

Country report:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ROMANIA

Implementation 2018 – 2021



INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS
MAKING A DIFFERENCE
FOR ROMA CHILDREN

European Union and Council of Europe Joint Project
Inclusive Schools: Making a Difference for Roma Children

Funded
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe



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Authors :

Gelu Duminica

Ciprian Fartusnic

Daniela Barbu

Alexandra Hosszu

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Contact :

inschool@coe.int

INSCHOOL Initiative

Since 2010, Roma inclusion has appeared more and more frequently as a priority issue on the political agenda of the European Union and the Council of Europe. In this context, both the European Union and the Council of Europe have identified education as a key element in promoting social inclusion.

The joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe, Inclusive Schools: Making a Difference for Roma Children (INSCHOOL), aims to strengthen Roma social inclusion by promoting inclusive education and training in schools in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic.

The joint INSCHOOL project of the two institutions supports the implementation of the "EU Declaration of 17 March 2015 on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education", as well as the "Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of education".

The methodology used in schools is the Index for Inclusion: A Guide to School Development Based on Inclusive Values by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow (4th edition, 2016). The Index for Inclusion serves as a basis for the intervention of INSCHOOL experts in schools, and for the development of Inclusive School Development Plans – a vision of inclusion developed by schools using a personalised and value-based approach.

This report covers data and conclusions arising from the project methodology, implemented at school level in two cycles: the pilot phase (2017 to 2019) and the second implementation cycle (2020 to 2021). During 2020, implementation was affected, but not interrupted, by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This national report aims to document the current efforts made by schools in the INSCHOOL network to increase the degree of inclusion / inclusivity and capitalises on research data collected between January and April 2021. The study was conducted using a sociological survey based on a questionnaire (2,450 respondents – parents, students and teachers), focus groups (53 participants – parents, students and teachers) and case studies conducted in three schools in the network. The data collected provided an overview of the activities and phase results obtained in each of the INSCHOOL schools.

The main topics addressed by the report relate to the following:

- the activities carried out in the network of INSCHOOL schools in Romania, both in the pilot phase and in the second implementation cycle
- the development of the schools in the network related to school inclusion, results and quality of education; this section also includes the analysis of data collected through online questionnaires applied to students, parents and teachers
- the good practice mechanisms and results obtained by the schools in the INSCHOOL network at the level of governance and strategic management
- results obtained through the interventions and support actions carried out within the INSCHOOL project

- a set of recommendations for the development of future actions for schools in the INSCHOOL network, together with recommendations for the development and improvement of educational policies at national level.

Activities carried out in the INSCHOOL network of schools in Romania

During the pilot phase (May 2017 to July 2019), the project **supported six schools** in Romania in three different counties (Buzău, Ilfov and Teleorman), as well as in Bucharest, selected with the agreement of the European Commission: Cilibia secondary school; "Nicolae Titulescu" secondary school, Buzău; "Prof. Ion Vișoiu" secondary school, Chitila; "Ferdinand I" secondary school, Bucharest, sector 2; Pietroșani secondary school; Conțești secondary school.

The average duration of implementation in INSCHOOL Romania in this period was 13.5 months, with grants implemented over a period of 5.8 months. During the months of implementation, the schools were supported by the INSCHOOL national team in carrying out the following activities:

Objective 1 – Setting up support mechanisms and resources for pilot inclusive schools

- Adapting the multifunctional classroom to provide additional support to students, and to support relevant learning activities, including remedial education. Acquisition or development of innovative teaching materials for active learning
- Supporting non-formal education activities, which stimulate the involvement of Roma students, defined by schools through PDIs
- Organising events to develop and strengthen skills relevant for inclusion (e.g. workshops for parents, teachers and students).

Objective 2 – Provision of support to teachers to promote inclusion and to improve the learning outcomes of Roma children

- Introducing, based on national needs identified at local and national level, support mechanisms for students lagging behind, in order to help them improve their school results and promote their social mobility
- Developing training modules / programmes for the professional development of teachers and training modules on community culture and the problems they face – depending on the context in which the project is implemented
- Organising training and mentoring / coaching activities for teachers to promote a flexible school curriculum and the use of diversified teaching strategies and learning resources
- Experience exchanges, also between schools selected for being provided with support
- Other interventions adapted to the needs identified at the level of each school.

