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Data collection and analysis of Erasmus+ projects promoting inclusion in education

Key findings from the research

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Study objectives

The overall objective of the Erasmus+ 'inclusion project' structured data collection and analysis is to:

- inform policy-making at European and national levels
- maximise the impact of funding invested through the Erasmus+ programme by disseminating innovative approaches, working methods, tools, strategies, which can inspire educational stakeholders throughout Europe
- showcase how stakeholders can use the Erasmus+ programme to enrich their own practice
- support further development of the Erasmus+ programme

The study is due to complete by the end of November 2021.



Study methodology & context

Covid-19 pandemic

PISA 2018 results

Study methodology

120 Erasmus+ projects
labelled 'good practice'

15 Case studies
(primary & secondary research)

Analysis and findings

- Learning environments
- Learners and learning climate
- Teacher's agency in tackling educational disadvantages
- School governance and leadership
- Active involvement of parents and families in school life
- Partnerships and collaboration in and around schools
- The potential and impact of the Erasmus programme in regard to fostering inclusion in education

Whole
school
approach

- Monitoring
- Prevention
- Intervention
- Compensation

Policy context

European
Education Area

Planned Council
Recommendation on
pathways to school
success



Starting point: 120 Erasmus+ projects 2014-2017 labelled as good practice

- Brief overview of the 120 projects in terms of programme type, coordinating countries and priorities – for final deliverable
- Analysis of the projects: results, assessment of sustainability, potential for scaling up?
- Selection of 15 cases
- Invitation to coordinators to contribute
- Interviews with coordinators, partners, stakeholders
- Drafting the case studies (in progress)



The 15 case studies

KA2, Cooperation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices (Key Action 2)					
School education, primary	School education, secondary	VET schools	Higher education	Adult education	More sectors
Wearable Methodology	Choose your future	Creative, non-formal learning in unconventional spaces (CREUS)	Marginalisation and co-created education (MACE)	Bringing young mothers back to education (BYMBE)	Education in mathematics in game-based immersive contexts (e-Magic)
Kids conquering castles	Motivation + Talent = Success		Training sports students as mentors to improve educational attainment of boys and young men		Family and community engagement in action
	Non-formal activities for inclusive groups of students		OffBook – Objective, foster theatrical performance to combat discrimination in schools and tackle early leaving		Tinkering EU: Building science capital for all
			Sustaining teachers and learners with the arts – relational health in European schools (STALWARTS)		MOOC on Dys(lexia)

- Great variation in approaches
- Focus on development of new approaches to combat exclusion and early leaving
- All higher education projects have produced materials for other sectors
- Coordinators and stakeholders include schools, higher education institutions, public authorities, NGOs, and
- private companies,



Success factors according to interviewees

Start by understanding and responding to your community and by asking 'who do you want to involve the most'.

To create successful diverse classrooms, the teaching methodology needs to be similarly diverse

...the importance of an engaged school leadership and school staff

...a close cooperation between the partners on preparing methods and materials

...a good management system with a continuous flow of communication and adherence to deadlines

The combination of peer mentoring with non-formal learning and unconventional learning spaces is a very successful way to encourage and enable excluded young people

The statements reflect experiences collected in the case study reports; most of them are not direct quotes.



A general finding from the research

- Among the 120 projects selected as good practices, **it is very few that 'live on' after the project period has ended**
- This is true even for the 15 projects selected as cases in the study
- The projects that have had a lasting impact at school or local level ascribe this to
 - The **involvement (including budgetary) of public authorities**, sometimes as project coordinators
 - **Quality of the partnership**
 - **Engagement of school management**
 - School leaders **giving teachers space** for developing ideas and methods in the project
 - **Appointing dedicated staff** to carry on and develop the initiatives



Key findings from the case studies

Learning environments

- Un-traditional learning spaces can facilitate new conversations about learning and school
- Learning environments should be designed to reflect the needs of the specific community and students
- Inclusive learning environments may be physical as well as virtual (castles, a café, or an app)

Learners and learning climate

- Inclusion is a very complex topic – different target groups have different needs -> there is no 'one-size-fits-all' in terms of methods and approaches
- Initiatives should leave sufficient room for adaptation to local and target group-related specificities
- Learner-centred approaches are key
- Involvement of a wider community besides the immediate target group (e.g., win parents' trust, involve municipal services and businesses, involve peers)



Key findings from the case studies

Teacher's agency in tackling educational disadvantages

- Activities involving all teachers in a school is a success factor
- Successful initiatives include development of teachers' knowledge and skills

Partnerships and collaboration in and around schools

- Transnational collaboration is an important inspirational factor for teachers as well as school leaders
- In some case studies, successful collaboration has been established between teaching and non-teaching staff, involving the latter in creating a positive learning environment

Active involvement of parents and families in school life

- Parents' experience with and attitudes towards learning and school are key to including children and young people from vulnerable backgrounds in school
- To involve parents, it is necessary to create trust in the school
- Activities and environments that are not 'school-like' are called for in this regard



Challenges and barriers

- Finding common ground between partners on the key methodologies and approaches
- In projects with many participating schools: Convincing the schools of the value of participation
- Gaining the trust of 'end-users', esp. where families are concerned
- Language barriers (especially for young students)
- Cultural barriers (how do teachers and students express themselves, what is 'allowed'?)



Lessons - for Erasmus+ project promoters

- Inclusion of local communities is key and should be prioritized/required
- It is very important for everyone who works with disadvantaged groups to get to know them and understand their perspective by talking to them and listening to them
- External 'experts'/professionals from other fields can be more effective in tackling delicate issues in the classroom than teachers
- Activities should focus on practical experiences for students
- For projects: Admin procedures should be manageable and transparent to all partners



Lessons - for the Erasmus+ programme and the Commission

- The programme should focus less on specific target groups – inclusion benefits all students
- More research in early school leaving in Europe is needed
- Data collection and evaluation should be strengthened to serve as an instrument for school innovation and teachers' professional development
- Funding should be made available to schools to acquire materials or offer scholarships to students during a project
- The application procedure appears to become more complicated with each call



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Thanks for your attention!

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