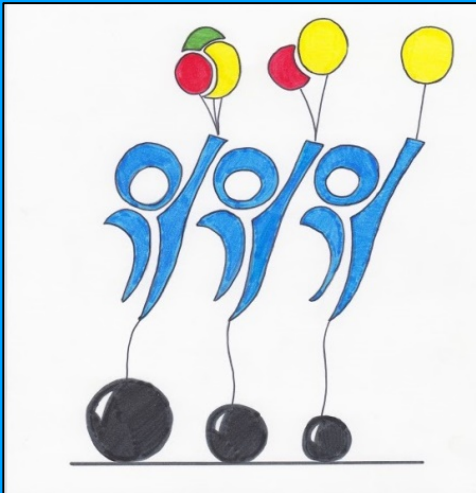




Erasmus+ KA201 Project

Supporting Opportunity in Schools: Promoting Educational Equity

Project Number 2017-1-ES01-KA201-037990

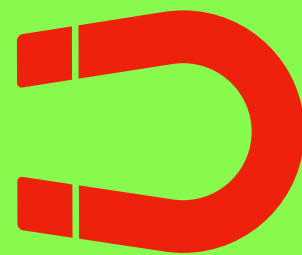


Our project is aimed at empowering schools to enhance and to assess equity through the development of several intellectual outputs and actions. This highlights the importance of assessing equity in schools to raise awareness among educational stakeholders. You can find more information in the project website.

The fourth transnational meeting of the project was held in Brussels from the 25th to the 27th of March. We revised the progress of our intellectual outputs: guide on school equity, rubric, dashboard of indicators, training course for school leaders, description of best practices and academic papers. These are the colleagues who attended the meeting.



MULTIPLIER EVENTS



In May-June 2019, there will be a conference in each country to share and promote the intellectual outputs of the project with school heads and educational stakeholders in the area of influence of the participating institutions.

The conference will include a lecture, a round-table, presentation of best practices and the project outputs.

BRUSSELS

6th May

MONZA

8th May

SIBIU

17th May

BARCELONA

23rd May

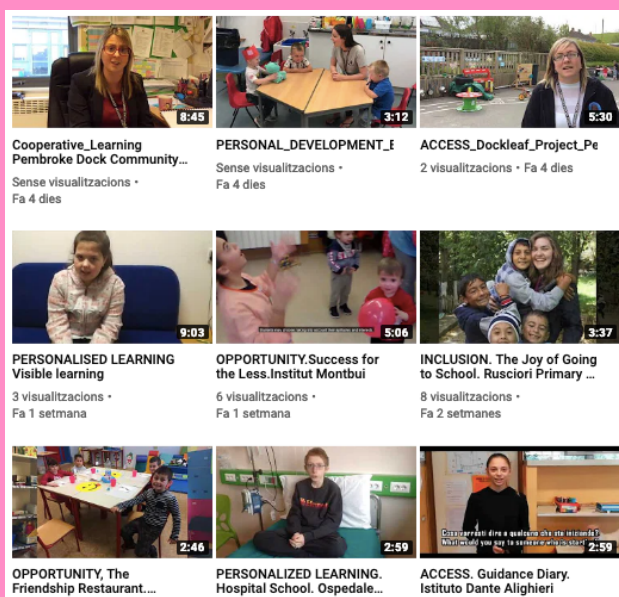
GIRONA

3rd June

SWANSEA

18th June

In our [YouTube Channel](#), you will find 35 best practices on school equity with a description and a video recording



Visit our website to access all the information about the project



euschoolequity.org

Interview with Marc Fuster, analyst.

Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD.



What is equity in education for the OECD?

According to the OECD, educational equity is composed of two variables. On the one hand, it refers to how fair the educational system is. Fairness is understood as the personal or social circumstances of students, such as sex, ethnic origin or family circumstances, not becoming a barrier for students to develop their full potential. On the other hand, equity refers to whether the educational system is inclusive. Here, inclusion is understood as all individuals achieving at least a minimum level of basic competencies.

Are there many differences between European educational systems regarding equity?

Yes. For example, in relation to fairness in the system, according to the PISA 2015 results, the most disadvantaged students in terms of economic, social and cultural status in France and Hungary are more than 3.5 times more likely to appear in the fourth lower performance in science in relation to students in more favored environments. The socio-economic status of students is calculated on various factors, including the academic achievement of parents and their employment, as well as family wealth and the various educational resources present in the home.

