

D2.1. Report on the conferences with different stakeholders organised in the participating countries of the parallel running RIAs



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Inclusion4Schools Project Summary

The emerging European context is to a large extent characterized by widening and deepening inequalities, the crisis of democracy, and the disintegration of communities. It is especially the case in the Central-Eastern European semiperipheral, post-socialist context, where there is a growing tendency of rearticulating authoritarian, nationalist, neoconservative discourses, which are increasingly infiltrating the political landscape within and beyond Europe. This „retrotopia“ is conducive to the hegemonic production of an imaginary social homogeneity, which consequently stirs up reactionary xenophobia, fear, and hatred through the construction of external intruders (e.g. the migrant) and enemies within (e.g. the Roma). Such a milieu steeped in fear tears up old wounds and produces new divisions as well, hence the construction of new walls – symbolically, as well as physically. Since the leitmotif of this programme is primarily educational, the proposed action targets such (imaginary, symbolic, and real) walls of exclusion which are intended to segregate children (based on class, ethnicity, gender, etc.), which are meant to divide and alienate the local communities to which those children nonetheless belong, thus actively (re)producing inequalities. **In contrast to the power-relations of exclusion, the culture of silence, and the reproduction of unjust structures, the project aims to foster and promote pedagogical relations of inclusion, a culture of dialogue, and the transformation of unjust structures through education.** Running in parallel to the research and innovation actions the central objectives of the proposed action are

- (1) to support and coordinate community schools (as being central to the constitution and maintenance of cohesive local communities) and their respective communities of practice, and
- (2) to create a place and culture of sharing (knowledge, praxis, solidarity) between such communities by initiating and coordinating the convergence and synergies of local, regional and transnational communities.

The expected impact of the proposed project is to contribute to the European initiatives and interventions that aim at reversing inequalities. Adopting a mission-oriented, impact-focused approach to address the specific challenges of the call, synergies will be enhanced between the relevant stakeholders



through coordinating and supporting the cooperation between teachers, researchers, local communities and other relevant stakeholders (such as policy-makers), in order to generate networks of policy development and to promote the policy uptake of the project.



Partners

Participant No	Participant organisation name	Country
1 (Coordinator)	John Wesley Theological College	Hungary
2	Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development	Hungary
3	C.E.G.A. Foundation	Bulgaria
4	J. Selye University	Slovakia
5	Oltalom Charity Society	Hungary
6	Albanian National Orphans Association	Albania



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List of abbreviations

CSA	Coordination and Support Action
D	Deliverable
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
GA	Grant Agreement
GPRD	General Data Protection Regulation
I4S	Inclusion4Schools
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RCISD	Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development
RIA	Research and Innovations Actions
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
WP	Work Package



Introduction

Inclusion4Schools is a 4 years long Coordination and Support Action (CSA) aiming to foster and promote pedagogical relations of inclusion, a culture of dialogue, and the transformation of unjust structures through education. The project strives against the logic of exclusion in education and against the systemic (re)production of inequalities – insisting on a bottom-up strategy – in the context of segregated schools and communities.

Delivering the project's messages, objectives and aims, generating awareness, attracting the target audience's (teachers, children, students, policy makers, stakeholders, general public) a massive and strategic online and offline communication is essential.

Therefore, this activity focuses on the development of a strong brand and all the materials necessary for an efficient communication and dissemination of the project. Particular attention is given to create an appealing communication for the target groups.

It is very important that schools, experts and disadvantaged students can read and hear about our activities, that they can be connected to the project using IT in order to support them accurately. To reach this, online platforms have been created for the purpose of sharing the pedagogical experiences of schools with a majority of underprivileged students. Interaction between these schools makes it possible to exchange locally developed techniques and methods which are successful in improving the students' educational progress. The online platforms offer opportunities for informal discussions, formal meetings, as well as sharing case studies and good practices among news, events and further useful materials.



Think Tanks in general

In various countries of Europe, although efforts have been made for a hundred of years to harmonize data and statistical categories, this is still insufficient. Applying the Delphi method we asked sociological and statistical societies, major higher education institutions, responsible local and central authorities and major opposition parties and anti-segregation NGOs about which data extensions, changes in data provision would be welcome, and which changes are likely to occur as well. The question also covers the extent to which they consider the request or provision of data by other actors to be prejudicial to their values or interests. Into this cross-sectoral think tanks should be involved representatives of every country involved into the project as well as countries involved in the parallel running research and innovation actions. We asked a sample of researchers from each country who present specific cases of segregation in a concise continuous study to determine the extent to which their specific local situation was reflected in the statistics available before the research, and whether the statistics are relevant to the direction and magnitude of the national average. We were asking middle-aged and older researchers for information on how the data reporting system and the administration's ability to support / hinder the collection of research data changed between 2000 and 2020. Inclusion4Schools interacted with / enhanced synergies and cooperation between other relevant projects selected under this topic. In cooperation with the RIAs the project generated networks to ensure the highest possible outreach and dissemination of the project and its results. With the involvement of the local consortium partners at least 12 events (conferences, workshops, seminars) with different stakeholders organised. One workshop was organised in each country of the consortium (Hungary, Slovakia, Albania, and Bulgaria), further four in the RIA countries (Greece, Portugal, Switzerland, Lithuania) and four held online.



Concept note

The 12 events are framed by the following concept note:

Objectives

- Bring knowledge and policy making together;
- Coordinate and support interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral think-tank to develop ideas and suggestions in order to enlarge the efficiency of the EU policy concerning social inclusion;
- Collect recommendations from different professional actors;
- Collect suggestions of a think-tank of different professional groups for the developing the methodology for identifying the key factors which lead to segregation;
- Comprises a network of actors from different sectors, including the academia, business and government agencies, which is designed to act as a space of social and cognitive intermediation geared towards the recognition of the community-based approach in education as a viable policy by providing supporting statistical data and research-based evidence;
- Address representatives of the countries involved in the parallel running research and innovation actions SMOOTH and PIONEERED.

Main topics

Issue analysis and round table with the participants

Specific cases of segregation

Statistics available and relevance

Recommendations about data extensions, changes in data



Topics addressed

We ask researchers, policy makers, civil society representatives, municipalities, teachers (etc.) to discuss about specific cases of segregation in a concise continuous study to determine the extent to which their specific local situation was reflected in the statistics available before the research, and whether the statistics are relevant to the direction and magnitude of the national average. We ask experienced researchers for information on how the data reporting system and the administration's ability to support / hinder the collection of research data changed between 2000 and 2020.

Inclusion4Schools will interact with / enhance synergies and cooperation between other relevant projects selected under this topic. In cooperation with the RIAs the project will generate networks to ensure the highest possible outreach and dissemination of the project and its results.

With the involvement of the local consortium partners 12 events (conferences, workshops, seminars) with different stakeholders were organised in all participating countries of the parallel running RIAs to support their efforts.

Broad information dissemination activities were undertaken to inform the citizens about the projects' developments and European engagement to reverse inequalities. Public opinion about the actions will be gathered and the information will also be fed into a database of the interactive project web platform.



Agenda

The EU visibility and communication elements developed by WP6 were of course used on the agenda. The Agenda of the think-tank event followed the same structure at every event:

Cross-sectoral think tank workshop

Agenda

- Registration**
- Welcome note**
- Short introduction of participants**
- Presentation of the host organization**
- Presentation of the [Inclusion4Schools](#) EU project and the topics**
- Discussions**
- Coffee break/ lunch break**
- Discussions**
- Feedback from participants. Conclusions**

Topics and questions of the discussions

The following topics and questions were discussed with the wide range of stakeholders. Questions have been developed with Oltalom's scientific experts.

1. Family factors influencing school advantage and disadvantage are assessed in some countries as part of the administrative data provision: how complete and how adequate the tools and scales are in your country:

- When measuring the status of the children's family in terms of the educational situation of the children's family?
- When measuring the status of the children's family in relation to the labour market situation of the children's family?
- When measuring the status of the children's family in terms of income and wealth of the children's family?
- When measuring the status of the children's family in terms of illness, disability, addiction in the children's family?
- When measuring the status of the children's family in terms of the sociodemographic situation of the children's family (child mortality, number of children, widowhood, divorce, broken family, patchwork family, multigenerational family)?
- Would you like to suggest some change? Would you prefer a European standardisation in these questions?

2. NON-family factors influencing school advantage and disadvantage are assessed in some countries as part of the administrative data provision: how thorough, how complete and how adequate the tools and scales are in your country:

- When measuring whether the student belongs to an ethnic minority, linguistic minority, immigrant group?
- When measuring the disadvantaged situation of the municipality?
- When measuring the disadvantaged position of neighbourhoods within the municipality?
- When measuring school facilities, infrastructures?
- When measuring the situation of class within the school?



