1ˢᵗ Meeting of the
Inclusive PolicyNet Working Group on General Secondary Education

Ljubljana, 14 October 2014

GATHERING DATA

- **Baseline survey on inclusive policies and practices in general secondary schools (LSE Enterprise)**

- **Findings of the Focus Groups meetings in the general secondary schools (Network of Education Policy Centres - NEPC)**

BASELINE SURVEY on inclusive policies and practices in general secondary schools

D: Community engagement

A: Inclusive practices for entry to school

C: Inclusive teaching and practice approaches

B: Inclusion within the school
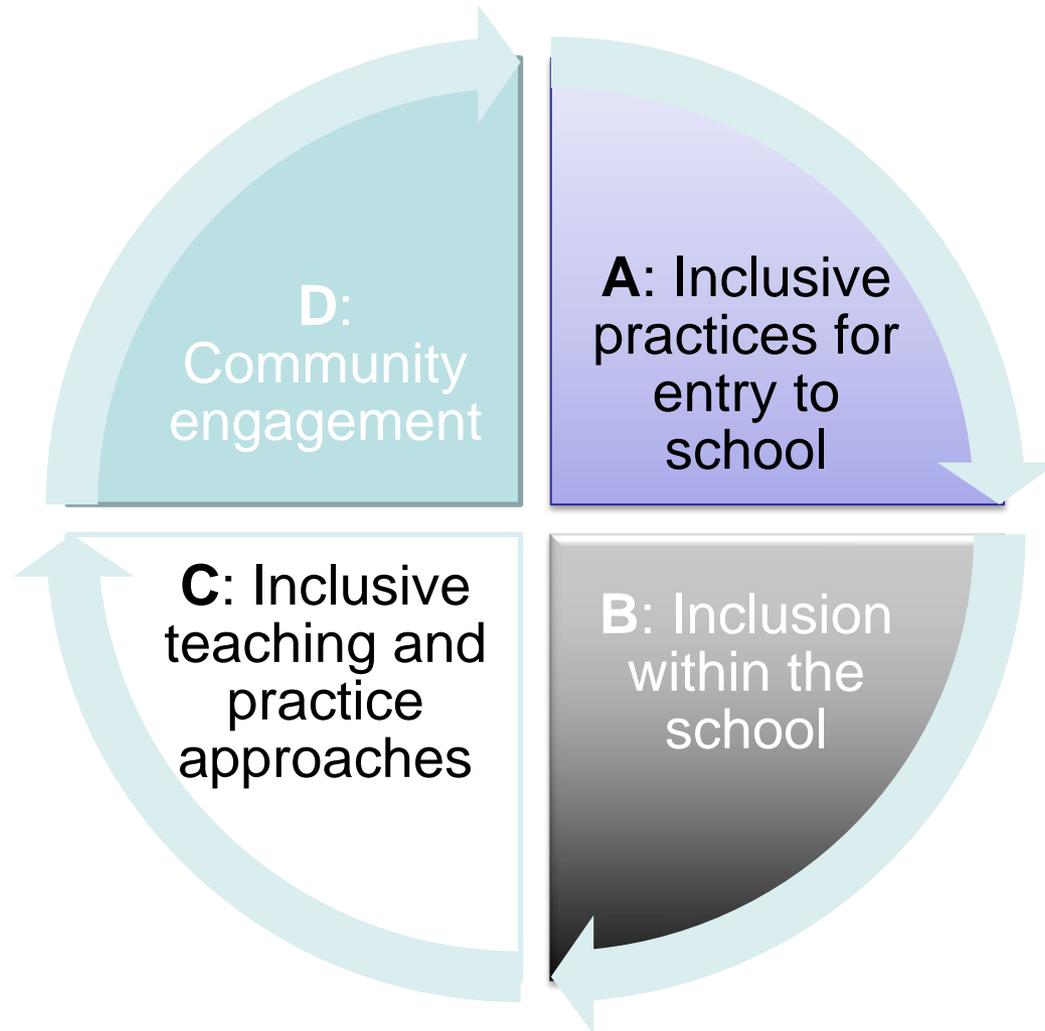
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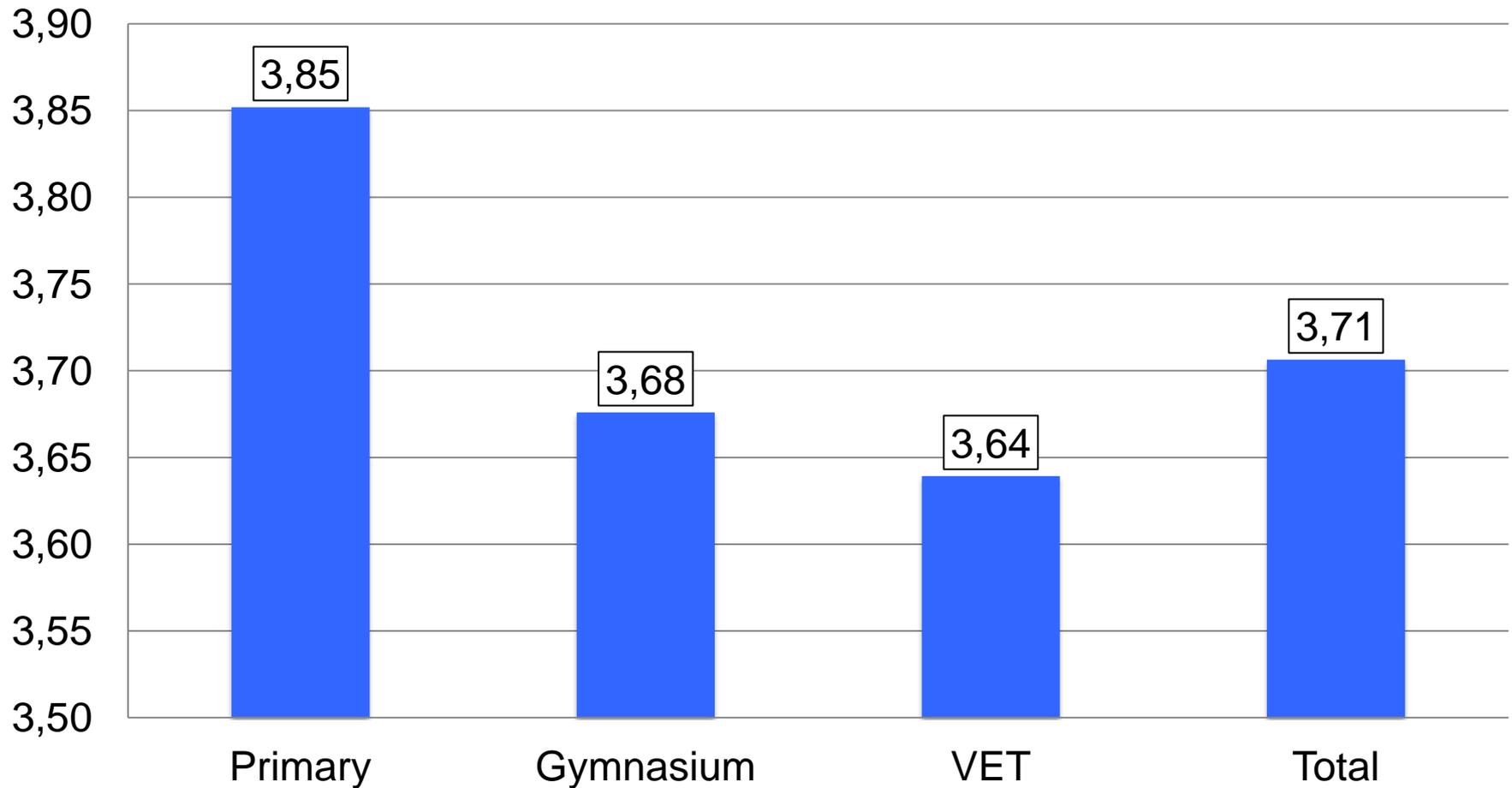
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- Primary schools tend to have **a more inclusive school atmosphere** than secondary schools including **general secondary**

- Education system across the regions **decrease their inclusiveness** as students progress through the system.