In PISA 2015, approximately 13% of the variation in student

performance in science is directly related to socioeconomic and cultural status. Anyway, there are differences. While in Iceland the impact of the socio-economic and cultural situation is less than 5% of the variation in performance, in France, Hungary and Luxembourg, the socioeconomic status explains 20% or more of this difference. The results of PISA 2015 place Spain at the OECD average, with 13%. The figures are similar if we look at performance in mathematics and reading.

These data are just a picture, which is actually much broader if we consider variations in indicators such as access to university studies, obtaining a certificate of basic education or participation in early years education (0-3), which becomes a key corrector to compensate for contextual inequalities during early childhood, with effects that extend throughout the school stage and beyond. For

example, with Education at a Glance 2018 data, we see that 35% of boys and girls under 3 years of age participate in education 0-3 on average in OECD countries, but while 41% of children with mothers with higher education studies participate in early education, only 31% of the children of mothers without university studies do so. Here, Spain stands above the average, but far from leading countries, such as Denmark and Norway, with figures that exceed 70 and 80% respectively, and with minor differences in the participation of more and less advantaged students.

What studies has the OECD carried out recently on equity in education? What information do they provide?

Equity appears as a cross-cutting issue in all or almost all projects of the OECD directorate of education. For example, equity is a central element when it comes to talking about education 0-3, as it has impacts on the development of children during this same stage of life, and also on their future cognitive and socioemotional development. Recent data regarding access to education 0-3 tells us that while OECD countries have tended to universalise the pre-primary stages, there are still significant shortcomings in the schooling of minors of 3 years, especially when they come from disadvantaged environments.



We can check this by looking at the "Education at a Glance 2018" or the "Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care" (OECD, 2017).

Obviously, PISA also offers us periodic data that are relevant in relation to equity. The study provides information on the performance of the students, both in cognitive and socio-emotional aspects (especially PISA 2015 (volume 3), dedicated exclusively to the well-being of students), and it distinguishes by socio-economic level, origin and mother tongue, gender and territorial dimension (urban-rural) of the students when analyzing the results. With PISA data, it is possible to analyze the impacts of specific policies on students, disaggregating the effects they have on specific groups (for example, the effects of course retention on socio-economically disadvantaged students compared to performance in countries that do not have course retention). Comparing two or more educational systems must be done carefully, of course, but it is also clear that these data allow us to better understand certain elements of our systems that would otherwise be much more difficult to analyze. In relation to PISA, the latest thematic report published in 2018 is precisely an exhaustive analysis on equity.

Another clear case of a recent report on equity and educational policies is the research on school resources, led by Paulo Santiago and Deborah Nusche from the department of recommendations in public policy and implementation (PAI, policy advice and implementation). The two synthesis publications published so far allow us, respectively, to understand much better how different

educational systems focus on the financing of the provision, and how they organize their school networks to become more effective and efficient. This is a project with a rigorous analysis, through which it is possible to understand better, for example, how the resources of the educational system can be organised to respond to those who need them most, or how schooling processes can be guaranteed when a municipality or region suffers substantial demographic changes in a relatively short period of time (eg depopulation in pre-rural areas).

"Comparing two or more educational systems must be done carefully, of course, but it allows us to better understand certain elements of our systems that would otherwise be much more difficult to analyze"

How does OECD assess equity?

As I said, educational equity can be faced in different ways, and somehow, the different lines of the directorate of education face them with different approaches. What is the role of teacher training and pedagogical knowledge of teachers and directors? What role has school autonomy or the inspection of education? Which is the best way to organize them? How do schools guarantee that all students have opportunities to learn what is relevant? How has a curriculum been designed? and how can we evaluate the incentives of the different actors to be aligned with educational priorities? ... all are relevant questions when addressing the reduction of educational inequalities and improving the quality of teaching and learning processes.

Some pieces of the OECD's work relevant in this regard have already been mentioned, such as the periodic results of publications such as Education at a Glance and PISA, but also TALIS with regard to working conditions and professional opportunities for teachers. Trends Shaping Education Spotlights, which look at the impact of emerging issues on the operation and objectives of educational systems, are important. The work already mentioned about school resources, the "School Resources Reviews", or the periodic compilation of comparative analysis of educational policies "Education Policy Outlook", are also informative in this regard. Obviously, the question of vocational training - in which a very complete work on workplace learning has recently been published - or papers related to education 0-3 and tertiary education.