In total, during the first cycle of INSCHOOL, **19 local training sessions and four national training courses** were organised, which involved the staff of the six schools, with largely positive feedback from the teachers involved. Twelve local training sessions were led by ISE experts, addressing issues related to multiculturalism, interactive teaching methods, special education needs and parental education.

The selection of schools for the second implementation cycle of INSCHOOL (October 2019 to June 2021) was officially bilaterally validated by the European Commission and the Council of Europe in February 2020. The eight schools involved in the second implementation cycle (out of which one benefits from methodological support only) are: "Nicolae Titulescu" secondary school Buzău; Cilibia secondary school; "Prof. Ion Vişoiu" secondary school, Chitila; "Ferdinand I" secondary school, Bucharest, sector 2; Pietroşani secondary school; Conţeşti secondary school; No. 3 Balăceanca – Cernica secondary school; "Luca Arbore" secondary school; "Mitocu Dragomirnei" secondary school.

Although the core of the activities remained unchanged, starting in March 2020, the implementation of the project required a series of adaptations to the new context and to the additional challenges faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic period. By November 2020, the schools had resumed normal work/implementation and ensured the implementation of the activities. The grant mechanism was similar to that of the previous school year, and all seven schools included in the programme were contracted.

All schools used part of their own grant to develop the skills of their teams by organising courses for parents, and courses in ICT and teaching methods specific to online / digital learning. Every month, online working meetings were held with all schools, through which the INSCHOOL team and the schools involved in the project were able to inform each other on how they work at the level of each school unit. Given the context generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities were implemented following the official recommendations, either in an online format or face-to-face, depending on the possibilities. Between November and December 2020, 120 teachers from INSCHOOL schools were trained in the field of intercultural education.

The project promoted the intervention model in other contexts as well. Thus, as a result of a grant received by Impreuna Agency Foundation from one of the managers of the EEA Grants funds in Romania (ANCPFECD), the INSCHOOL working method was extended to five other schools in Ilfov County. Co-operation with the Ministry of Education was also formalised by a Memorandum of Understanding on the Priority of Quality Inclusive Education, signed by both parties on 9 October 2020. Based on this, a micro-grant initiative similar to the one proposed by INSCHOOL was launched between May and July 2020 by the Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe in order to support 40 schools in the most disadvantaged areas in Romania.

As part of the project's contribution to promoting quality inclusive education, on 4 November 2020, the high-level conference, I Want to go to School! About the Need for Inclusive and Quality Education, launched a series of four thematic discussions related to quality inclusive education in Romania, benefiting from media coverage through one of the main media representatives in the country. Some of the results of this event have already been included in the Coalition Governance Programme (2020 to 2024).

The joint INSCHOOL project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe will continue to support the policies of the Ministry of Education in the area of school desegregation, and will actively contribute to the development of a mapping of disadvantaged schools in Romania. The INSCHOOL initiative also inspired measures to promote quality inclusive education, including measures to fight segregation in the National Resilience and Recovery Plan (2021).

Developing inclusive culture: the development of schools in the INSCHOOL network

Although under the influence of special conditions, the schools in the INSCHOOL network have managed to maintain or even improve some general indicators on school participation, attendance or results. Thus, four of the seven schools in the network **obtained better results** in terms of the quota of students who passed the national assessment, compared to previous years. These trends are also maintained in terms of the population of Roma students, but **the proportion of students who did not get a grade above 5 in the Romanian National Assessment remained higher** compared to the majority population, in all schools in the network.

Also, **the total number of cases of repeating the school year decreased** (Pietroşani, Arbure and Mitocu schools not declaring any such case in the 2019-2020 school year), **this situation being directly influenced by the special context** in which the previous school year ended. Beyond the general evolution of the year repetition rate, **the proportion of Roma students in the total number of students repeating the school year did not change significantly**, the interventions in this area needing a longer time to achieve the expected impact.