- Both primary schools and VET schools tend to have **more inclusive teaching practices than general secondary**

- **One third of general secondary** and one fifth of VET schools have **neither an inclusive school atmosphere nor inclusive teaching practices and policies**

- Teachers and principals display a much higher **perception of inclusiveness** in their schools than students and parents do and local government officials

- Particularly **low scores** were given by students and parents to issues of
  – "familiarisation",
  – "parental involvement",
  – "equal treatment"
  – "activities outside school"

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
related to general secondary schools

➢ Review the selectivity of enrollment system

➢ Update curricula

➢ Improve teachers' attitudes and understanding of inclusion

➢ Improve teachers' skills for inclusive practice

➢ Include parents in school activities and governance

➢ Promote extra-curricular activities for ALL students

➢ Provide more formal career guidance

➢ Provide opportunities for internship

➢ Improve quality of buildings and equipment

FOCUS GROUPS Process

Focus groups were held in 49 pilot schools in the Joint European Union and Council of Europe project *Regional Support for Inclusive Education.*

196 focus groups with more than 1700 stakeholders

4 FGs were held in each school: 56 total in general secondary schools

- parents,
- students,
- school staff, and
- local community.

- to provide evidence for a more targeted and needs-based support for the creation of the school development plan and development of school projects;
- to establish, to what extent the culture, policies and practices of the schools are inclusive, what are the main barriers to inclusion and what types of support are needed.

PRIDOMINENT FINDINGS related to CULTURE:

- *School culture is based on authority rather than on transparent policies that are accepted by all, with **no space for discussion and agreement** on how things should be organised and what practices are desirable: "School is very rigid and not flexible enough. It is founded on authority, no clear rules and value system."*

- *School culture suffers from acceptance of own 'marginality' in the social world of the community – either due to ethnic/ linguistic minority status or due to being a VET school in a culture **where only academic/ tertiary education** is viewed as sufficiently important.*

PRIDOMINENT FINDINGS related to POLICY:

- There is a tendency in the pilot schools to **operate more on the basis of external regulations** (provided at the national or cantonal level)

- Policies reported through FGs does not imply that generally accepted written policy exists in the school

- The presence of policies has only been reported where **special project activities** have taken place (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, two schools in Macedonia, possibly Kosovo, one school in Serbia).

PRIDOMINENT FINDINGS related to PRACTICE:

Many schools have reported targeted inclusive education measures:

- *Individual learning plans;*
- *Remedial classes and additional tutorials for students with learning difficulties or at risk of dropping out;*
- *Subsidising the access of students at risk of socio-economic exclusion to school and to extracurricular activities;*
- *Organizing inclusive extra-curricular activities;*
- *Involvement of students in providing support to peers;*
- *Other measures.*

Most FGs reveal a lack of a holistic, consistent and articulat strategy for inclusion.

THE FOLLOWING NON-INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN PARTICULAR WERE HIGHLIGHTED BY STAKEHOLDERS:

- *Teachers **do not support all students equally** or according to their needs.*

- *The school applying the **same assessment criteria** to students with disabilities in areas where they need individualised approach,*

- ***Lack of adjustments** in curriculum and teaching;*

- ***Lack of transparency** in assessment;*

- *Sitting **Roma students separately** from other students in class;*

- ***Lack of a strong stand** on violence or bullying, lack of security measures*

- ***Top-down** decision making*

- *Lack of measures to improve **accessibility** of school to all students*

- ***Lack of support** for students at risk of dropping out.*

NEEDS for SUPPORT

Capacity building of local authorities

Training needs of staff

Infrastructure-related needs

Awareness-building needs

SMALL GRANTS

The goal :

Help schools develop and/or improve their existing inclusive practices in the widest sense for children at higher risk of marginalisation and exclusion.

Individual grant to each pilot school will be up to **9,500.00 EURO**.

Duration of the grants: October 2014 – June 2015

SMALL GRANTS - PRIORITIES:

Providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs of vulnerable children in formal and non-formal educational settings through:

- piloting /organisation *of **additional support activities***
- development of ***teachers' competencies***
- ***peer education and exchange*** of experiences/good practices
- development of ***diversified approach to involving parents***
- development of ***outreach mechanisms***
- support to students and their parents' ***their participation in decision-making***
- ***Other***

PROCESS

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: the timing of the project and the evident lack of experience in project writing

After collecting all final project proposals NEPC proceeded with their analyses to identify the main features of the projects and underline the possible issues of the implementation.