Certainly, the fact that there are a number of publications exploring this question, which are also diverse among them, implies a certain degree of duplicity and repetition. However, it also allows us the ability to "explore everything". Some of the hottest issues in educational policy forums now have OECD data to analyze them, such as the impact of digital connectivity among children and adolescents, the impact of socio-emotional competencies on the academic performance and the well-being of the students, or the analysis of factors of quality in education 0-3 beyond the degree of schooling. This is illustrated by the permanent updating of questionnaires in PISA and its innovative domains, or ongoing projects such as "21st Century Children", or the study on socio-emotional competences.

In what ways could education systems favor equity?

There are many elements that play a role in this topic, for example, to ensure a sufficient level of funding for the educational system, which at the same time guarantees access to the different educational levels regardless of the personal or family situation of the learner; to guarantee early years education (0-3), especially students with less-favored situations, and pay attention to criteria of quality assurance in teaching and learning; to provide more resources, financial or otherwise, to those schools that receive learners with more educational needs, such as learners of immigrant background, or address issues such as the active participation of girls and women in science, technology and mathematics; how to distribute the best teachers and improve the stability of the workforce of the schools, especially those where teaching is a more difficult challenge; to fight school segregation, helping the municipalities to make better planning and controlling the criteria for the assignment of learners to the schools; to drastically reduce the course retention; to help learners with less resources to complete lower and upper secondary education, for example with financial aid, as well as accessing and completing higher education; to provide robust academic and professional guidance systems, especially at the end of compulsory education, and to work for smoother transitions between stages, for example with a greater continuity between 0-3 and pre-primary and primary, or between lower and upper secondary education or vocational training; to facilitate frames and tools for the evaluation and teacher peer learning,

through solid peer evaluation protocols and better training of the school heads; to provide resources to VET to improve the professional development and research capacity of teachers on the pedagogical methods they use, or on the use and analysis of data that can allow them to understand and better address the needs of their students, among others things. The list is not short, it is true, but it is specific, and we have enough knowledge about many of these issues to start working on them. The political will and the inclusion of the different stakeholders involved in decision-making is key to doing this with guarantee.

In any case, it is worth mentioning that schools have limited capacity, often with very high expectations and unlimited needs imposed from outside, whether they are from families or the administration. If this is the case for schools in general, it is an even more significant problem for those where the context is more complicated. If teachers are not burned out, it means they really have a vocation!

It's been a joke, there can always be an individual effort to improve things, an extra motivation or the coincidence that a school has an extraordinary leadership or a particularly committed team.

"The professional culture of teachers, their ability to collaborate and the attitude they have towards their students and families are determinants of the fairness and the inclusion of an educational system"

What do you think schools could do to improve equity?

There are many determinants of the fairness and the inclusion of an educational system, which are developed in the context of the school; from the professional culture of teachers, their ability to collaborate and the attitude they have towards their students and families, to the general school culture in relation to academic learning, but also to questions related to life in general, such as respect for peers or the voice of students in the decision that affect them. All are determining factors.

But the capacity to transform things has an important organizational and systemic dimension. A clear case of this is the availability of resources, and if these are distributed according to the needs. To take an example that I think will sound familiar to any teacher, and about which we often talk little about, it is time. How can we improve professional collaboration in the school, the time devoted to the individualized analysis of students, the design of innovative pedagogical strategies, etc. if we have previously overloaded the teachers with a lot of other obligations and an organization of work that they have little to do with them?

RUBRIC TO SELF-ASSESS SCHOOL EQUITY

One of the first outputs of the project is a rubric to self-assess school equity. You can download the document by clicking the image below.

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Our partnership is formed by the following institutions, which are schools, universities and educational authorities from Belgium, Italy, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom. All of them are coordinated by the Inspectorate of Education of Catalonia.

La xarxa està formada per nou institucions, centres educatius, universitats i autoritats educatives de Bèlgica, Espanya, Itàlia, Regne Unit i Romania; coordinats per la Inspecció d'Educació de Catalunya.