- When measuring the qualification of teachers?
- When measuring how much the school is supported by its environment?
- Would you like to suggest some change? Would you prefer a European standardisation in these questions?

3. Discussion on the given country

- In many places, some schools are taking advantage of legal opportunities not to admit/enroll disadvantaged children, while in others disadvantaged children are concentrated. Please assess whether the data reporting system has adequate information on this?
- In many places, some schools are circumventing legal prohibitions and find ways to avoid admission of disadvantaged children, so they are concentrated in other schools. Assess whether the data reporting system has adequate information on this?
- In many places, some schools publicly use the legal possibilities to divide children into different groups, e.g. by creating groups according to the children's performance or by setting up special education groups. This leads to a concentration of disadvantaged children in certain groups. Please assess whether the data reporting system has adequate information on this?
- In many places, schools are circumventing legal prohibitions and still segregate disadvantaged children within the school. Assess whether the data reporting system has adequate information on this?
- Would you like to suggest some change? Would you prefer a European standardisation in these questions?

4. Researchers' access to the following types of data in your country

- Census data on school enrolment, school attendance by person
- School statistics by school



- Administrative data on disadvantaged persons by municipality
- Regular, publicly funded, very large-scale surveys (covering at least 10% of pupils or parents), data collection
- Would you like to suggest some change? Would you prefer a European standardisation in these questions?

5. Conclusions and feedback

- Identification of areas of common concern: specific projects/more general themes.
- Proposals for future activities.

Revised questions to participants:

1. There are some European countries where social scientists are satisfied with the state maintained-managed data collection in the educational sphere. In other countries are not satisfied with the state-maintained system but they have enough money to make regular sociological surveys concerning these problems. There are a third type of European countries in which there is a shortage of good state-data and not enough money to collect representative data. Where do you position yourself based on your personal and national experience?

2. There are three typical corners of a triangle concerning the reliability of data. In one corner, there are those scholars who think regular state data service guaranteed by the educational administration or guaranteed by the schools themselves, are absolutely okay to understand educational inequalities and segregation itself. In the other corner are scholars who think data is not really reliable because they are interested in showing something about the working of educational administration or about the working of the schools, so not the school-type data service but the national census provides the best - most reliable - data concerning educational inequalities and scholars have to follow - if they don't want to describe the year-by-year but the general situation of a country, then you have to follow the data of the national census.



There is a third corner, where scholars say none of them are okay, it is PISA, TALIS, and other type of non-traditional, non-regular data collection methods that are the most reliable data collection methods. Where do you position yourself based on your personal and national experience?

3. Principally in every country, much more data exists than before - student-level, school-level, region-level, etc. How can you reach the data? In every European country, there is an electronical system by which schools are managed. There are several data sets that belong to individual students stored in school directors' computers. They are not simple excel tables or word documents, rather they are state-provided software in which the teachers and school directors fill data on students. One question: what kind of data exists? In some countries you can't find data about ethnic background, because it is regarded as sensitive data. There are other countries where there are collections of data on school-level, but they are not aggregated, they cannot be accessed by scholars. These may be two different questions. If you see the most important books and serious studies published in your national academic reviews, do they use the census data, the normal statistical data, or the PISA-type data?

6. Who are the most important actors in the improvement of data concerning educational inequalities? One opinion is that state administration and educational administration are the best maintainers and providers of data. We should believe them about the worthiness of the type of data that is being collected. Another opinion believes civil actors-civil society is the best actor in terms of data collection. The third type believes an international community is the best provider of data. In cases of Central European, quasi-democracies, international data providers are more reliable. How should data provision happen in each country? National-state service?

7. According to one type of opinion, the most important reasons behind school inequality are individually detectable reasons - psychological, medical reasons that can be caught when we test and research on the individual-level. A second opinion believes the classical social background is responsible for school inequalities - parents' education level, unemployment of parents, poverty of parents. Reasons come from social categories of family. The third category indicates that it is the ethnic-religious-migrant background that results in school inequalities. Data provision is connected to this because there are statistical systems that prohibit the collection of data on ethnic/religious background, for example. What is the situation in your country?



8. Data on locally determined differences. There is typical data coming from sociological surveys that indicate typical places where school inequalities occur. The typical places are located in the countryside. Second: only very detailed, census-type survey can describe the concrete details of educational inequalities. This method does not allow for regional differentiation, because individuals may be recognized, therefore they are sensitive data. To identify local problems - local cases of school inequalities, the data to look for is places of scandals. Scandal news will help locate places of segregation. How are places in need of support are identified? How can researchers help this process of identification?

9. What is your message to policy makers? What suggestions would you make to institutions and individuals that can influence decisions about data provision?

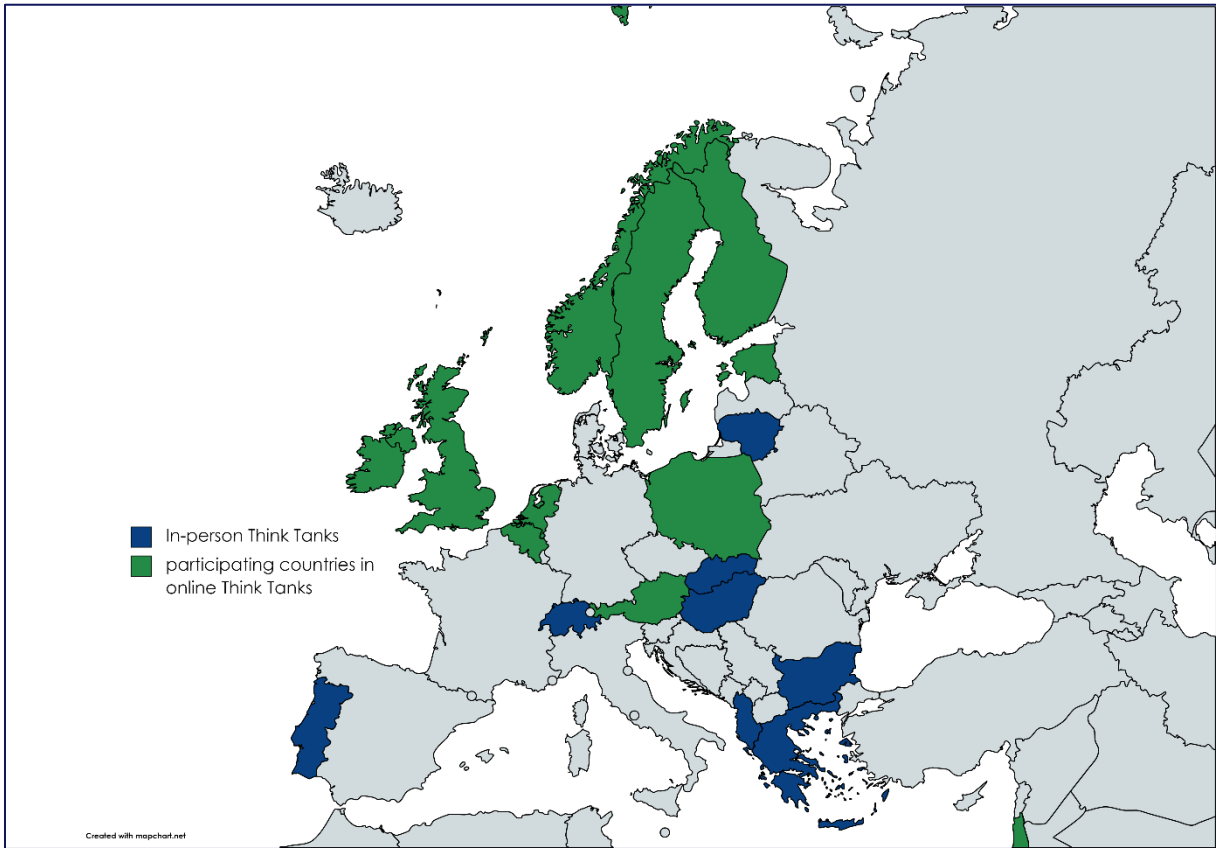


The organised Think Tank events

We organised 4 of the 12 events in the countries covered by the consortium, 4 in the RIAs projects countries and 4 online.