Three of the schools registered a lower number of students with a high number of absences in the 2019-2020 school year, compared to previous school years. The phenomenon of absenteeism generally affects the Roma school population to a greater extent. In three schools (Chitila, Arbure and Pietroşani), three out of four students who have over 40 absences are Roma students. The analysis of the evolution of absenteeism in the last three years shows that, even in the pre-pandemic period, it registered worrying values, compared to the entire school population.

As per to the data provided by the management teams, most Roma children in Cernica and Buzău schools currently need remedial education, and over 50% of children in Chitila need such education. On the other hand, only 10% of students in Mitocu school and 20% of Roma students in Arbure school are in this situation. These differences have multiple causes, the most important being related to the different degree of participation in online school, both at the level of the entire school population as well as at the level of the Roma school population in each school. The schools demonstrated that they managed to organise their activity to ensure the necessary hygienic-sanitary conditions during the periods when the students returned partially or totally to the classroom. Although not all schools were able to provide a sufficient stock of masks and disinfectants, there were no special epidemiological situations.

Teachers' opinions

The project was an important context for learning and promoting inclusive values and practices. The survey of teachers' opinions indicates that most **teachers believe that INSCHOOL schools systematically promote such practices**. They say that **inclusion in school is understood** as the participation of all children, the "fight" against all forms of discrimination and the encouragement of each student to have a good self-image. **The perception of school staff about "inclusive culture" is a positive one**. Common inclusive values are developed and transferred to all staff members, children and their families, officials and communities as a whole.

What do teachers like most about their school?	What would teachers like to change?
Cooperation and communication with students and colleagues	Improving the school infrastructure (labs, digital devices, smartboards)
Respect amongst all actors in the school	Better cooperation with parents (especially of those at risk for exclusion)
Earnestness of colleagues	Access and support related to open educational resources

Even though **schools still need support to implement inclusive values**, a large number of teachers state that they help students better understand the world and find what they like and what they are good at. Teaching and learning reflect inclusive values and policies that correspond to the diversity of actors in the school. Children are encouraged to be active, reflective and critical. Adults work together and thus everyone takes responsibility for the learning of all children. Learning activities encourage the participation of all children, who are actively involved in their own learning process.

Students' opinions

Students' opinions are convergent, to a great extent, with those of the teachers, demonstrating the positive effects generated by INSCHOOL activities. The general views of students about the school highlights the fact that this is a space where they have good friends among their peers colleagues, most of the students considering that the adults in the school get along well with each other, but also with the students. Three out of four secondary school students consider school to be a large community to which they belong. Most children think it is good to interact in school with students from different backgrounds.

For three quarters of the student respondents, school is very useful, supporting them to look to the future in a positive way, to learn about democracy and how to get along with other people. To the same extent, students believe that school helps them have a good image of themselves. Also, most secondary school students believe that children with disabilities are respected and accepted in their schools.

Overall, students' perceptions of teachers are good, but only two out of three students said they like most of the lessons. Elementary school students are more enthusiastic about their school compared to secondary school students. Over 95% of elementary school students say they are happy at school and like their teachers, that they learn many interesting things at school, including how to take care of the environment. Generally, elementary school students are happy with the way they are treated: they communicate with the teachers if they have a problem, and they think the teachers are kind to the children and listen to their ideas. Most say they have good friends at school.

What do students like most about their school?	What would students like to change?
Teachers	Better school facilities (technology, sports areas, lab, better teaching materials)
Playing with their classmates	Some children should be better behaved
The way their classroom looks	More extracurricular activities

There are still attitudinal challenges from the perspective of inclusion: the proportion of respondents who indicate a skin-colour problem in their school is about a quarter; belonging to a sexual minority as a source of discrimination is indicated by over 50% of the students surveyed.

Parents' opinions

Parents are quite happy with the schools in their communities; **83% of the respondent parents believe that their child's school is the best in the area and also feel part of the school community** and over 90% of them believe that the school manages to create a community and inform them about important issues.

