

“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

Synthesis Report

Maria Golubeva
1/9/2014

Synthesis report integrating key findings and recommendations of baseline study conducted in pilot schools by LSE Enterprises and focus groups conducted in pilot schools by NEPC with analysis of interventions proposed by pilot schools

Contents

Introduction	3
1. Sources of data about the pilot schools.....	3
1.1 <i>Baseline study by LSE Enterprise</i>	3
1.2 <i>Focus groups report by the Support Network</i>	5
2. Key findings and recommendations: synthesis.....	6
2.1 <i>Decreasing inclusiveness of the education systems</i>	6
2.2 <i>Policy recommendations to address decreasing inclusiveness of the school system</i>	7
2.3 <i>Synthesis of findings and recommendations by school type</i>	10
3. Pilot school project plans: analysis in the context of recommendations	12

The opinions expressed in this Report are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe

Introduction

This synthesis report is produced in order to integrate the key findings of baseline study and focus groups that preceded a major intervention by the Council of Europe to promote inclusive school education in the Western Balkans – Regional Support for Inclusive Education – and to generate recommendations to improve pilot school projects based on these findings.

The project ‘Regional Support for Inclusive Education’, funded by the European Commission and implemented by the Council of Europe, among other interventions supports 49 pilot schools in South East Europe to develop inclusive cultures, policies and practices, and aims to increase capacity to implement inclusive education across the region through awareness-raising, mutual learning and capacity building measures.

1. Sources of data about the pilot schools

1.1 Baseline study by LSE Enterprise

In order to measure the impact of the Project, the Council of Europe Commissioned a baseline study, conducted in the pilot schools by LSE Enterprise.¹

Data analysis of the baseline survey, provided by LSE Enterprise, focuses on aggregate results across countries, and aims to capture differences across different types of schools and different stakeholders that participated in the survey.

The survey questionnaires were developed to operationalize Index for Inclusion. The original Index for Inclusion, developed by Booth and Ainscow (2002), has several dimensions that allow it to cover all major areas of change needed for achieving inclusion in practice:²

Dimension A, *Creating inclusive cultures*, is aimed at creating a secure, supportive and collaborating community, introducing all new staff, students, parents and school decision makers to the values of inclusion, and ensuring that school policy and classroom practice are guided on everyday basis by the principles and values of inclusive school.

¹ W. Bartlett et al. (2014), Cross-Beneficiary Report, <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1473702/2308705/Baseline+survey-Cross-Beneficiary+and+7+Beneficiaries+Reports-final.pdf/02491b98-4f08-48de-b190-6e8387ff333c>

² Booth and Ainscow (2002), Index for Inclusion, <http://www.csie.org.uk/resources/translations/IndexEnglish.pdf>

Dimension B, *Producing inclusive policies*, is aimed at making all school policies and plans inclusive, participatory, access-oriented and ensuring that exclusionary pressures are minimized. All policies involve clear strategies for change. Support activities increasing the school's capacity to respond positively to diversity are built in a coherent and participatory way.

Dimension C, *Evolving inclusive practices*, is aimed at making all school practices, in the classrooms and out side, reflect the inclusive culture and policies of the school. The 'resource' approach, identifying resources for learning in the students' experience outside the school, in the experience of staff and parents/ carers, and in each other, is crucial to this dimension. Learning is orchestrated and participatory.

According to the authors of the baseline survey, 'Since the core objective of the work was to provide a synthetic numerical measure of the level of inclusion of each school, the primary source from which the questionnaires was inspired is the index for inclusion developed by Booth and Ainscow (2002), which provides an ideal basis to produce such type of measurement. Additionally, the research team drew on a previous experience gained by implementing a project funded by the European Training Foundation that assessed the role of VET for social inclusion and social cohesion in South East Europe.³'

The index for inclusion derived from the survey is organized along four dimensions, different from those in Botth and Ainscow (2002), each representing a potential area where exclusion / inclusion may occur:

- A. Inclusive practices for entry to school
- B. Inclusion within the school
- C. Inclusive teaching and practice approaches
- D. Community engagement.