No	Date	Location	Partners involved	Participants
1	27 April 2022	Budapest, Hungary	RCISD, Oltalom	13
2	24 May 2022	Komarno, Slovakia	Selye, Oltalom, RCISD	42
3	31 May 2022	Tirana, Albania	ANOA, Oltalom, RCIS,	23
4	20 June 2022	online	Oltalom, RCISD	11
5	28 June 2022	online	Oltalom, RCISD	8
6	5 July 2022	Sofia, Bulgaria	CEGA, Oltalom, RCISD	20
7	28 August 2022	online	Oltalom, RCISD	6
8	8 September 2022	online	Oltalom, RCISD	7
9	14 September 2022	Winterthur, Swiss	PIONEERED, RCISD, Oltalom	22
10	19 October 2022	Braga, Portugal	SMOOTH, RCISD, Oltalom	11
11	25 October 2022	Thessaloniki, Greece	SMOOTH, RCISD, Oltalom	10
12	12 January 2023	Vilnius, Lithuania	PIONEERED, RCISD, Oltalom	22





Discourses on the perception of educational inequality

The first question, which arises in connection with the phase of organizing think tanks as a part of WP2 of our project, is what conditions exist that make dozens of discussions useful at *all*, in an information space where a huge mass of books and studies is available, where the operational difference of opinion *seems to* lie in the kind of details that cannot be gleaned from a single discussion, only perhaps from footnotes to studies, and often only from links to data repositories that are not suitable for independent scientific reference in the footnotes.

One such circumstance is that research on "educational inequalities" *is of a different nature* than research on, for example, "racial inequalities" or "religious inequalities". Of course, racial and religious inequalities exist in every country in Europe just as much as educational inequalities. However, racial and religious inequalities have been *formally prohibited* in all European countries, and indeed in almost all non-European countries, for a *very long time*. And not only are they forbidden by existing law, but there is no *significant* political force in Europe calling for any rehabilitation of these inequalities.

Differences between European countries and political currents are mostly reflected in *how* advanced a country is in the process of eliminating inequalities. In practice - until 2011 - there had not been an example of a *trend* towards reversing this tendency of increasing inequalities. Since 2011, there seems to be only one exception, and that is the Hungarian ecclesiastical law, which has restored the 1990 level of inter-confessional equality (which is close to the French legislation) to the level that existed in Hungary at the end of the 19th century.

From our point of view, the unidirectionality of the processes is complemented by the fact that not many examples of these "forbidden" inequalities are brought into the political public sphere, not only in terms of measures but also *in terms of words*, at least not by an EU politician in government (an example that breaks this pattern is Orbán's speech abroad, which brought the Nazi concept of anti-miscegenation into public discourse, however it was not accompanied by any public policy measures.)



Even if there are people (voters) who call for action *to* restore racial and religious inequalities, their voices are not *directly* heard in the discourse of intellectuals, academics, main-stream publicists. Their position is also not present in the discourse analysing *political opinion*. Social scientists do, however, observe them, not in the context of political opinion research, but in the form of youth sociology research on extremist subcultures, hate speech research, in the context of the negative end of the Bogardus scale (“I wouldn’t live in a country with him”), or as social groups that support terrorism - in other words, as measures of deviancy.

On the one hand, it is an important task of measurement to make the magnitude of ‘political sub-groups’ opinions rejecting the mere existence of minority groups - either as a form of deviance or as a political force - comparable in Europe, in order to identify what requirements the European Parliament, Council or Commission should impose on national prosecutors, national media authorities, and mainstream political parties, and on the other hand, to enable it (the EP, EC) to assess how the influence of such ‘political sub-groups’ in national societies is changing historically and geographically.

Educational stake-holders will appear in these discourses *not* as forces calling for the direct restoration of racial or denominational inequalities, but as defenders of the *idea that certain forms of autonomy* - e.g. church property, foundation property, corporate property, association property - have autonomy over deciding which type of deviance is subject to the prohibition of permissive behaviour. A specific question is how stake-holders who aim to promote freedom of hate speech in the context of a liberal argumentation system react to this issue. But the bottom line is that no one (or almost no one) in the research sphere will take *sides, even covertly, with* forces that directly aim to restore racial and religious inequalities. For the ‘social debate’ on this issue has already taken place: originally, ‘the Second World War was the debate itself’. Later, indirectly, the debate was the ‘German historians’ debate’, or it occurred in the context of the political elections which, as a rule, only allowed the extreme right-wing forces of Greece, France, Sweden, etc. to grow to the same extent as to which they softened those of their slogans, which made them to be seen and presented as forces directly aiming at the restoration of inequalities of race, creed and gender.



In contrast, tackling the “perpetuation of educational inequalities” has become a stated EU objective without a public debate on the issue, in at least three senses.

The “three senses” are separate - they refer separately to a separate dimension of the term, and this paper will address all of them separately.

- the first sense deals with the problem of overcoming “inequality”
- the second sense points to why the focus on “education” is particularly problematic in this context
- and the third sense is why the concept of “generational transmission of equality” is problematic

First sense: The problem of overcoming inequality

‘Educational inequalities’ are quite obviously a part of social and economic inequality. Social and economic inequality is a constitutive feature of every human society we know so far. Moreover, an aspect of the self-definition and ‘pride’ of modern European society (and the educational system that legitimises it) is that ‘social and economic inequality’ is *not* tribal, *nor* religious *or* linguistic, as in the rest of the world (including the states that became independent states from the colonial territories of EU powers, and *thus* many millions of former British imperial citizens, Dutch imperial citizens, etc., were transformed from citizens of the rule of law into citizens oppressed by local majorities). This inequality is *not* based on the national construct in relation to the nation-state, as the experts of the the League of Nations, predecessor of the EU, in a sense could have observed in the successor states of the Habsburg-Romanov-Ottoman empires, *nor* on the basis of belonging / not belonging to the ruling party, as the - Western Marxist Soviet bloc critics of the Soviet bloc (mainly based on Polish and Hungarian data of course) said about the whole Eastern bloc. According to the once dominant ideology of modern bourgeois society, “social and economic inequality” is the “reward” of harder work, better situational awareness, and restrained consumption (thus invested in productive assets). *In this sense, then, the question is one of measuring the social acceptability of social and economic inequality itself, of measuring the extent to which differences in acceptability (or the extent to*



which quite different public policy issues) create parties and party preferences, and of measuring whether the operating curriculum and hidden curriculum of schools track the evolution of a shift economy of politics.

In this area, several logically contradictory positions are possible, as to who one considers as the main source of authority:

- a. the school considers the acceptance of the inequality measures of the political force that controls the Ministry of Education as the source of authority
- b. considers the election-winning largest party to be the source of authority, which is not usually the same as above in countries operating by a predominantly coalition logic
- c. considers that whoever the most popular is in the apparatus of the teaching administration - which is obviously not subject to change by an election
- d. considers the most popular one among the school's own staff, i.e. heads of department, teachers and their assistants as the source of authority, who are obviously not subject to change in an election.
- e. whoever is perceived to be or can be shown to be the most favored by the school operator (particularly in the case of church-owned schools, and in relation to the fact that Europe's main school operators, the metropolitan municipalities, are always more left-wing than the countries, and are always more multicultural, etc.)
- f. the most popular agent in the world of the school's potential supporters, e.g. companies or social associations,
- g. the most popular agent among the most important (biggest, loudest) actors in the graduate labour market,
- h. The most popular agent among the employing groups on the graduates' labour market
- i. considers that who the most popular is among the most important constituencies of parents with children attending school to be the guiding voice,
- j. considers that who the most popular is among the largest groups of parents with children attending school to be the guiding voice.



However, all these alignment points can also be judged according to whether

- the school is adapting "at high speed" to changes in any of the above "environmental factors", or
- Based on the difference between the school cycle and the election cycle, aims to define the concept of inequality on some kind of intermediate value, mean, or median on the basis of the previous, current, and future potential election winner's position

And, of course, it makes a difference whether the set inequality-norm measure is to be realized in such a way that

- tries to push teachers, assistants, actors around the school to soften or round up or down their opinion, or
- opinion differing from the norm is free to be expressed, and the school seeks to achieve its goal by involving new complementing actors to form an "aggregate effect".

It is quite obvious that the concept of "still acceptable inequality" in the research communities logically

- can *never be* the same as the concept of inequality as defined by the above groups, as researchers have their own group interests and group norms
- can *never be* equidistant from the concepts of inequality as formulated by the above groups
- *can never be as group-specific as any of the identifiable positions above, as researchers are always more diversely opinionated*
- *can never be as manifest as any of the identifiable positions above*

This is something that the vast majority of researchers are already aware of *when they start* any inequality research. At the same time, the prevailing norms among researchers, not unrelated to the norms of those who control research resources, virtually preclude "researcher bias" from being self-revealing in studies.

Or, if self-revelation takes place, it has, as Bourdieu illustrates in his lecture "The Science of Science, or Reflexivity", an even stronger legitimating purpose: to convince the reader that the researcher is so objective that he even lets the reader in on *his own* biases. The *function of the self-disclosure of bias is to allay the suspicion that the criteria-data presented by the researcher are*



biased to the extent that the reader (informed of the author's bias), is dulling the data results in his mind, just to arrive at the very result the researcher intended. (The process is familiar from market bargaining, diplomatic history and game theory: if agent a is informed about the maximum price that agent b is willing to give, then he will give a price, a position, that agent b is not willing to give, and agent b will "successfully" bargain, agreeing on the price that agent b thinks is the worst price that is still acceptable. And the discourse trap precludes actor c from making a deal with an offer that is more advantageous to actor b.)