In addition, most parents are happy with what their children are learning in school, they like the teachers their children have in class and consider that they have a good relationship with them, and consider that **any child is welcome at the school**. Less than 10% of those surveyed consider that there are cases of discrimination in school on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, disability, or clothing and appearance.

What do parents like most about their school?	What would parents like to change?
Teachers	Bathrooms should be cleaner
Discipline and respect	More innovative teaching methods
Educational activities	Playgrounds sports fields and more green spaces

There is a general tendency to accept that schools are organisations that strive to promote inclusion. Although about 40% of respondents consider that belonging to a sexual minority is a source of discrimination in school, while the rest did not agree with the statement or answered that they are undecided, it is the opinion of parents that schools are largely spaces where respect for human rights and the environment, positive relationships between students but also between them and teachers, openness to diversity, and school participation for all children are encouraged. In particular, what respondents appreciate about schools is the collaboration and communication between the main actors in education, the respect and earnestness shown in school, the competences of teachers associated with the quality of teaching activities, and the appearance of classrooms.

School governance

Promoting a truly inclusive school culture requires, among other important conditions, high-level managerial and leadership skills. The INSCHOOL project has consistently provided support for developing the institutional capacity of schools to promote strategic management and encourage effective leadership.

The project activities thus directly aimed at influencing the governance of schools in the INSCHOOL network and increasing the institutional capacity from the perspective of ensuring effective management. The option at project level was to develop the skills of management teams through applied / practical activities, and the creation of authentic learning contexts, in which it is essential to learn through and for, not learn about. **Schools were supported in analysing and revising their institutional development plans (PDIs) and operational plans (OPs), through which the long-term development vision is put into practice.**

Another principle promoted at project level is the promotion of participatory management, in which the management is collective, collegial and transparent. Thus, each school involved a steering committee, consisting of teachers dedicated to school development projects, as well as other relevant representatives. These steps were supported by the educational counsellor as well as a facilitator. The revision of the strategic documents was carried out on the basis of INSCHOOL instruments, through systematic consultations with the teaching and non-teaching staff, with representatives of parents and students.

Another real learning context for school teams was represented by the INSCHOOL grants, which involved documenting the support needs for the activities considered a priority at each school level, during the initial implementation of the Index for Inclusion methodology (March to October 2018), as well as building a funding application and executing a budget. The applications for INSCHOOL grants were built based on the priorities and vision of the school promoted in the final PDIs adopted by each school.

The management teams from the schools chosen as case studies ("Prof. Ion Vişoiu", Chitila, Conţeşti and "Nicolae Titulescu", Buzău) indicated that the INSCHOOL project represented **a real framework for reflection and re-signification of the values of their own organisations**, both from the perspective of the vision as well as of the mission pursued. The learning experience of implementing the

INSCHOOL grant activities and other activities, together with the experiences of online learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, led to the revision of the PDIs in the summer of 2020.

The management teams highlighted **the role of training programmes for the development of close relationships** between the main actors who contribute to school life, especially by cultivating teachers' skills in the field of inclusive / intercultural education. At the same time, **the experience exchanges with all the schools involved in the first cycle of implementation of the INSCHOOL project contributed to the development of the inclusive culture of the school**, which conferred the exchange of good practices of the values of social inclusion.

Training activities (inclusive / intercultural education) and team-building workshops for teachers contributed directly to the cultivation of teachers' skills in inclusive education, both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities, creating the context for understanding differences between students as a resource for the process of studying. Equally, these activities have led to increased group cohesion of school staff for the development of an inclusive culture in school, the valuation and capitalisation of diverse life experiences. The inclusive approach to teaching-learning has led to a change in the ingrained beliefs of teachers, who have adapted the educational approach to the different needs of students and have used non-formal methods in teaching and extracurricular activities. Peer mentoring has also worked among teachers, and young people have helped older people develop their IT skills, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another priority of the management teams was to cultivate a relationship of mutual respect and support with the parents of the students at school. **Parents' participation in school-led activities led to acceptance and respect for diverse traditions and life experiences, and positively supported education in the spirit of respecting inclusive values.** The collaboration with the parents was constantly monitored in all activities, as they were the support factor of their children.