Dimensions A and B in this modified Index cover both, culture and policies and practices, whereas Dimension C focuses almost exclusively on practices.

Two variants of the Index for Inclusion were calculated in the baseline study – weighted and un-weighted Index.

The baseline report also contains beneficiary reports from all seven countries, in which national researchers involved in the baseline study have formulated policy recommendations. These recommendations will be included in the synthesis part of this report.

³ W. Bartlett et al. (2014), 11.

1.2 Focus groups report by the Support Network

Parallel to the baseline study, and also prior to project development in pilot schools, the support network operated by Network of Education Policy Centers (NEPC) has conducted focus groups with key stakeholders in all 49 pilot schools. The focus groups were integral part of the NEPC platform of organization component of the project conducted in order to provide evidence for a more targeted and needs-based support for the creation of the school development plan and development of school projects. The focus groups targeted the following stakeholders:

- School staff,
- Parents,
- Students,
- Local community.

The focus group questions were grouped around the 3 key themes of inclusive education according to Index for Inclusion: inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices.

The goal of the focus groups was to establish, to what extent the culture, policies and practices of the schools are inclusive, what are the main problems and barriers to inclusion and, crucially, what types of support are needed for the schools to become more inclusive and sustainable.

Focus group report includes recommendations on improving school culture, policies and practices, which will also be included in the synthesis in this report.

Focus group results analyzed by NEPC confirm that teachers may play a role in alienating or marginalizing certain types of students. Non-inclusive practices were often reported by stakeholders in a large proportion of schools. The following examples of practices were reported:

- Teachers are often selective or partial and do not support all students equally or according to their needs. Nepotism, prejudice, students' faith or political sympathies playing a role in how support is given (or not given) by teachers;
- The school applying the same assessment criteria to students with disabilities in areas where they need individualized approach, lack of adjustments in curriculum and teaching;
- Lack of transparency in assessment;
- Separate schooling of ethnic minority students in 'satellite' schools that are seen as less important/ prestigious, or in 'schools under one roof' which in fact do not communicate or cooperate in the same school;
- Placing Roma students separately from other students in class;

- Lack of a strong stand on violence or bullying, lack of security measures to make the school a safe place for students;
- Top-down decision making without soliciting opinion of staff, students and parents;
- Lack of measures to improve accessibility of school to students with special needs and students from poor families, lack of practices that would confirm the school's openness or accessibility towards marginalized groups;
- Lack of support for students at risk of dropping out.

All of these examples suggest that changing school practices (particularly teaching practices) and where appropriate, also underlying implicit or explicit policies, is key to changing the school to become more inclusive.

2. Key findings and recommendations: synthesis

2.1 *Decreasing inclusiveness of the education systems*

Given the methodology of baseline study, which gives rather big weight to the voice of school principals when calculating average Inclusion Index, all school types on average scored above the middle of the scale in all dimensions of the index.

Nevertheless, primary schools on the whole scored higher than Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools and gymnasium-type schools, and gymnasiums have scored the lowest in two areas: inclusive practices for entry to school and inclusion within the school. While gymnasiums scoring the lowest in Dimension A (Inclusive practices for entry to school) is not surprising, given that entry into this type of upper-secondary school is based on academic selection, Dimension B (Inclusion within the school) captures the presence (or absence) of inclusive culture, policies and practices within the school, and should not in principle depend on type of school. Also VET schools score much lower in this dimension than primary schools.

On the basis of these findings, the baseline study suggests that 'education systems across the regions decrease their inclusiveness as students progress through the system... primary schools tend to have a more inclusive school atmosphere than secondary schools. Second, both primary schools and VET schools tend to have more inclusive teaching practices than gymnasia. Third, about one third of gymnasia and one fifth of VET schools have neither an inclusive school atmosphere nor inclusive teaching practices and policies.'⁴

⁴ W. Bartlett et al. (2014), 20-21.