The discourse - generalisable from the experts' discussions we analysed - raises the relative weight of "personal acquaintance" or "inducing sympathy" among the goals of all researchers, thus reducing our efforts to hide the actual research goals. All this means that, idealistically speaking, by the end of the "dialogues between experts participating in our think tank events" and realistically speaking, by the end of the "WP2 process", participants will have clarified their suspicions about how much data from their fellow participants' country, university or collegial circle "can be taken seriously." To put it minimalistically, the writer of the final proposals will have some ammunition not only to form a critically constructed impression of the think-tank participants' input on data provision, but also that of the questionnaire respondents' input and of the authors of the studies.

The second sense: The problem of contextualising educational inequality

Of the "social and economic inequalities," "educational inequalities" are the least based on inherited material wealth, in fact, the transmission of cultural wealth involves much more personal work on the part of the parent with high cultural capital, and on the part of his or her child, than the transmission of material wealth. In other words, the transmission of cultural capital without loss is of greater indirect benefit to those without cultural capital than the transmission of loss-less material capital. (To use a trivial example: a person from the lower third of society is less interested in being treated by a doctor from the lower third of society than in being treated by the best-educated doctor possible, and is thus ultimately interested in ensuring that the medical



school selection system does not put anyone at a relative disadvantage because he belongs to a more advantaged social group, provided that his educational record is better than that of the disadvantaged group.) Except that to some extent, *any occupation is a provider (either directly or through the amount of GDP it generates.)* So any low-status person has an *interest in having their child (or themselves) admitted to secondary school or higher education receiving additional support, and in obtaining a diploma with as little effort as possible, but, as a consumer, they also have an interest, as a user of services and as a taxpayer in not having this support applied to anyone else,* since this is the best chance of randomly being assigned to a provider who will provide a high level of service.

In reality, however, it is not possible to enforce these dual interests at the same time, since the party that wins the election will act in unison - at least nationally. The dual interest will therefore be *manifested in a positioning between the two extremes, which will tend to set the extent of the anti-"educational inequalities" policy program of the party within each of the parties in the rotation.* It is *'expedient', in a functionalist sense, to measure this policy position in some uniform way, because the 'policy alternatives without numbers' to be debated in the European Parliament are 'empty'.* However, *in a conflictual paradigm, the experts of the country dominating the inequality discourse within each policy alternative are not at all interested in quantifying the discourse, because if the "inequality reduction" in one country is already completed according to the demands of its constituency, then the respective MPs can easily shirk the steps advocated by the country dominating the inequality discourse in that political family.*

The third sense: The problem of the generational transmission of inequality

There is also a problem with the third element of "the transmission of educational inequalities". In other words, not only the question of the extent to which 'inequality' is legitimate, and also within that context, the question of the extent to which the restriction on 'education' is legitimate, have not been socially debated, but also the question of the extent to which 'transmission' is legitimate, has also not been socially addressed so far. As is well known, in any society it is group-specific to what extent people consider



it legitimate that those around them not only accumulate inequalities themselves but also inherit social advantages and disadvantages. In addition, along the time axis, it is observed that any group that “may had resented” the fact that other groups inherited advantages, gradually increased their social status over the decades and, having overcome their own initial disadvantage by resiliently, accumulated social advantages, and finally began to expect its environment to tolerate the transmission of that advantage. However, this universal process varies greatly in extent and speed from one stratum to another in different countries.

On the extent of “intergenerational transfer”, not only is the commonly held discourse on what percentage of a country’s national income can be spent on elderly care and higher education legitimate, but also the latent question of the legitimacy of “paying back” the additional tax paid to the individual through the child’s higher education. *Reference is made to the discourse on tuition fees in higher education, which in all countries has been ‘twisted’ to include the argument that it is legitimate to charge tuition fees because higher education is used more by the children of the rich, but the counter-arguments do not include the fact that these parents have paid more taxes for this very reason. Similarly, the arguments for the future included that tuition fees are fair because in the future a person with a higher education degree will have a higher income than without a higher education degree, but there was no similar argument on the fact that due to the fact that higher incomes will increase GDP more, they will pay more taxes, and that this is why the investment in learning could be rewarded by tuition fee exemptions. Of course, the question is *not* whether this view is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ in the tuition fee discourse, but whether the extent to which people have confidence in the future and plan to live in their home country varies from country to country and region to region, and hence their attitude to tuition fees is *objectively* different. This is therefore again a question to be measured in order to determine the extent to which the tuition fees policy of individual education policies expresses the maintenance of inequality or the fight against it, or even the illusion of fighting it.*

The same question arises for the education system as a whole in the context of a single European labour market, since vocational training that meets



international standards both leads to capital flowing into the country and to the start of high-value-added, high-technology, GDP-increasing production, and to the fact that better-educated workers can more easily find jobs abroad that make it worthwhile for them to emigrate. *Thus, the perception of exclusion from learning the preferred occupations as a disadvantage is also a phenomenon to be measured internationally.*

Inheritance taxes can be used to regulate the inheritance of property capital in some systems, but preventing the inheritance of cultural capital is almost impossible.

All these "knowledge factors" are formulated from the close diagnosis of the think tanks' output, while the outline of standardised opinion polls on a European scale is left to the proposal stage.

Influenced by the above circumstances, the think tank participants suggested exploring qualitative inequality-generating and segregation-generating factors differentiated by country, occupational-schooling-health inequality research reflected by statistical systems, spatial inequality research, and also the unearthing of resilience factors related to inequalities.



The state of data provision and indicators of inequality as seen by European experts

“You cannot make responsible state policy without truthful data”

(Quote from a Bulgarian think-tank participant)

Our initial aim in organising think-tanks online and in-person in a multitude of European countries was to collect in-depth information about the type of data available to collect precise information about forms of educational inequalities across Europe. Our main aim was to map out the available information - data - that is needed to look at educational inequalities at a structural level. In a sense, this means descriptive data, but as empirical sociologists are aware, quantitative data can go beyond a simple descriptive analysis of a social condition. If collected and analysed in a concise and understanding manner, quantitative data can also show us covert sociological threads that make up and lead to inequalities at the level of social structure, at the level of those in power, at the level of decision making. Without reliable empirical data available, social policy cannot be formed - large-scale change cannot happen. Therefore, the think-tanks were designed and set up in a way that would allow participants to engage in an exchange of experiences, information and theories about quantitative data collection methods - methods of data collection, access to data, indicators used in collecting data specifically about educational inequalities, and the historical and geographic comparability of data.

In this short summary of the think-tanks WP2 has held between April, 2022 and January, 2023 (all together 12), we will pull together the information we have gathered from different countries on a variety of topics related to our main theme: educational inequalities. Firstly, we will introduce our overriding methodology in collecting experts' information during the think-tanks. Secondly, we will identify and reflect on those topics that were in focus throughout the discussions (naturally not all topics were touched up at equal weight during the think-tanks, which was mainly due to the background of the participants). Thirdly, we will look at the indicators that participants have discussed as essential when researching our main theme. A detailed elaboration of the above topics will be included in the D2.2 deliverable. The current report is a summary and presentation of the opinions expressed at the 12 think-tank workshops.



As the introductory part of our report has already clearly indicated, educational inequalities exist everywhere - both for historical and cultural reasons. Our aim cannot be to eliminate inequalities as such - that would perhaps be too grand or too naive. However, in order to be able to influence stakeholders in their decision making process, in order to form policy making in a way that can tackle educational inequality in an informed, well-founded, and socially responsible way, it is highly important that empirical data collected through quantitative methodologies (allowing us to construct a comprehensive, wider-level image of the state of the art of society) is made available across Europe in such a way that allows researchers, as well as other stakeholders working with large-scale data to theorise issues of inequality at a structural level - which will at the end inform policymakers to make the right decisions.

As a report reveals, the participants did not exactly agree on the scope and value they thought quantitative data collection methods should have when mapping out the specificities of educational inequalities. At the same time, ***all think-tank participants have agreed on the need to conduct large-scale empirical research on educational inequalities both at an international and transnational level, using quantitative research methods.*** They have also ***all agreed that the harmonisation of data would be highly necessary to be able to conduct trans- or pan-European research both historically and in terms of country specificities.*** Overall, our think-tanks were successful in identifying the main issues that need to be addressed in our upcoming work of creating a list of policy recommendations, and they were also successful in bringing together social researchers from around Europe to discuss how we all understand educational inequalities similarly or differently.