Most of the projects are designed according to the results of focus groups.

NEPC assisted in the country beneficiaries in the process of project proposal design and supported the communication with schools.

Some conclusions…

According to the project background children/students with special needs are considered the most vulnerable group. The identification of children with special needs as the main target group of projects shows that the ***understanding of the inclusive education needs to be broadened.***

Most of the schools identify the capacity building of teachers as one of the main issue to be addressed. This is shown in the high number of school planning teachers education (46) but challenge remains ***on how to monitor the impact of these trainings on every day practice***

Civil work and equipment activities have also been identified by considerable number of schools as means to improve the school environment but it a challenge to ensure the equipment is ***adjusted to various needs and available for use of all students***

RAISING AWARENESS

The considerable number of schools planning events, publication, and visibility action show the **need to be more opened towards the local community**. In fact the local community is the most commonly identified indirect target.

In most case the project implementation foresees the cooperation with other schools, local stakeholders and national institution

Projects Activities
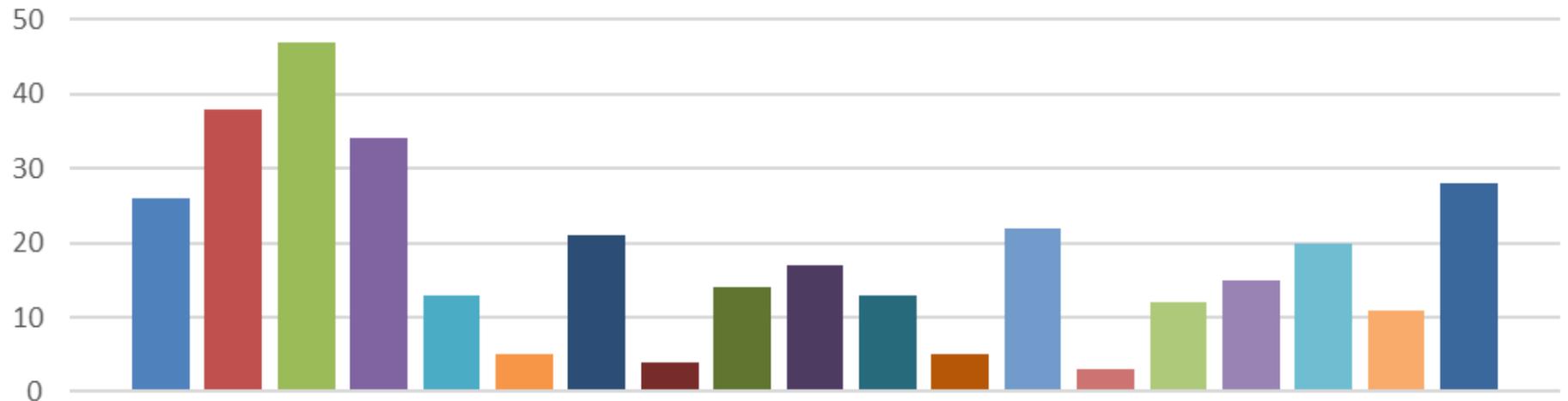
Legend	
Civil work	Equipment
Teachers' EDU	Other EDU (students & parents)
meetings with parents&lc	New school bodies/forum/club
Peer-visit/field trip	Policy
Peer-education	Educational plans & classroom activities
Promotional mat	Awareness campaign
extra curricular	Sport
Art	Publication
Media	Survey
Events	

POSSIBLE CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Discrepancy between the background/project goals and activities planned

Project calendar and number of activities in some cases are too ambitious

In some cases it is not clearly defined how the purchase of new equipment will contribute to inclusive education.

Some projects foresee the selection of the target group at the beginning of the project rather than working on cooperation and cohesion among all students.

There is the need to further sensitize school staff about the risks of categorization and labelling.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Considering all the above mentioned the M&E system has been developed. The monitoring and evaluation system tailored for the school project aim to:

- Support school in the project implementation
- Enhance them to develop measures that can contribute to make the activities inclusive
- Underline the learning dimension of the project
- Ensure that the evidence of the activities are collected and kept
- Raise awareness about the impact

- **Questions…?**

- **Suggestions…?**