eKool was created and the City of Tallinn started to use it from the beginning.

> WHO FORMULATED THE NEED/ PROBLEM/ CHALLENGE?

Four Estonian schools submitted a vision/project application to the foundation "Vaata Maailma" ("Look at the World"). The foundation is composed by a private and public (state) partnership in 2002.

> WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT/PRACTICE?

Foundation "Vaata Maailma" ("Look at the World") of private and public (state) partnership in 2002.

> WHO IS THE TARGET GROUPS/END USERS?

School administration, teachers, students and parents.

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

eKool aims the creation of cooperation, which makes contribution to the development of a child. eKool enables systematise information of the school and create internet access to this information and bring into order the collecting and maintenance of the school information. eKool is a role based web application, allowing distributing learning information only for those, who are eligible to see it.

Subject teacher and class teacher are those who forward the information. There is a forum where parent or student can take part in the discussion. It is also possible to open a discussion where

the parents can discuss on the topics they are interested in and where class teacher or subject teacher can be involved. New part in eKool is development conversation between teacher, student and parent to cooperate for the child's development. Before the conversation the questionnaire will be sent to the student and parent to be prepared for the conversation. During the conversation the aims of the last development conversation will be looked over. As a result, a written summary will be composed where feedback and new aims will be set. The development conversation and the summary are the confidential. The school head is the composer of the questionnaire and analyst of the results of the development conversations (can log in to see the summaries).

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

In addition to the school curriculum, lessons plan, grades and results information there should be more

learning materials, e-textbooks and other useful materials for the teachers.

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

eKool is an indispensable facility of the modern school today.

> WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? EVALUATIONS?

98% of the Tallinn schools use eKool system in 2013. There are no diaries on paper and upon agreement with the school – no certificates on paper. All information will be archived digitally and exchanged with the Estonian national educational information system EHIS.

It is positive that at every moment the student and parent has the access to important information and feedback regarding his/her child's school.

City of Usti nad Labem

1st Good practice – Reverse Scholarships (activities of People in Need (PIN) NGO services)

> INTRODUCTION

Both good practices from Usti nad Labem are parts of other PIN services within social integrational programs, such as social work, tutoring in families and career and employment counselling. In general the main objective is to prevent social exclusion and to reduce social exclusion by systematic support for children and families with the aim of change in attitudes to education.

Reverse scholarships are aimed at supporting children growing up in an environment of social exclusion, in obtaining secondary education that will enable them to succeed in the labour market. The scholarship is given to the basic school-leavers under specific conditions; students currently enrolled in the 2nd or 3rd year of Secondary/high School.

The rules of application for the scholarship

- children from families that work with PIN in the long term and therefore the PIN workers can access the motivation of parents for further education of their child
- student is a primary school graduate, his grade point average is a maximum of 3.0 and at least one parent has primary education at the most

- applicant must have the final report card with no "F" grades (F = fail) on the last semi-annual report, they must be classified in all subjects, they cannot have a lower grade for behaviour, no unexcused absence and must not have more than 25% of lost hours
- a PIN worker responsible for a successful applicant selects, with the help of school, 4 key subjects that are more important for graduation (courses, which appear later in the school-leaving exams of final exams), a successful applicant must receive a grade lower than "C", or "good" in these subjects

> WHAT WAS THE NEED/ PROBLEM TO ADDRESS? THE CONTEXT?

- there are several deprived areas in Usti nad Labem – the children there don't go to kindergartens, the have bad attendance at school and often they don't continue with the education after the primary school or they don't finish it
- each child who ends their education after primary school becomes an unemployable person (the largest part of unemployed people in Ústí nad Labem are people without the education at

all or who completed only basic school – 46 %) – especially in the city with high rate of unemployment

- instead of working and paying taxes, they become dependent on receiving social benefits
- no possibility to approach children individually within the current educational system
- insufficient family motivation for education and work

> WHO FORMULATED THE NEED/ PROBLEM/ CHALLENGE? WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT/ PRACTICE?

Both projects are the integral part of PIN activities – People in Need is an NGO active in the field of education as well as helping those living in social exclusion

- Tutoring and Drop-in centre
- Field social work, Employment counselling

The experience of PIN enables them to establish very intense, individual and social work with the families

Need is based on long-term work in the localities, career counselling.

> WHO IS THE TARGET GROUPS/END USERS?

Children:

- students at risk of social exclusion
- motivation to graduation
- smaller school absence
- improving school performance, grades

Whole family:

- pedagogization of family environment
- cooperation on school attendance
- running a household (paying rent etc.)

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

Phase I

Suitable candidates are selected for a scholarship within the services of PIN or in cooperation with other non-profit organizations or institutions. Cooperation with schools in the selection of pupils did not work in the past - there was favouritism with certain students. Pre-selected candidates subsequently sign scholarship application (with a copy of report card), and the application is assessed by the People in Need committee. Successful applicants sign the Scholarship contract and choose the key subjects. The applicant undertakes to the proper fulfilment of the conditions and is aware of the penalties of non-compliance with any

conditions. Penalties consist of a suspension or termination of the scholarship.

Phase II

Student receives the scholarship from the 2nd year, 1000, - CZK (crowns) monthly. Family shows evidence for the past month (eg paid rent, services, school lunches, water debt, public transport cards, school aids, school activities and clubs, etc.). At least once a month there is a contact with a PIN consultant and a student's legal representative. At least 4 times a year (in the period before the two quarterly, semi-annual and final classifications) the consultant contacts the school to verify compliance with the conditions for granting the scholarship. The school is informed in advance about which of its students receive the scholarship and has a contact for possible communication with the consultant.