The methodology behind the think-tank concept

During our pre-planning process of organising the think tanks, we initially planned on organising in-person think tanks across Europe. However, it became clear that it would be quite challenging to bring together 8-10 participants in 12 countries from Hungary, without any local contact. Therefore the final plan was to hold 4 in-person think tanks in the partnering countries, 4 in-person think tanks in the RIA countries, and 4 online international think tanks, where participants from different countries could meet virtually to discuss and exchange their country-specific experiences. Naturally, in-person and online professional events have a very different atmosphere and require a different structure. Therefore, we need to come up with two different strategies in order



to lead the discussion according to their specific needs determined by the professional background of the participants, and the type of space framing the discussion. Accordingly, during our first online think-tank event, it became clear that we need to employ, more focused, and more intensively moderated approach in conducting an online think-tank. We have already conducted two in-person events at this time, and quickly found that social dynamics, willingness to talk and share, and the overall atmosphere of this professional exchange differs greatly when conducted in person or online. One of the reasons why the online think-tanks were successful in gaining information about data provision was our flexibility and quick reaction to identifying what works and what does not work online, and we were able to quickly readjust our style of moderation and the structure of discussion in a way that proved better in prompting participants to speak and also to discuss the topic not only with us, but to each other. As we have already reported, when all participants were initially approached, they received a lengthy list of very specific questions that they should consider before the actual think-tank (please see *Topics and questions of the discussions* part). Many participants came prepared to answer those specific questions and actually brought them up and answered them voluntarily. Other participants had a general idea about what the conversation was to be about. Some participants were surprised by the questions and were not prepared to answer them. As we quickly learned, many participants did actually not work with quantitative data and many were quite sceptical about their value - this will be discussed at length in the next part of our report.

As there were participants who, while recognising the importance of statistical data, argued strongly in favour of the data that can be obtained from qualitative research. These participants tended to argue for the need to emphasise the equal importance of quantitative and qualitative research. In the report, we have therefore decided to split participants' observations on quantitative and qualitative research, to focus on both aspects separately.

Keeping the interests of all participants in mind we made an important methodological decision here in order to find a way to accommodate all participants' research interests and expertise by employing a more flexible approach in leading the discussions, which proved to be a successful shift. By forming our questions about data collection methods/access to data/comparability/reliability of data in a way that allowed participants to focus on our topics but to talk about them more freely, participants were quickly involved in the conversation and revealed a lot of useful information both about their personal work and beliefs and also about the circumstances of data collection in their countries (Please see *Revised questions to participants* part). In general, it can be said that the personal and online format brough



somewhat different results, but the variety of outcomes of course also depended on the style of moderation and the background and personality of the participants. The second and fourth online, the Hungarian and the Bulgarian personal think-tanks resulted in straightforward, to-the-point discussions on very specific issues related to inequalities and data in a formal structure of discussion. The first and third online think tanks, and the personal think tanks in Albania, Portugal, Switzerland, Slovakia, Lithuania, and Greece were characterised by a relaxed, dialogue-centered atmosphere where a sense of communal understanding came to the forefront. During the online events less time was spent on introductions and getting to know each other. The focus on the list of questions provided a more rigid structure, an almost interrogative 'question and answer' method of discussion, where very little time was spent on issues unrelated to the main topic of discussion. In some cases, the minimalist setting (a computer screen with pale backgrounds and a few faces on screen) somewhat delayed engaged conversation. In other cases, a type of camaraderie quickly developed between participants and lively discussion took place for 2 hours and in one case, more. During the personal think-tanks, the live interaction, the more relaxed and tangible atmosphere allowed for a more personal setting. In many cases, this also resulted in free flows of discussion where the focus alternated based on participants' own background and work. Overall, the methodology of conducting the think-tank discussions brought many results that will be useful for our main purpose. We have identified several participants that we will invite for further cooperation on our WP2 work, whose input at the think-tanks was more than informative in terms of data provision.

Data provision - collection - access - comparability

When looking through the transcripts of the think-tanks, we identified a list of topics that came up during both the online and in-person discussions in relation to data:

- type of data (qualitative and quantitative),
- level of data (representative, non-representative, person-level, aggregate, administrative-level),
- source of data (census, international surveys, registry, municipality, Ministry of Education, other Ministries, etc.);
- reliability and tracking of data;
- comparability/harmonisation of data;



- correlations between data (person-level and aggregate);
- use of census data;
- longitudinal and geographical comparability;
- access to data;
- external limitations/restrictions of data access;
- anonymity;
- challenges of data collection;
- expertise in data analysis and management;
- the use and misuse of data;
- the finances of collecting and using data.

Themes	Think tank sources										International online 1	International online 2	International online 3	International online 4
	Hungarian	Bulgarian	Portugese	Swiss	Greek	Albanian	Lithuanian	Slovakian						
Use of censuses	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x		
Quantitative data collection	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x		
Qualitative data collection		x	x		x				x	x	x			
Comparative data sets and time lines	x	x							x	x			x	
Access to data (restrictions)	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	
Intra-institutional restrictions	x					x	x		x	x	x		x	
Anonimisation	x	x	x				x		x	x	x		x	
Data collection difficulties	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x		x	
Data collection expertise	x	x	x			x			x				x	
Misuse of data	x	x	x			x			x	x	x		x	
Harmonisation of data	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x			
Data collection and provision finances	x								x	x				
Types of data - aggregate and person-level	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	
Tracking of problems	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x		x	
Comparability	x	x							x	x	x		x	
Relationships - merging of data -aggregate and individual	x	x							x	x	x			

Table 1. Data-specific topics

Out of these topics, *level and source of data; comparability; use of census data; external limitations and restrictions to data access; and the use and misuse of data collection* were the topics that appeared during all online and almost all in-personal think-tanks (all but the Swiss, Greek, and Slovakian think-tanks). As such, we identified them as the main points of reference – the most pressing issues to deal with – when drafting our policy recommendations.

The majority of the second, third, and fourth online, the majority of the Hungarian think-tank participants, and half or less of the other in-person participants have accessed and used some type of quantitative data in their work in the field of educational inequalities. Most participants have used PISA, TIMSS, and other international educational surveys to access information

about students' social background. Most participants have also collected data from country-specific data sources, such as the Ministry of Education, or other administrative entities. **Almost no one has purposefully used the national censuses to collect data on students' and teachers' immediate and wider social backgrounds, revealing a lack of knowledge about the widespread usability of the censuses in the research of educational inequalities.** We will deal with this issue at length in our next WP2 deliverable.

PISA and TIMSS are regarded as reliable data sources. PISA has been criticised for not looking at country-specific nuances. Both have been praised for their connectivity to national-level quantitative data sets. Merging different sources of data and different data sets in general has been identified as one of the biggest and most costly challenges in analysing data successfully and precisely. In many countries, for example, Lithuania and Poland, merging different data sets seems to be currently almost impossible, which largely disables scientists to get a comprehensive picture of school inequalities at a national level. However, a Lithuanian participant has revealed that currently developing a system within Lithuania that allows for merging data is a main priority in the context of social policy and they have started working on it. Many participants referred to the high cost of such attempts and admitted to using other techniques because of this challenge. An Israeli participant, on the other hand, revealed that he has a lot of experience in merging different data sources, including PISA and administrative level data. The Irish participants drew attention to the Growing Up In Ireland project that has gathered longitudinal education-related (including social background). They also revealed that due to the existence of GUI, they currently do not tend to look for other sources of data in the context of Ireland, because of its richness.

The question of data harmonisation has come up in 8 out of 12 think-tanks. Closely connected to the issues of comparability, data harmonisation seems to be a very important element of working with data. Our Horizon2020 partner project, Pioneered, has already created a guide that analyses available data sets across Europe and recommends changing specific measures in order to make geographical comparability (one of the dimensions of data harmonisation) possible and more reliable. Currently, researchers (at least those that participated in our think-tanks) think of the idea of European harmonised data as a "nice dream", as an item on their professional wish list, which is an "enormous challenge" and very costly. The idea that census data could be used to collect more information about inequalities in general, and educational inequalities specifically seemed to be a relatively new idea to most participants - as mentioned before, we will discuss about this in our policy recommendations in more detail. **One of the hot topics of the think-**



tanks was the question of data access and the GDPR became a catchword that seems to equal 'obstacle in data provision' regardless of location. Interestingly, geographical and geopolitical location seems to be a dividing line in participants' attitude towards data: while Western European citizens revealed a high level of trust in their national data providers, and were generally satisfied with the type and quantity of data available for their work, Eastern European participants were much more reluctant to trust their countries' official data and had revealed available data is "not enough" and many times "incomplete" or simple "unavailable." While GDPR obviously guards the rights of the individual to reserve their privacy, according to think-tank participants it prevents researchers from actually identifying local or community-specific inequality issues. As one of the Hungarian in-person think-tank participants indicated: "*There is always an anti-knowledge edge to the protection of individual rights*". In many cases - because of the restrictions of linking data - individual-level focus is actually impossible and many indicators that would reveal instances and types of inequalities remain hidden. The problem, whatever remains hidden, whatever cannot be identified as a structural problem and wrongdoing, prevents scientists from recommending the necessary changes and policymakers to make informed decisions. **Therefore, creating safe spaces (such as the researchers' room at the Central Statistical Office in Hungary), where scientists can do their work (including working with person-level data), may prove to be a successful compromise - at least according to the think-tank participants of the Hungarian in-person think-tank and according to the first and second online think-tanks.**

Restrictions on accessing data are closely connected to another motif (topic) that came up repeatedly during the think-tanks: data misuse. Quite a few participants seemed to be focusing on bringing attention to the dangers of data misuse. As one of the Finnish participants said, "*It is not the data that is important, but how you use it*". As a general summary, think-tank participants suggested that researchers working with statistical data should have much easier access to different data sources, that quantitative data is needed for comparative longitudinal and geographical research, and for that reason, the harmonisation of data across Europe is a first priority.