Table 2.1 Key findings by school type

School type	LSE Baseline study	NEPC study
Primary	<p>Inclusion Index of primary schools is on average higher than that of secondary schools (3,86).</p> <p>Primary schools score on average much higher than other types of schools in Dimension A (Inclusive practices for entry to school).</p>	<p>Individual focus group reports suggest that on the whole primary schools are more often perceived as inclusive by stakeholders. Some primary schools (those located in economically disadvantaged areas) show a sense of social marginalization among stakeholders, similar to VET schools.</p>
VET	<p>Inclusion Index of VET schools is on average lower than that of primary schools (3, 69). Similar to gymnasium-type schools, also VET schools score rather low on Dimension B (Inclusion within the school). VET schools score the lowest in Dimension D (Community engagement).</p>	<p>VET schools' stakeholders live with a sense of marginality, VET not seen as important in the community.</p>
Secondary/ Gymnasia	<p>Inclusion Index of gymnasium-type schools is on average lower than that of primary schools (3, 69). Gymnasia score lowest in Dimension A (Inclusive practices for entry to school) and Dimension B (Inclusion within the school).</p>	<p>Individual focus group reports from gymnasia suggest that school culture based on authority, top-down decisions and lack of openness and transparency are perceived by parents.</p>

2.2 Policy recommendations to address decreasing inclusiveness of the school system

Beneficiary reports for each country in the baseline study contain policy recommendations, some of which can be grouped by school type. Also focus group report analysis has led to policy recommendations for pilot schools, however, these are not grouped by school type and (except for specific recommendations on VET schools) will be addressed below in the context of pilot school project plans.

Recommendations of the beneficiary reports that concern primary schools include:

Albania

- Schools located in rural areas in particular are recommended to increase their teachers' awareness on the importance of inclusive education and governments should help this process by providing capacity development.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- The Ministries of Education in the ten cantons of Federation of BiH and in the Republika Srpska should fully apply the existing Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH and be obliged to secure support for all children in all parts of BiH coming from socio economic unprivileged conditions.

Croatia

- Special emphasis should be given to devising activities and procedures for familiarization of families with schools prior to enrolment or at the entrance point. Special attention should be devoted to the facilitation of involvement of families coming from underprivileged social backgrounds. Schools should initiate dialogs with such families in order to be able to better understand their needs and perspectives, and to negotiate their expectations.

Kosovo*⁵

- Primary and gymnasia schools should enhance their engagement with municipalities. This requires engagement from schools and local community but it should be the school to initiate cooperation given that it will provide benefits to students.

Recommendations of the beneficiary reports concerning VET schools include:

Albania

- Enrolment to the education system needs more interventions by the government and schools to increase the familiarization of students and parents with the advantages of following the secondary level of education, especially of VET.

Serbia

- Introduction of inclusive teaching in VET schools has to be strengthened. The latter implies that VET schools and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development must take some actions in order to improve current situation. Furthermore, for all the decision makers and stakeholders in the VET system, while projecting reforms and modernization of vocational education, is recommended to adopt special measures for protecting students from socially disadvantaged categories, and that social inclusion in vocational education should essentially become an integral component of the whole

⁵ This designation is without prejudice to position on status and is in line with UNSC 1244 and ICJ Opinion on Kosovo Declaration of Independence

discourse on vocational education, not an isolated part, but an integral element of the vocational education system.

“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

- Schools, especially vocational and gymnasia secondary schools, should increase their activities to familiarize students and their parents with the school prior to their enrolment.

The focus group reports have indicated a greater degree of social marginalization in VET schools and in some primary schools located in economically disadvantaged areas. The focus group analysis shows that stakeholders in VET schools specifically feel pessimistic about the value of their school and the education it provides in the eyes of wider society, there is sense of marginalization.