A successful student can receive the scholarship in the 2nd and 3rd year of high schools, vocational schools. About 20% of students do not complete the program because of non-compliance with the conditions. 35 students in total participated in the program. The Unicredit bank foundation and the financial group Patria currently fund the program.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

Reverse scholarships + Supporting education

The task of coordinator's work is very sensitive – he must persuade parents to pay more attention to their child's education, to supervise the fulfilment of their child's school duties and to be very supportive to their child's effort to be successful in school. The coordinator must explain the importance of education for future employment and social status and identifies the risks associated with a low education.

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED/SOLVED?

Reverse scholarships + Supporting education

- long-term systematic work in families, field social work, cooperation with schools, teachers, directors, volunteers
- the tutors are trained and led by the experienced coordinator who is also in close contact with the teachers or leadership of the school where the child goes
- the program has also its own methodology

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

There are still families for whom education has not such a value and monetary stimulus becomes one of the key motivating elements to complete at least a basic level of secondary education.

> WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? EVALUATIONS?

All activities of staff People in Need are recorded to electronic database system.

Evaluation with family and student is once a week.

Evaluation of program is once a half year.

Currently, 80 children are in the project of reverse scholarships, the results will be analysed in detail at the end of the pilot project.

2nd Good practice – Supporting education (activities of People in Need (PIN) NGO services)

> INTRODUCTION

Both good practices from Usti nad Labem are parts of other PIN services within social integrational programs, such as social work, tutoring in families and career and employment counselling. In general the main objective is to prevent social exclusion and to reduce social exclusion by systematic support for children and families with the aim of change in attitudes to education.

Supporting education aims at increasing school success through tutoring children in families by volunteers. Priorities are work with all - families, schools and other educational institutions and volunteers.

> WHAT WAS THE NEED/PROBLEM TO ADDRESS? THE CONTEXT?

- there are several deprived areas in Usti nad Labem – the children there don't go to kindergartens, the have bad attendance at school and often they don't continue with the education after the primary school or they don't finish it
- each child who ends their education after primary school becomes an unemployable person (the largest part of unemployed people in Ústí nad Labem are people without the education at all or who completed only basic school – 46%) – especially in the city with high rate of unemployment
- instead of working and paying taxes, they become dependent on receiving social benefits
- no possibility to approach children individually within the current educational system
- insufficient family motivation for education and work

Who formulated the need/problem/challenge? Who initiated the project/practice?

Both projects are the integral part of PIN activities – People in Need is an NGO active in the field of education as well as helping those living in social exclusion. Services delivered are:

- Tutoring and Drop-in centre
- Field social work, Employment counselling

The experience of PIN enables them to establish very intense, individual and social work with the families. Need is based on long-term work in the localities, career counselling.

> WHO IS THE TARGET GROUPS/END USERS?

a - Families

- Pedagogisation of family environment
- Optimisation of homework
- Improvement of family cooperation with schools and other educational institutions

b - Children

- Improving school performance, grades
- Acquisition of new knowledge
- Reducing the number of excused and unexcused hours – improving attendance
- Systematization of homework
- Support meaningful leisure time
- Strengthening social and communication skills
- Volunteers and cooperating institutions
- Give teachers and volunteers (often future teachers and social workers) insight into the phenomenon of social exclusion
- Promote inclusive approaches in the education system through clarification of the special educational needs of socially disadvantaged pupils

> HOW DOES IT WORK?

Based on both working with children (tutoring) and their parents:

The coordinator gives *parents specific knowledge and skills* that are important for supporting the education of their children. They provide the necessary educational materials to parents. These materials help them to learn with their child and balance their own handicap in school knowledge. They point out the negatives of home environment, which make the child's school preparation difficult (noise, a lack of workspace), and also support parents in giving their children clear boundaries,

they want them to be thorough when monitoring fulfilment of school duties and especially demand regular school attendance and eliminate unjustified absence.

Terms of the program Supporting Education in families

Terms of cooperation are clarified to the families by the coordinator at the beginning of the cooperation and they are further specified in the contract. They particularly concern sufficient motivation and willingness of parents to cooperate on supporting their child's education.

These include:

- the family must not obstruct the regular volunteer visit within the agreed scope and see the presence of the child at the time of the meeting
- family must provide the necessary space and quiet in their home school to prepare the child
- family must provide the necessary assistance for their child's school preparing
- family must ensure the presence of at least one adult family member in a time of tutoring,
- the family must notify the coordinator of cancelling of the lesson at least one day in advance
- arranged tutoring can be cancelled only for serious reasons

Volunteer usually visits the family weekly for two hours. They can tutor more children in one family and may be involved in the implementation of leisure activities or group tutoring. In order to achieve such objectives, a careful guidance of the program coordinators is needed.

> CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY?

Reverse scholarships + Supporting education

To both good practices provided by Usti the biggest challenge is that the task of coordinator's work is very sensitive – he/she must persuade parents to pay more attention to their child's education, to supervise the fulfilment of their child's school duties and to be very supportive to their child's effort to be successful in school. The coordinator must explain the importance of education for future employment and social status and identifies the risks associated with a low education.

> HOW WERE THEY TACKLED/ SOLVED?

Both good practices are addressing the joint challenges by

- long-term systematic work in families, field social work, cooperation with schools, teachers, directors, volunteers

- the tutors are trained and led by the experienced coordinator who is also in close contact with the teachers or leadership of the school where the child studies
- the program has also its own methodology

> WHY DO YOU CONSIDER IT TO BE A "GOOD PRACTICE"?

There are still families for whom education has not such a value and monetary stimulus becomes one of the key motivating elements to complete at least a basic level of secondary education.

> WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? EVALUATIONS?

All activities of staff People in Need are recorded to an electronic database system.

Evaluation with family and student is once a week.

Evaluation of program is every half-year.

AN URBACT II PROJECT

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants. URBACT is co-financed by the ERDF Funds and the Member States.

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