Telltale of social disadvantage and educational inequalities

In the previous part of this chapter of the report we have discussed the findings of the think-tanks in relation to data provision in the context of data



collection methods and access to data. In this part we will focus on another element of data collection: the indicators used in gathering data about inequality, and how harmonising not only data collection methods, but also the indicators used at data collection is of primary importance to get reliable and truly comparable data in an international context.

Themes	Think tank sources									International online			
	Hungarian	Bulgarian	Portugese	Swiss	Greek	Albanian	Lithuanian	Slovakian	International online 1	International online 2	International online 3	International online 4	
Segregation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	
Integration			x	x	x		x						
Inclusiveness	x		x		x		x	x		x	x		
Staggering regions	x	x	x		x	x			x	x	x	x	
settlements	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
neighborhoods	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Social segments			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
White flight			x	x	x		x		x				
Sociocultural background		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Deep poverty								x				x	
Criminality			x						x				
Roma/gypsy focus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Migrant focus			x	x					x	x	x	x	
Colour blindness		x											
Commuting					x	x	x			x			
Organised commuting			x		x					x			
Quality teaching		x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	
Special competences of teachers		x		x	x	x		x				x	

Table 2. Indicator-specific topics

In Table 2 we have listed the main concepts that participants have identified as factors that indicate a person's social disadvantage which is of course closely connected to educational inequality as well: segregation, integration, inclusion, regional factors, social segments, white flight, socioeconomic and sociocultural background, deep poverty, criminality, Roma ethnicity, migrant background, commuting to school, organised commuting, and the preparedness of teachers.

As obvious, quite a few factors were identified throughout the think-tanks as elements of social disadvantage. Overall, most participants have talked about a person's socioeconomic status as perhaps the most important key indicator of social disadvantage - more so than ethnicity, religious background, locality, migrant status, and so on:

"I think from the UK perspective, it's very clear that individual characteristics can make a difference, such as a learning disability or mental health issues. But, actually a lot of the things that we are looking at as individual characteristics such as mental health are the result of socioeconomic difficulty and as a result of poverty." (Second online think-tank, UK participant) On the

other hand, most of the participants, however, also emphasised that not a single factor in itself can be the sole reason for social disadvantage, instead it is a complex array of a multitude of factors that need to be considered simultaneously, based on location, history, culture, and so on.

Regional indicators (county-wise, settlement-wise, and neighborhood-wise) were a key factor, however their significance varied from country to country. In Switzerland and in Belgium the de-centralised governing system and the regional differences in education bring very different results in terms of locality indicators than for example deteriorating regions in Slovakia or Hungary, or urban areas of poverty where intervention is much needed. Determining certain regions as designated disadvantaged areas (like in the case of Ireland) may highlight points of intervention, but they will also revert attention from other places which do not fall under this category, but where intervention should also happen.

The think-tank participants have also discussed at length the other indicators mentioned according to their relevance in their own national context (the next chapter will talk about this in more detail).

In terms of the comparability of data, participants have indicated that one of the reasons why internationally comparable research is so difficult, is the fact that countries differ in what they deem as 'sensitive data', which brings us back to the question of GDPR and individual rights to privacy greatly determining what social research can do to identify structural states of inequality in a broad perspective. Some indicators that participants identified as sensitive in their country included ethnicity, religion, and health. Some other factors that participants identified as crucial but less researched were homelessness, mental health, wellbeing, system supports in place at educational institutions. In short, a conceptual and scientifically confirmed transnational definition of what constitutes inequality is almost impossible due to the variety of sensitive data in each country. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed further.

Coming to an agreement and a common understanding on operational terms when measuring inequalities was another important element of the think-tank discussions. As one of the participants said, it is important to keep in mind that we might not actually mean the same on the terms that we use to research social inequalities, and that type of self-awareness is very much needed to produce reliable information.

During all of the think tanks (both online and in person), we asked participants the same last question - keeping in mind that besides the fact that the think tanks proved to be a great initiative to invoke professional discussion on data



provision and educational inequalities in an international context, we also have another, longer-term goal in WP2, namely the upcoming policy recommendations document - in order to collect their thoughts and ideas about the type of changes they think are crucial in making effective and successful policies in the sphere of education: What would you suggest to EU policymakers in terms of tackling educational inequalities through the systemic unravelling of the phenomenon? The answer given by an online Estonian participant seems to sum up the issues connected to our theme in an comprehensive and truly inspiring way: *"I think that the funds destined for development in social sciences in general is lower in comparison to other fields of science. And that is something that I will really try to encourage policymakers because it's totally worth it to invest in social sciences just because they can close a little bit this inequality gap that we have in our societies. It's totally worth this kind of an investment in the long term"*



Aims and topics of the think-tank events

Aims and composition of the national think-tanks

In the cross-sectoral think-tanks we invited a sample of researchers from each country to present specific cases of segregation in a concise continuous study. The goal was to determine the extent to which their specific local situation was reflected in the statistics available before the research, and whether the statistics are relevant to the direction and magnitude of the national average. Alongside the scholars practitioners from the NGO sector, social workers, specialists from the helping sector and school headmasters, there were also advisers to (local) political decision-making bodies (Albania, Portugal, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Switzerland and Lithuania) and representatives of different denominations working on pastorisation/evangelisation and community building in marginalised communities present at these think-tank events. They were less attached to the statistical/quantitative methodology and clearly expressed their concerns about the exclusivity of the “exact approaches” (census, PISA tests, authorities regulated data collection) in defining the multidimensional character of the marginalisation and segregation. In this interdisciplinary and intersectional environment the priority of the statistical/quantitative approach was often challenged, and the issue provoked conceptual debates among the participants. In general, there was a consensus regarding the need for data collection however, the “whys” and “hows” were disputed on many levels. In what follows we intend to present the main key issues in this debate by summing up the most common arguments in support of the multi-level and location specific approach to statistical data collection. We present these arguments in support of the field-focused qualitative approach grouped around three topics: *field based data collection*, *NGO involvement in community building practices* and *the role of the (local) authorities*. All these aspects are interconnected and overlapping nonetheless, the level of importance was emphasised to a different extent during each think-tank discussion therefore, we present them separately.



Field based data collection

(mostly discussed in Bulgaria, Portugal, Greece, Switzerland and Albania)

This problem covers a large register of topics starting with the measurability of “disadvantages”, reliability of the centrally collected data, trust of the community in the collector of the data, and historically accumulated aversions towards external intervention and labelling, sensitivity and vulnerability of the marginalised communities and up until the necessity of correction of the centrally collected data by anthropologists and/or activists with local experience.

The consensual statement in this complex question was formulated by a Bulgarian sociologist: “the collected data is correct, but it doesn’t give you the truth.” The reasoning and the aspects of the problem were expressed from different positions depending on the specific problems of the countries. In Bulgaria, Albania, Slovakia, Portugal and Greece the participants focused mostly on the segregation problems of the Roma population. The Roma activists insisted on separation of the statistics from the fieldwork based (anthropological) information – e.g., geocoded maps of locations where Roma live compiled on the basis of fieldwork results and the Ministry of Education or Social Affairs Statistics which is not in use by the practicing pedagogists. The main problem identified here is that the specialists can select data for ethnicity, religion, income based on different criteria or indicators, but in reality, people are diverse and identify themselves as a part of multiple „groups of criteria”. Relying exclusively on the indicators, the experts claim that the surveys would exclude the majority of the people from the general landscape.. The main problem here, as formulated in practically at all think-tanks, is that Roma, and ingeneral other respondents, members of marginalised groups – for historical and political reasons - do not trust the central authorities who collect the data therefore, they very often provide false information regarding their ethnicity and living conditions. The Slovak experts were very explicit in this regard: „the only reliable data can be provided by the community pastor who visits the families every morning and takes the kids to school”. In Portugal the Roma community openly resisted central data collection regarding their ethnicity and living conditions and their wish was



respected by the authorities. However, this resistance to a large extent has slowed down the implementation of anti-segregation policies. In Albania Roma are also reluctant to officially declare their ethnic belonging therefore the anti-segregation experts propose the mixed method of 'yearly social mapping' which is based on the statistics of the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Second Chance Schools and the data provided by the teachers.