Recommendations of the focus group report on VET schools:

- VET schools and primary schools in areas challenged by poverty have to be encouraged to resist the risk of marginalization. Changing the school culture in this case may need to start from building the leadership competence of the school staff and administration, and motivating students to be active and creative and to assume ownership of their own learning.

Leadership training for staff and administration and (separately) for student leaders in such schools, coupled with mentoring (by successful and open members of the local community or by senior students from better performing schools, provided they are supportive) may be an effective way to overcome the marginalization challenge.

Recommendations of the beneficiary reports that concern primarily general secondary and gymnasium type schools include:

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- The Ministries of Education in ten cantons of Federation of BiH and in the Republika Srpska should fully apply the existing Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH and be obliged to secure support for all children in all parts of BiH coming from socio economic unprivileged conditions.

Croatia

- Schools (and secondary schools in particular) are invited to enhance cooperation with local community, by establishing and maintaining links with individual members of the communities and their institutions and associations, being responsive to local community needs.

“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

- Schools, especially vocational and gymnasia secondary schools, should increase their activities to familiarize students and their parents with the school prior to their enrolment.

Kosovo

- Primary and gymnasia schools should enhance their engagement with municipalities. This requires engagement from schools and local community but it should be the school to initiate cooperation given that it will provide benefits to students.

2.3 Synthesis of findings and recommendations by school type

Given this overall result and recommendations, several areas for improvement can be outlined according to school type:

Primary schools

- Primary schools in the region are on the whole more inclusive than VET and secondary schools, but **primary school students in disadvantaged areas face the risk of marginalisation**. Teachers in schools serving disadvantaged communities should become more aware of the values of inclusive education and practice them in their work.
- Inclusive school is a welcoming school. **Familiarization of families with schools prior to enrolment** or at the entrance point is important. Special attention should be given to **building school’s partnership with parents coming from underprivileged social backgrounds**. This requires both cross-cutting and targeted measures (e.g. working on overall school culture, but being mindful of economic limitations that may put the family’s engagement with school at risk). All parents independently of social, ethnic or religious background should be welcome in school and should be treated as equally important members of school community. **Engaging parents in teaching and extra-curricular activities**, and inviting them to share their life experience and skills with other members of the school community may be effective. School can also offer parents **learning opportunities** – e.g. IT trainings – as some pilot schools are indeed planning to do.
- **Special support to students from socially disadvantaged groups** is necessary.

VET

- **VET schools do not score high on inclusion within the school**, and their stakeholders often feel marginalized and ‘unimportant’ due to the way VET is perceived in society as a ‘lower’ strand of educational attainment. This challenge should be addressed through **a change of discourse about VET**, as rightly pointed out in the Serbian beneficiary report, from seeing it as a socially marginal form of education to seeing it as an equal and inclusive educational path. This involves first of all a change in the attitudes, values and practices of school staff, but also empowerment of all stakeholders, including teachers, students and parents.
- **Leadership training and mentoring (both for the school administration, teachers and for students)** may be helpful approaches. Teacher leadership networks existing in the pilot countries can provide a basis for leadership trainings. Mentoring for teaching staff could also involve resources in the region as well as those developed by CEDEFOP, e.g. Mentoring Handbook.⁶
- Students and parents need to be familiarized with the requirements and opportunities of the secondary education system in their country/ community in order to be able to make informed choices.
- **Special support to students from socially disadvantaged groups** is necessary also in the VET school system.

General secondary schools and gymnasium-type schools

- **Exclusive, or insufficiently inclusive practices and culture of gymnasium-type secondary schools** raise concerns about the willingness and capacity of school staff in these schools to promote inclusion. The findings of both the baseline study and focus groups seem to point in the direction of exclusive culture (top-down, disregarding difficulties encountered by individual students, non-transparent) and lack of support for students with learning difficulties in teaching practices in gymnasium-type schools. Also political or kinship-related preferential treatment given to some students has been mentioned as a feature of teaching practices in focus groups with parents in this type of schools.
- **Gymnasium-type schools need to build relationships with the communities they serve**, both close community (students and their families) and wider community. This should include building partnerships with parents independently of their social, political or ethnic background and seeing all parents as equally important.
- There is also a need for **developing inclusive policies in gymnasium-type schools** – e.g. policies and procedures for supporting students who start

⁶ http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/MENTORING_HANDBOOK_final_version.pdf

developing learning difficulties due to the stress experienced in the highly competitive environment or due to external factors.