In order to improve the students' results at the national assessments or at the end of the school year within the INSCHOOL Project, remedial activities were organised for the elementary and secondary school students. In this sense, teachers who teach subjects which are included in national exams conducted weekly training classes with students who had disabilities in writing, reading, and maths. Both the active participating teachers as well as the school leaders and management were involved in carrying out these activities, which facilitated the presence of as many students as possible through counselling meetings with their parents. **It is important that these activities have also received recognition and support at the level of educational policies at national level.** Thus, the National Programme, School after School, has recently started for students in INSCHOOL schools. The involvement of local and national authorities thus plays an important role in providing the necessary learning resources for students during the period when the school moved online or took place remotely, as well as later, after resuming face-to-face classes.

The support staff (school mediator, school counsellor, speech therapist, etc.) are extremely important for the

management teams in all three schools, given that the support needs of students are very high. The existence of the school mediator has improved the communication with the parents of the Roma students and not only, but the visits to the community also increased the number of students present at the organised remedial activities. In fact, all the

representatives of the management teams point out that most Roma students were actively involved in every action organised and carried out at the class or school level, with a measurable impact on their school attendance and results.

Next steps – capitalizing on INSCHOOL experience

The results of the project were directly affected by the pandemic situation. Students who faced problems with Internet access or lack of adequate equipment were lagging behind in terms of acquiring new skills in the 2019-2020 school year. Teachers found alternative solutions for sending them learning materials with the support of parents or colleagues, maintained telephone contact with students and family, and went to their homes when needed. Moreover, they were not able to prepare adequately for the resumption of topics from previous years, the review period and that of the final preparation for the exam overlapping with a major wave of the epidemic from April to June 2020.

The pandemic also provided a positive context for forced learning and adaptation through which schools had no choice but to rethink their learning and collaboration processes and methods. Most management teams deem that in the previous school year and this year, teachers have capitalised on various learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) and developed new skills in working with digital resources, applications and platforms (Moodle, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom / Meet, etc.). Furthermore, teachers' access to suitable equipment has significantly improved compared to the beginning of the pandemic (March 2020). Online classes were an opportunity to use interactive methods that they had not had the opportunity to use much during face-to-face classes. Moreover, **with the return to school, teachers continued to use digital tools, sometimes students requesting the use of digital textbooks and other audio-video materials.** In the pandemic context, the relationship between school, parents and students has improved, as they have had to co-operate intensely to adapt to online education.

The research data also allowed the identification of areas **that continue to be important challenges for the INSCHOOL school network:**

- Teachers have not yet had initial or continuing training in adapting the curriculum and teaching methods to the needs of children with disabilities.
- Although there are concerns about promoting non-violent interaction between students, they still feel the effects of language violence and hostility, and aggressive behaviour from the elderly students.
- Most children do not participate in extracurricular or sports activities, either in school or outside of school.
- There is a higher proportion of unqualified teachers in the schools, which limits the quality of the educational process.
- Parents would like to improve the teaching methods which need to be innovative, the arrangement of playgrounds, green spaces and sports fields, and the cleanliness of the bathrooms.

- The experience of schools carrying out projects with external funding or support is still limited, although, looking at the evolution, we also note that, compared to the 2017-2018 school year, the number of projects implemented by schools is increasing for all education units in the network.
- Support staff is limited, ranging from one to four people depending on the school. Both teachers and parents mentioned the need to involve specialised people to work with vulnerable children or those experiencing emotional imbalances so that they can provide time and support for the developmental needs of students.
- The measures initiated by schools regarding the fight against absenteeism and school dropout among students (including interventions targeting Roma students) are insufficiently evaluated.
- As students see it, at school level, there is a need for several transformations in terms of school image (renovation, furniture change), creating a more friendly environment through participatory decoration of hallways and classrooms. At the same time, some students believe that the material base of the school needs to be improved so that the classes can be more practical more often. Although efforts have been made to adapt teaching and learning methods to students, they believe that some classes are not interactive, and teachers could benefit from innovative learning methods.