The most important issue raised by some leaders of Roma NGOs (Bulgaria, Slovakia) as well as officials in charge of ethnic minority issues (Portugal, Albania, Slovakia) is that the community members of the groups exposed to segregation are not sufficiently informed about "who is using the data, who is controlling the data, and for what purpose this data is collected". In their view the optimal solution could be a "community-based data collection" which has already been introduced in some areas of Bulgaria, Greece and partly in Albania. The practical realisation differs in every location, but the general concept is to involve local stakeholders in a qualitative survey (door-to-door data collection as some participants called it) so that its outcomes can be harmonised with the results of the quantitative research. By harmonising the findings of the two approaches in a geographical information system, realistic and adaptable set of data can be developed – as the Bulgarian practice well demonstrates.

In Lithuania and Switzerland more general concerns were articulated since in these countries the issue of segregation is not that closely associated with the ethnicity of the pupils. In both locations a need for an integrated analysis was expressed. In their opinion the collected statistical data does not fully show the dimensions of the disadvantage: the matrix can be urban/rural; poor/wealthy background; ethnic minority/majority. However, in the majority of the cases it is not representative because sometimes the exceptions from the expectations are more than the expected outcomes. The data collection is not sensitive to the intersections between the dimensions – and the vast majority gets lost in the system during adolescence for psychological reasons (very often independently from social/ethnic background) because pedagogist do not have efficient tools for coping with their problems. Large scale data is necessary, they say, but the danger is that it rather leads to labelling some problems without understanding their complexity. Therefore, data harmonisation does not solve the problem on a local level since different kinds



of data is needed for policy-making and different for improving the schooling situation. Data is very important but without empirical access to everyday events or empirical observation, it is just data - conclude the experts. What clearly echoes the above quoted observation of the Bulgarian sociologist: “the collected data is correct, but it doesn’t give you the truth.”

As a summary we can say that the statistical data collection seen from a bottom-up perspective is rather problematic and the census methodologies used among vulnerable communities need fine tuning and more precise elaboration both in the countries of the EU and outside of it.

Community building activities

(mostly discussed in Bulgaria, Portugal, Greece, Slovakia and Albania)

The cross-sectoral think-tanks provided a good opportunity for the local NGOs engaged in combating discrimination and school segregation to present their good practices. The examples of building school communities and community schools vary from country to country and are largely dependent on the flexibility of the educational authorities of the countries. In Switzerland for example the regulations are completely decentralised and are mostly outsourced to the canton’s authorities. Nevertheless, community building in schools is obstructed by the lack of teachers in the rural locations or areas with a substantial population of immigrants. In Portugal several NGOs are working in the field of anti-segregation in schools. For instance, the government funded Programa Escolhas that promotes social inclusion and education for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The program works to provide educational support, mentorship, and opportunities for personal and social development. However, as the experts well note, all these programs become functional when the community members - due to the successful awareness raising campaigns - themselves realise the importance of education and become ready to mark out money for developing a better school. The community building efforts of a greek NGO, ARSIS, working mostly with immigrants, homeless children and Roma in Greece is closely cooperating with the Creative Commons educational projects mostly funded by the European Union, providing funding and other resources to promote the use of Creative



Commons licenses and open education and anti-segregation practices in the country.

After several partly successful or unsuccessful Roma Strategies accepted and implemented by the state authorities, the Christian denominations remained on the field and still play a central role in community building among the Roma in the country – this was the conclusion of the think-tank organised by the Slovak partner. The Reformed Church in Slovakia is involved in promoting social inclusion and providing support to vulnerable populations, including the Roma. They offer educational programs, community outreach initiatives, and advocacy campaigns to address issues of poverty, exclusion, and discrimination. The Greek Catholic Church, Lutheran Church, Roman Catholic Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church are also active in the same fields, however, they do not introduce innovative methodologies for community-based education. Instead, they support the daily activities of the regular educational institutions. According to the NGO representatives, NGO efforts are successful mostly where mayors are either of Roma ethnicity or clearly Roma-friendly. In these locations (like in the village of Rimaszécs, Central Slovakia) the self-organised grassroots organisations provide support for the extra-curricular studies, school mediation, social work and health care programmes involving activists of Roma origin who are well accepted and trusted by the local population.

The segregation and marginalisation issues of the above-mentioned countries are hardly comparable with the problems which Albania, Hungary, Slovakia or Bulgaria have to face. In Albania the civic engagement is rather weak. The Ministry of Education has launched a project to set up Social Centre Schools which are similar to the idea of community schools however, practically no efforts are made to train the teachers to deal with the Roma or Egyptian minority groups and no consequent policy to employ the Roma people is in place. Apart from the project participant organisation other NGOs, like Community Development Fund is an Albanian, Albanian Children Foundation and World Vision Albania work to promote community participation and ownership in development initiatives, including in education. They support community-based initiatives that empower communities to take control of their own education systems and improve access to education. In Bulgaria organisations like Roma Lom Foundation have demonstrated that parent-



children type community centres are functional and it is very likely that their good practice will be disseminated by the central authorities and multiplied all over the country.

In this section we can conclude that in all targeted countries both the authorities and the locally active NGOs are fully aware of the importance of and need for community-based schools which can successfully integrate the vulnerable and segregated communities. In this regard Europe is still divided: in the old member states (and Switzerland) the problem of segregation is more related to migration while in the new member states and the EU member candidate Albania the problem is, at least partly, connected to ethnicity. However, when it comes to the level of openness of the education systems towards the community-based and innovative solutions the real difference between these two categories becomes clearly visible. In the first category the educational authorities have multiple years of experience in encouraging, supporting and even coordinating the non-standard and adaptive local solutions while in the second category they have just started planning the infrastructure of a network of alternative and community-based schools (with the exception of Hungary where the actual trend is rather the centralisation and homogenisation of the education).

Role of the central authorities and local administration in combating segregation

(all think-tanks)

The role and general attitude of the authorities in fighting inequalities and segregation in the schools has been already mentioned under the previous chapters. All experts involved in the think-tank agreed that even the most benevolent efforts of the central authorities (action plans, strategies, social programs etc.) might become inefficient and formal if the municipalities are not sufficiently motivated and devoted to involving the marginalised communities in the de-segregation process. Three main problems were detected during the discussions: (1) the role of collaboration of the local actors, (2) providing teacher training for local community members and involving them in the anti-segregation activities and (3) the need for financial/logistical



support for community-based education activities (e.g., Open Schools). The participants representing the bottom-up approach also agreed that the data collected on the sites should be processed centrally and the outcomes of the research should be shared with the local stakeholders. These results will enable them to decide about the further activities and develop local strategies since the national databases, as one Lithuanian expert formulated it “are useless generalities for a teacher who knows the parents and living conditions of all her pupils but has no idea whom and how to contact if she wants to improve them.”