- **Special support to students from socially disadvantaged groups** is necessary also in gymnasium-type schools.

3. Pilot school project plans: analysis in the context of recommendations

3.1 Recommendations for pilot schools prior to project development

Prior to pilot project development, the authors of beneficiary reports attached to the baseline study and of the focus group analysis report proposed the following recommendations regarding inclusive schools.

Beneficiary reports (recommendations from national reports synthesized in one list):

- Awareness raising at school and community level about the importance of inclusive education, supported by development of national-level rules and procedures;
- Familiarizing students and parents with the advantages of enrolling in secondary education, including VET;
- Developing instruments for evaluating the school's inclusiveness, involving also parents and students;
- National and local mechanisms should be created for supporting students with disadvantaged socio-economic background;
- Schools should ensure physical access to students with special needs and provide assistant teachers to support students with learning difficulties;
- Monitoring the learning progress of students with special needs is important;
- Students should participate in the making of school policies and in the evaluation of teachers;
- School policies and communication with students and parents should be transparent;
- Teachers should be required to treat students equitably and to interact with them in a friendly manner;
- Schools should strive to build partnerships with parents and to support the engagement of parents from disadvantaged socio-economic background;
- Schools' engagement with local community should be increased;
- Inclusiveness of VET schools in particular and their support for students from socially disadvantaged background should be a priority.

Focus Group Report's recommendations on developing inclusive school policies:

- The development of school plans should foresee sufficient time, space and capacity building for the development of school policies on inclusion. The development of inclusive school policies has to help the school community to arrive at a common understanding of what inclusiveness means and by what measures the school is going to achieve it.
- It is important that schools should be provided with hands-on capacity building (training, consultations by project staff) on how to develop policies – with practical step-by-step how-to and examples of what a good written school policy (e.g. on bullying) looks like. Where possible, the examples of good written policies should be from the region.
- It is essential that the policy development process should be inclusive and should involve representatives of school board, administration, staff, parents and students. Methods of participatory action research (PAR), such as a scenario-based workshop, can be used for this purpose. The project support team can create a short textual aid on facilitating such workshops in order to create a school policy.

On developing and promoting inclusive school practices:

- Measures to stop abusive practices and to create policies that would be effective in addressing and stopping violence and discrimination should be at the top of school plans.
- A common understanding of which practices are inclusive (and worth supporting) and which practices are exclusive (and have to be avoided) should be shared by all groups in the school community – teachers, students, parents and administration. It is necessary to raise the awareness of stakeholders about what constitutes supportive practices.
- Training and capacity building given to schools during the project should have a particular emphasis on teachers' ethic and one of the planned outcomes of capacity building for staff should be the creation of a code of conduct for teachers. Activities such as mentoring by teacher trainers should be organized in order to ensure that the culture of equity, inclusiveness and fairness prevails in teachers' work.

3.2 Clustering of interventions proposed in pilot school projects

In July 2014, pilot schools in seven countries submitted Project proposals outlining the actions they are planning to implement.

This part of the Synthesis Report is dedicated to clustering the planned actions in pilot schools according to type of intervention, and commenting on the appropriateness of the more common types of interventions envisaged by the schools, given the context. Beneficiary reports by country, analyzing more closely the planned interventions in national clusters of pilot schools, are included in Annex A.

