



Inclusion4Schools

Event Report for Milestone M7

First Online Focus-group Discussions of professionals in education (both in public and higher education) in Hungary (M24)



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Related WP number and name	WP3 Support for Community-centred Approaches
Related Task Number and Title	Task 3.3: Support for school-university partnership
Partner Responsible	Wesley
Event Title	Discussion of professionals in public and higher education of teacher education on the possibilities of cooperation with disadvantaged schools
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H2020 Horizon2020
I4S Inclusion for Schools
M Month
PIONEERED Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe
RIA Research and Innovation Action
SMOOTH Educational Common Spaces Passing through enclosures and reversing inequalities

Scope of the Event

The online focus-group discussion of professionals in education (both in public and higher education) provides the grounds for initiating and developing frameworks which help formalize the procedures and competencies that spring from the coactions of the school-university partnership for pedagogical purposes.

The analysis of results and structuring and reflecting on the outcomes should produce such a pool of knowledge which can feed into novel research projects in the social sciences, as well as into educational policies.

The discussion lasted for 2 hours.

Participants

The focus group included six participants from Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county (Hungary), representing both higher education and teacher training, as well as regional schools. The project consortium was represented by three project members.

Organisation	Number of participants
Tokaj-Hegyalja Egyetem, Sárospatak	2 people
Abakuk Szakképző Iskola Szikszó	1 person
Ilosvai Selymes Péter Általános Iskola, Abaújszántó	1 person
Taktaszadai Móra Ferenc Általános Iskola	1 person
Wesley János Családi Bölcsőde, Óvoda, Általános Iskola, Szakképző Iskola és Kollégium, Abaújkér	1 person

Venue: online (Zoom), 24 October 2022

Summary of topics and outcomes

The organizer of the discussion prepared preliminary questions related to the topic, however, the participants had the opportunity to raise new issues and questions:
How educational progress and achievement can be characterized in disadvantaged schools?

Who are the key professionals and with what responsibilities to instigate change in a disadvantaged school?

What changes should be made in the academic content of teacher education so that understanding social-cultural contexts, children's rights become relevant along with standard knowledge transfer?

What qualities – knowledge, skills and dispositions – should a teacher possess to be able to take part in improving education in a segregated school?

The discussion covered a wide range of topics within our thematic focus. The participants all agreed that there is a pressing need for preparing future teachers for their work with disadvantaged students living in non-privileged areas of Hungary, in deprived social and cultural circumstances, particularly in segregated schools. The participants agreed that the procedures of carrying out the teaching practice for pre-service teachers do not specify the non-standards needs of the non-standards disadvantaged schools, there is no strategy that would include for students to gather experience in these schools.

The participants pointed out that both their personal experiences when being training to be teachers, and their experience of welcoming new colleagues to their schools confirm that currently teachers are not properly prepared to apply adequate pedagogical methods in disadvantaged schools and it is up to their own personality and skills to develop a teaching strategy that will enable them to create the necessary relationships with students and to effectively work with them.

The participants highlighted the need to develop a prejudice-free and open-minded personality as professionals, but also pointed out that the necessary institutional infrastructure and support is also needed for effective work with disadvantaged students.

Teachers in public education schools all welcomed the idea of developing closer ties with teacher training institutes to keep up with the current theoretical knowledge and to share their practical experience and needs of the schools with the university tutors. Participants supported the idea that the contribution of other professionals than teachers (e.g., social workers, health care workers) would mean substantial assistance in the everyday life of schools.

The participants have concluded that keeping and developing a good personal relationship with the students is the basis for further successful development. Furthermore, participants agreed on the importance of creating closer ties to students' families was another key factor: parents' involvement in their children's education, in the school can also mean a huge impact in one's schooling. Some participants had drawn attention to legislative and structural anomalies that result in further challenges at a systemic level.

The fact that some representatives of the universities, although, initially were involved in the preparation, but finally they failed to turn up at the event raises further issues at the project level: How can our project be more relevant for teacher educators?

Conclusion

All the participants of the focus group discussion possess in depth first hand experience with the pedagogical and social challenges in disadvantaged and segregated schools. They agreed on the approach that university-school cooperation in the field of teaching practice and in the curriculum development of teacher

training institutions can shape the effectiveness of schools as organizations and individual teachers with a variety of pedagogical strategies and procedures tailored to the local needs of the students.

Additionally, the conclusion the participants arrived at was that with systemic changes in the education system and with sound education policy focusing on disadvantaged students and schools their efforts would be able to produce a much-needed multiplication effect both in their close vicinity and throughout the country.