Intervention recommendations at the level of school unit

The results of the evaluation show that the strategic documents of the schools in the INSCHOOL network (development plans and operational plans) have been effectively improved and revised. Also, from the perspective of the process, we noticed an increase in transparency and in the degree of involvement of school actors in defining these documents. It is necessary for this process to continue, maintaining awareness that it is a dynamic process, sensitive to changes in context (for example, those related to the pandemic period and online learning). It is also necessary that the process of monitoring and evaluating the results of the activities included in the PDI and supported by the OP, including through small grants supported by the INSCHOOL project, continue in particular from the perspective of the inclusive culture that is currently developing. **The development of the school's capacity / competences in this area should be a priority for the next stage**, understanding that evaluation also helps to identify records for future operational plans, as well as transparent justification for the resources invested (human, material, financial).

Research data indicates a significant improvement in relationships among school actors, especially teachers. It is a significant result, given that this is prerequisite for the

development of an inclusive culture at school level, and it is important that strategies for cultivating / developing these links, specific to a functioning learning community, continue. Even if there is currently an overuse, online tools can be used to continue inter-school exchanges (in the form of virtual visits), which have an important contribution in the development of these learning communities.

Mentoring activities among students, with an important role both in the area of learning outcomes and the development of a culture of inclusion, have important potential for the development of inclusive values. They must be a source of inspiration for teachers.

The training programmes were greatly appreciated by the participating teachers, and it is important for schools to ensure that all teachers (including those who will be newly-hired in the next school year) will be able to benefit from a meaningful training experience facilitated by INSCHOOL. The link between the trainers and the participating teachers must be maintained so that, with the support of the management teams, **the capitalisation of the training results be facilitated, both at the class level and at the school level.** As with extracurricular learning activities, schools need to ensure that the elements of innovation do not remain isolated “episodes”, but directly influence the way classroom learning activities are designed and conducted.

Among the priority **training / information areas at school level**, we note those that aim at issues regarding the environment / sustainable future, and those that aim at the peaceful resolution of conflicts / reduction of the phenomena of violence and bullying in the school space. Beyond awareness-raising activities, teachers need more support for the **development of specific skills for working with students with disabilities and / or special educational needs**, for the development and implementation of individualised learning plans, curricular adaptation, the development of contextualised learning activities and for the evaluation of adequate learning / progress.

It is also necessary that the management teams be aware that the development and **implementation of remedial education** measures requires a set of specific skills from teachers. Investing in continuing education in this area can increase the efficiency of such programmes currently running in the schools in the project. There is also a need for a **systematic approach to non-formal and informal learning contexts**, given that research has shown that a large number of students do not participate in any extra-curricular or sports activities during school hours or outside them. The gains in key competences for participants in extra-curricular activities were clearly documented, especially if they had a certain regularity, continuity and diversity.

The fluctuation of teachers and the relatively high proportion of unqualified teachers (or of those who teach within the teaching norm in disciplines for which they do not have specialised training) particularly affect the **structure schools**. In the next period, these schools must **concentrate on the intervention measures** facilitated by the INSCHOOL project, with the management teams explicitly assuming as a target the task of reducing the current differences in the following key areas: participation, attendance, school results, continuing studies by attending higher education, and so on.

Communication channels with parents and other relevant community actors need to be maintained and even diversified. Parents and the community can continue to provide support to ensure adequate learning conditions (e.g. cleaning / maintaining the hygiene of bathrooms, arranging playgrounds / recreation areas within the school perimeter, green areas, etc.). Parents can also be directly involved in solving these problems, based on a close school-family relationship.

Schools need to continue efforts to understand the impact of the pandemic on students, from multiple perspectives (school participation, learning outcomes / skills acquisition, socio-emotional skills, etc.). For example, indicators on absenteeism show a worrying increase in this phenomenon among students and simply returning to “physical” school will not automatically lead to improved school attendance. Often, these phenomena correlate with other risk factors (pre-pandemic) and involve individualised interventions, involving teachers, support staff, family and other professionals in the community or to which schools have access with INSCHOOL support.