Given the existence of clearly outlined dimensions of inclusion in the baseline study, one possible approach to the clustering of planned interventions could be according to dimensions. However, a test analysis of 2 country's pilot project proposals (Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina) has established that very few interventions planned by schools concern any aspect of Dimension A (inclusive practices for entry to school), and absolute majority of planned activities are related to Dimensions B and C (inclusion within the school and teaching practices), a few are related to Dimension D (community engagement), and many planned interventions do not really fall clearly under any of the outlined dimensions.

Therefore, an alternative method of clustering was chosen, grouping the proposed interventions under two large categories – cross-cutting measures and targeted measures – and subdividing each of these categories into a number of types of interventions, generated by analyzing the most typical activities proposed by schools. Only activities that may, at least hypothetically, be connected to the values and practices of inclusion were clustered in these categories. Other activities, without an explicit link to inclusion (e.g. celebration of national, international and religious holidays, renovation of buildings without clear references to improving access, decoration of classrooms without reference to any associated inclusive practice) were clustered under 'Other'.

Currently few school project plans include articulated and consistent measures on building the school's engagement with local community (beyond celebrating national and religious holidays). Therefore no separate category for activities engaging local community has been created.

As a result of this approach, the following main types of interventions planned by pilot schools have emerged:

Cross-cutting measures

- Training of school staff to improve inclusive values and approach;
- Creating partnerships with parents (includes training for parents on inclusion);
- Awareness raising;
- Encouraging peer support and peer learning on inclusion among students;
- Improving cooperation and coordination among school staff;
- Creating school policies on inclusion;
- Using creative workshops and arts to promote inclusion;

- Improvement of learning infrastructure (teaching aids, library, multimedia);
- Using sport and trips/ excursions to promote inclusion;
- Establishing & training of Inclusion Support Team.

Targeted measures

- Training staff and parents to support students with special needs in mainstream classroom E.g. *Remedial and additional teaching, Workshops for teachers "Identifying and teaching students with special needs and abilities"*.
- Improving access for students with limited mobility through infrastructure
- Targeted measures for involving disadvantaged or minority parents in school life. E.g. *IT literacy workshops with 30 parents from socially disadvantaged families*
- Group-based additional training or summer schools for children with special needs.
- Providing targeted support to students facing socio-economic marginalization risks. E.g. *IT literacy workshops with 30 students from disadvantaged families. Workshops for students at higher risk of marginalization and exclusion.*

The table 3.1 below illustrates how these types of intervention are distributed by country.

Table 3.1 Types of measures distributed per beneficiaries

Beneficiary	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	Serbia	"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	Kosovo
<i>Cross-cutting interventions</i>							
Training of school staff to improve inclusive values and approach	6	6	7	4	3	4	6
Creating partnerships with parents (includes training for parents on inclusion)	5	4	6	6	6	6	0
Awareness raising	7	3	7	5	3	5	6
Encouraging peer support and peer learning on inclusion among students	6	5	5	3	2	4	1
Improving cooperation and coordination among school staff	2	0	1	0	2	0	0
Creating school policies on inclusion	2	0	2	1	2	1	1
Using creative workshops and arts to promote inclusion	5	4	3	7	3	3	2
Improvement of learning infrastructure (teaching aids, library, multimedia)	4	6	4	5	7	6	4
Experience exchange trips/	3	1	1	3	2	4	3

Beneficiary	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	Serbia	“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”	Kosovo
excursions/ sports events to promote inclusion							
Establishing&training of Inclusion Support Team	2	0	2	1	1	3	0
Other	7	2	3	7	2	6	1
Targeted interventions							
Individual plans and additional individual measures for students with special needs	3	3	1	1	2	2	1
Training staff and parents to support students with special needs in mainstream classroom	4	5	7	4	4	6	1
Improving access for students with limited mobility through infrastructure	2	3	1	0	1	0	0
Targeted measures for involving disadvantaged or minority parents in school life	1	1	2	2	3	3	1
Group-based additional training for children with special needs	2	0	2	1	0	2	1
Targeted support to students facing socio-economic risks	2	2	0	2	3	0	1

The table 3.1 can serve to indicate the most popular types of interventions.