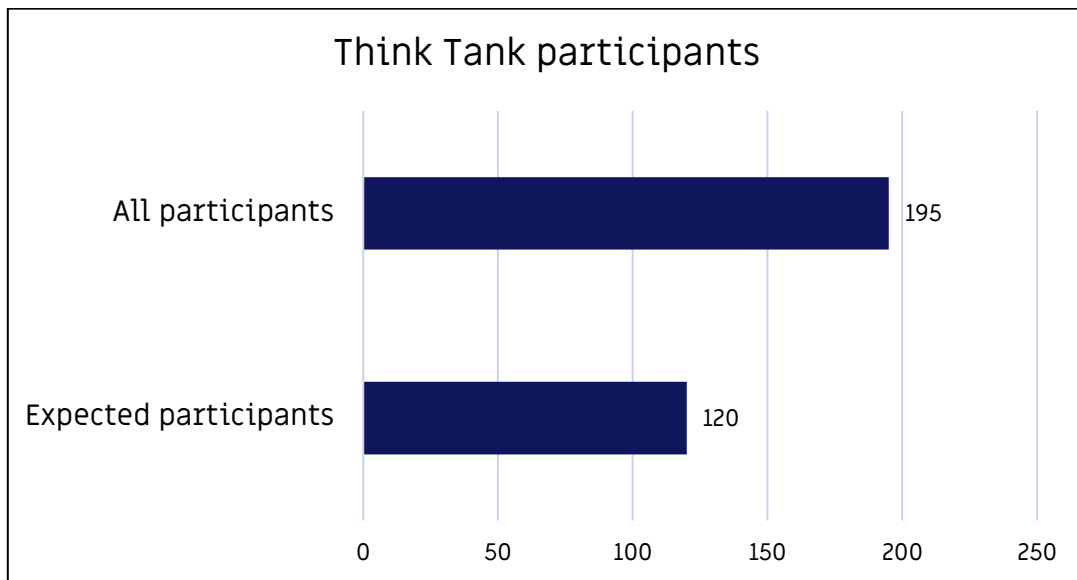
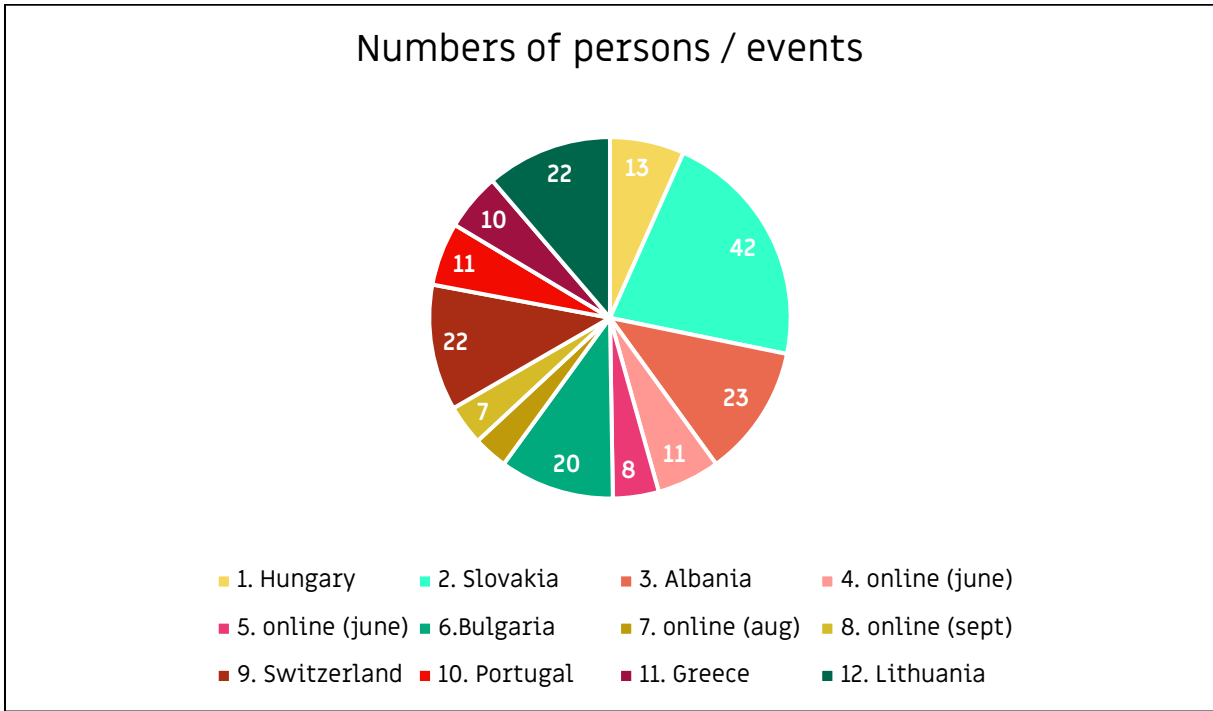
Relevant KPIs

The objectives linked to the Tink Tank events were achieved through strong communication activities. Each in-person and online event was shared on the website and on the project’s social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) in several languages. RIA consortium members were happy to promote the events and to recommend experts. The numbers are calculated by summing the activities of all the posts on the sites.

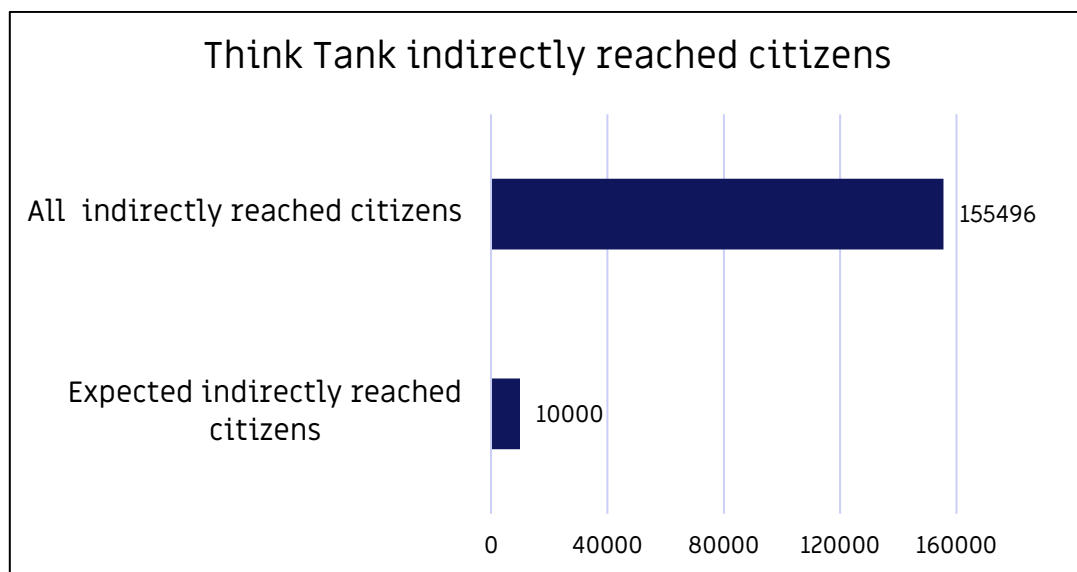
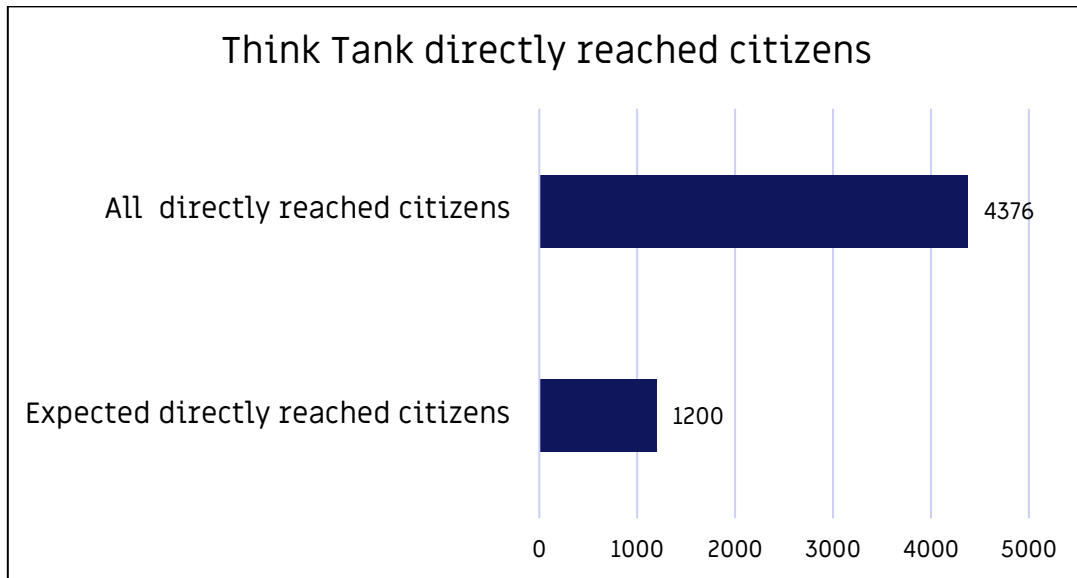
All the pre-defined KPIs for the events have been achieved.

	Expected	Reached
Numbers Of events	12	12 + 1
Participants	120	195
Direct reach	1200	more than 4376
Indirect reach	10000	more than 155496

We were expecting 10 participants per event, although some events were smaller and others larger, but on average 16 people participated and we achieved our overall target.



We also successfully completed direct and indirect outreach. All events were published on all social media platforms, including the I4S website’s calendar.



Event Feedback Form

Participants' opinions were important to us, which is why we used an anonymous questionnaire we developed together to evaluate satisfaction. The overall opinion of all event participants is illustrated in the table below:

	Very satisfied			Not satisfied	Amount of completed feedback forms
	1	2	3	4	Nbr
Overall impression	42	17	4		63
Discussed topics	45	16	2		63
Place of work	47	13	2	1	63
Structure/Methods used	37	19	7		63
Atmosphere	58	4			62
Fulfilling your expectations	39	18	4	1	62
Outcome of the Workshop	34	18	6	1	59
Communication	41	7	2		50

