

“Regional Support for Inclusive Education”

Funded
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Implemented
by the Council of Europe

An inclusive school is a school where:

every child is welcome,

every parent is involved,

every teacher is valued.

1st meeting of the policy working group on VET

Turin, Italy
16 -17 June, 2014

Meeting concept
Agenda
List of participants

ETF Working together
Learning for life

The first working group on Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a thematic (cross beneficiary) policy meeting of the Regional **Inclusive PolicyNet** members from 7 Beneficiaries of the Joint EU/CoE Project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education” in South East Europe.

The Inclusive “PolicyNet” is a platform for exchange of experience and learning. It contributes to developing a common understanding of inclusive education within the region and it actively seeks how to influence politicians about inclusive education. The Inclusive PolicyNet will develop concrete policy recommendations and plans for their implementation at various levels of education (primary school, secondary, VET).

The policy working group on VET will develop policy recommendations based on:

1. the research findings from two studies carried out by ETF and EU/CoE regional projects and conducted by London School of Economics (LSE) in the SEE region (“Mapping VET policies and practices for social inclusion and social cohesion”; and Baseline survey on inclusive policies and practices); and
2. the experiences of the “TeacherNet” and “SchoolNet”.

Background

South East European countries have committed themselves to make their education systems open to diversity. The Regional Support for Inclusive Education Project promotes the concept of inclusive education in South East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Kosovo^{1*}) as a reform principle that respects and caters for diversity amongst all learners, with a specific focus on those who are at higher risk of marginalisation and exclusion.

The Project established the **Inclusive PolicyNet**, a multi-composition group of key stakeholders involved in policymaking in education, which will be influencing the policies based on the successful examples from schools and teachers. It has 70 members, comprised of representatives of the Beneficiary Policy Teams - 10 representatives per Beneficiary.

The Beneficiary Policy teams held their first meetings to discuss main issues and challenges for each level and type of education (Primary, General Secondary, and VET). A summary of the Beneficiary Teams’ reports was prepared and used as a framework for the first Regional Inclusive PolicyNet meeting. Many of the issues and challenges identified are common to all education levels, but there are also specific issues at each education level.

At **the first Regional PolicyNet** meeting in Sarajevo, on 6 March 2014, the working group on VET was established to identify common VET policy areas across the region. The areas identified are related to raising awareness and making VET more attractive, promoting sectorial cooperation (health, education and labour) and connections with the labour market both in curriculum design as well as in development of work-based learning. Issues related to the quality of VET include teacher training, promoting the capacities of school management, and development of teaching and learning materials.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

The group also discussed how to overcome some of the key barriers such as development of selection or entry channels for disadvantaged young people into vocational schools and quality measures (support to students, curriculum and teaching and learning materials, assessments, support to teachers, school level policies and practices, education of non-teaching staff, preventing drop-out, supporting transition) and development of quality assurance in line with European Quality Assurance in VET.

The Inclusive PolicyNet will continue its work in thematic working groups. The main objectives of the working group meetings are to further develop the inclusive education policy priorities identified at each level and type of education and to start discussing policy recommendations for each of these priorities. Once the thematic working groups develop recommendations, the Inclusive PolicyNet will endorse them and agree on the implementation mechanisms.

Given that the European Training Foundation (ETF) is the leader of policy reforms in the VET sector in the SEE region, the Inclusive PolicyNet has established strategic partnership with the ETF. The policy working group on VET will build on achievements and recommendations of the ETF's research on "Mapping of VET policies and practices for social inclusion and social cohesion in the Western Balkans, Turkey and Israel". This project was launched in 2012 as the ETF's regional initiative to address the linkages between VET and social inclusion in SEE, Turkey and Israel. The aim of the project was to deepen the countries' understanding of the main barriers and potential opportunities for building inclusive and equitable VET systems, given the social and economic challenges facing the region. To achieve these aims, LSE Enterprise research teams in nine countries investigated the impact of VET practice and policy on social inclusion and social cohesion, taking into account the community effects of VET.

Within the Regional Support for Inclusive Education Project the LSE Enterprise team of researchers has carried out a baseline study to measure the nature, extent and level of awareness of inclusive education in 49 Pilot schools in the SEE region (out of which 14 are VET schools – 2 per Beneficiary).

The main findings and recommendations from these two researches ***provide evidence-based suggestions*** on how to enhance the role of VET and its multi-dimensional contributions to the promotion of skills, socialisation, civic values, social inclusion and social cohesion.

Objectives of the VET working group meeting

- 1) to discuss the findings from the Mapping research on VET policies and practices for social inclusion and social cohesion and a Baseline survey on inclusive policies and practices
- 2) to obtain feedback from the participants about the findings and agree on how the VET working group will use this evidence in their further policy work

Expected result

VET regional priority recommendations identified and agreed through beneficiary studies/reports.

16TH June 2014, European Training Foundation (ETF), Turin

09:00 ***Transfer from the hotel to the ETF***

09:30 – 10:30 **Opening**

- Mr Henrik Faudel, Head of Geographical Operations Department, ETF;
- Ms Lida Kita, Specialist in Public Policy Management, VET and Social Inclusion, Country Manager, ETF
- Ms Vesna Atanasova, Senior Project Officer, Council of Europe (CoE)

Meeting objectives and expected results

- David Addis, moderator

10:30 – 11:00 **Torino Process: VET in relation to social demand and social inclusion**

- *What are the main social inclusion issues and how have these evolved over the past years?*
- *How well equipped is the VET system to address these factors to be inclusive and to deliver to the aspirations of learners?*

- Ms Evgenia Petkova, ETF expert
- Chair: Ms Lida Kita, Specialist in Public Policy Management, VET and Social Inclusion, Country Manager, ETF

11:00 – 11:30 ***Coffee break***

11:30 – 12:30 **Torino Process and SEE perspectives**

Key issues and monitoring tools to link up national progress and European benchmarks.

(Education and employment disparities in socio-economic development, under-representation of females in education and employment, the presence of vulnerable groups, vulnerable minorities such as Roma and/or others, as well as economically inactive people and long-term unemployed individuals).

- Ms. Cristina Mereuta, ETF
- Chair: Ms. Lida Kita, ETF

17TH June 2014, ETF, Turin

- 08:30** *Transfer from the hotel to the ETF*
- 09:00 – 10:30** **Country specific findings -Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia**
- LSE researchers (30 min per country)
- 10:30 – 11:00** *Coffee break*
- 11:00 – 12:00** **Country specific findings - “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Kosovo***
- LSE researchers (30 min per country)
- 12:00 – 12:30** **ETF stocktaking on NEETs in ETF partner countries**
- Martino Rubal Maseda, ETF
- 12:30 – 13:30** **LUNCH**
- 13:30 -16:00** **How will VET policy working group use these findings for further policy work?**
- Discussion
- 16:00 – 16:30** **Wrap up and next steps**
- Ms. Lida Kita, Specialist in Public Policy Management, VET and Social Inclusion, Country Manager, ETF
 - Ms. Vesna Atanasova, Senior Project Officer, Council of Europe
 - Ms. Zorica Lešić, Project Officer, Council of Europe
- 16:30** *Transport to the hotel*
- 19:00** *DINNER at hotel premises*