The experience of schools in attracting and carrying out projects financed by **external resources** must continue to be developed, including through peer learning activities. For example, schools with an important activity in this area (Chitila, Conțești) can share the experience gained and can contribute to the development of schools’ skills in developing and implementing externally funded educational projects. Also, the **opportunities offered by the new generation of Erasmus+ programmes** must be systematically exploited, with the help of support programmes at national or county level co-ordinated by ANPCDEFP.

Intervention recommendations at system level

The INSCHOOL project promotes a complex methodology of support for schools to develop a culture of inclusion. The positive results obtained so far demonstrate the need for current intervention programmes designed at system level to systematically capitalise on this experience, and ideally, the need to integrate these interventions so that the cumulative effect can be achieved, both by activating / involving all actors in the school (whole school approach) and by implementing a set of interventions that reach multiple levels (educational management, teachers, targeted support measures for students at risk, lifelong learning, non-formal and informal learning contexts, etc.).

- Experiences so far show that schools can have a concrete benefit in knowing and understanding the *Index for Inclusion*, an extremely useful tool for assessing areas for improvement and developing specific improvement measures for this area.
- There are various ways in which **the Index for Inclusion can be used**, including the inclusion of competences regarding the inclusion concept in the (professional) profile of the school manager and the teacher
- Encouraging training programmes (initial and continuing) that directly pursue these skills in the field
- Developing open educational resources that allow the capitalisation of the practical aspects of the *Index for Inclusion* and their promotion at national and county level (for students / teachers / principals)

- Including in the competitions for principals and deputy principals, and in the final exams and degrees for teachers, an element of evaluation of items regarding inclusion
- Including in the quality assurance activities some examples from the *Index for Inclusion*.
- At system level, efforts must also be made in order to understand the impact of the pandemic on students, from multiple perspectives (school participation, learning outcomes / skills acquisition, socio-emotional skills, etc.)

Research shows that **small grants** to schools are an effective tool for addressing a challenge in a personalised way if there is an effective organisational framework. The experience of INSCHOOL demonstrates that carefully supported schools can identify and prioritise the issues they face, propose relevant intervention measures, allocate resources appropriately, and successfully carry out and monitor the activities supported by such a grant. In addition to attracting additional resources, this mechanism provides an effective learning context through which different school actors collaborate and develop skills relevant to inclusion.

The systematic research of the progress of the activities carried out in the INSCHOOL schools demonstrates **the need for systematic methodological support** of the management teams in order to improve the skills regarding the strategic management, especially in the case of schools with a large proportion of students at high risk of exclusion.

Other areas of intervention relevant at a national level:

- Involvement of pre-school education units in inclusion programmes, together with the co-ordinating schools
- **Promoting inter-school exchanges** (including in the form of virtual visits), which have made an important contribution to the development of learning communities in the area of inclusion
- **Supporting mentoring activities among students, with an important role both in the area of learning outcomes and in the development of a culture of inclusion**
- **Involvement of school authorities at county level** (ISJ, CJRAE, CCD) in monitoring, evaluating and promoting examples of good practice identified in the area of developing an inclusive culture at school level
- Leveraging of learning in non-formal and informal learning contexts relevant to the area of inclusion (including through activities specific to Scoala Altfel programme)
- Capitalising on INSCHOOL's experience in early detection (red-flagging) of students at high risk of dropping out and in defining and reporting school dropout phenomena
- Encouraging training offers at CCD level in relevant training areas such as: environment / sustainable future, and those aimed at peaceful resolution of conflicts / reduction of violence and bullying in schools.
- Continuing efforts to **support teachers in developing specific skills for working with students with disabilities and / or SEN**, for developing and implementing individualised learning plans, curricular adaptation, developing contextualised learning activities and for appropriate assessment of learning outcomes / progress
- Initiating **specific measures to fight the negative effects** of teacher turnover, especially in disadvantaged schools
- ARACIP capitalising on the mechanism developed in INSCHOOL regarding the **evaluation and monitoring of PDI and PO**, to be used at system level, in parallel with the promotion of the *Index for Inclusion*