The most typically widespread interventions include:

- **Training of school staff to improve inclusive values and approach;**
- **Creating partnerships with parents (includes training for parents on inclusion);**
- **Awareness raising.**

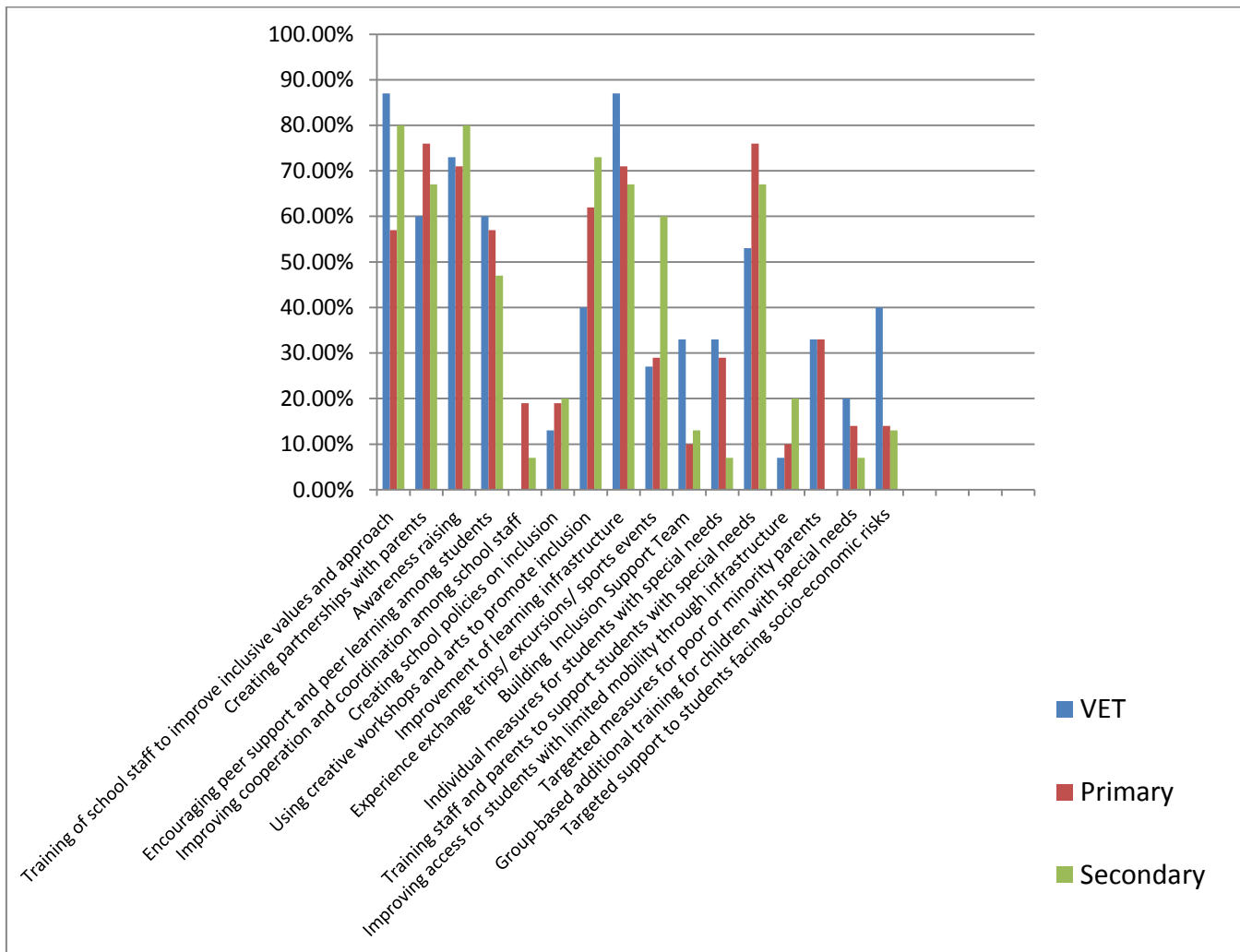
The types of interventions that have been suggested by recommendations but are insufficiently addressed by the schools themselves are:

- **Creating school policies on inclusion;**
- **Targeted measures for involving disadvantaged or minority parents in school life;**
- **Targeted support to students facing socio-economic risks.**

In order to cluster planned interventions by type of school (primary, VET, secondary or gymnasium) in Table 3.2, the total number of each type of school was calculated as

100% (mixed-type schools were calculated in all categories they represented, e.g. VET/ gymnasium school would be included both in VET and gymnasium categories).

Table 3.2 Interventions clustered by school type



The resulting chart clearly shows that certain types of interventions are favored by all type of schools:

- Improvement of Learning Infrastructure is planned by more than 60% in every category of pilot schools, and
- Training of School Staff is planned at least by 57% in every type of school.

However, some types of interventions recommended both by the authors of national beneficiary reports and of the focus group report are not taken up by the pilot schools:

- **Very few schools have planned activities around developing school policies.** Even when that is the case, project plans do not usually indicate that the process of developing school policies will involve students. **VET schools in**

particular have almost completely disregarded the recommendation to work on developing school policies.

- Only 60% of VET schools have chosen to create partnerships with parents as part of their project activities.
- None of the secondary and gymnasium-type schools have planned targeted support measures for disadvantaged and minority parents.
- Less than 20% of secondary and gymnasium-type schools have planned activities involving targeted support to students facing socio-economic risks.

3.3 Analysis and Recommendations

- The emphasis on staff training to improve inclusive values and approaches and on partnerships with parents, as well as on a range of awareness raising activities (both internal for the school community and external for the outside world) is appropriate and is in line with the recommendations of both reports. The character of proposed measures, however, is often rather general and project descriptions do not go into details regarding the 'depth' of training and capacity building interventions.

It is essential to establish at an early stage that staff training and capacity building activities include emphasis on inclusive practices and aim to transform school discourse and to make it more inclusive. Moreover, teacher training activities should always be followed up by monitoring and evaluation of how newly acquired skills and competences are applied in the classroom. Individual peer support for school staff (e.g. via mentoring) would be another way to ensure that ideas and practices learned during training are embedded in school practice.

- Given the significant emphasis on the need for developing inclusive school-level policies in the recommendations produced by the authors of both the baseline report and the focus group report, particularly with emphasis on introducing monitoring and evaluation, including evaluation of school and teachers by students, and policies involving students in school life and decision making, as well as policies to support socially disadvantaged students and their families, the main weakness of the majority of pilot school projects so far is insufficient focus on school-level policies.

Only a small minority of schools has explicitly referred to interventions leading to the development of new school policies in their project proposals, and when they did, the proposals did not spell out how students will be involved in these processes. This needs to be addressed at earliest possible stage, as the

lack of clear and transparent inclusive school policies cannot be compensated by one-off measures such as workshops, seminars or exchanges of experience. **Guidelines for school policy development have been produced for the pilot schools' use by the NEPC.**

- Despite the recommendations of both the baseline report and the focus group report, secondary and gymnasium-type schools have shown very little interest in developing actions that are aimed to increase their social inclusiveness. None of the secondary and gymnasium-type schools have planned targeted support measures for disadvantaged and minority parents. Less than 20% of secondary and gymnasium-type schools have planned activities involving targeted support to students facing socio-economic risks. This clearly shows that social inclusiveness is not part of the agenda for this type of schools as yet, and extra effort is necessary in order to convince the schools to take a second look at their project plans and to include measures that would support the inclusion of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, giving them equal chances to access higher education.
- Currently few school project plans include articulated and consistent measures on building the school's engagement with local community (beyond celebrating national and religious holidays).