EQAVET 4·INCLUSION

EQAVET4INCLUSION
Policy recommendations
for prevention of drop-out
in VET schools
based on EQAVET

USR Veneto, Italy

Index

PART 1 – DROP-OUT SPHERES: EDUCATIONAL vs SOCIAL CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

The EQAVET-4-INCLUSION Erasmus+ KA220 project has been designed within a robust policy context. The policy recommendations developed in this project are based on a thorough analysis of all feedback from VET schools (teachers, administrators, and managers), social NGOs working with NEET youth, and local, regional, and national VET authorities. The recommendations cover the following subjects: a) Perceived definition of drop-out among VET providers; b) Description of the current situation concerning drop-out in vocational education and its consequences; c) Existing strategies for the prevention of drop-out at the level of VET schools and local, regional, and national VET authorities; d) Recommendations on further strategies for the prevention of drop-out in vocational education.

The target groups of the policy recommendations are:

- VET policy makers
- school management officers
- guidance counsellors
- teachers

1.2 EQAVET4INCLUSION Erasmus+ project in pills

The project EQAVET-4-INCLUSION addresses one of the main priorities of the Erasmus program, namely Inclusion and Diversity in all fields of education.

The project will promote social inclusion of people with fewer opportunities, including people with disabilities and people with a migrant background, as well as people living in rural and remote areas, people facing socio-economic difficulties.

Project results are:

1. Report on the present status of inclusion and prevention of drop- out in VET
2. Online digital tool for self-assessment of inclusiveness and drop-out prevention in VET schools
3. EQAVET4INCLUSION training curricula for vocational school's staff
4. Report on validation of the assessment tool and training curriculum and materials

1.3 How is defined the "inclusive education" at National Level in partnership Countries

Greece
Source: Eurydice,2023

Inclusive education in Greece is defined as an educational approach that aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have access to and can participate fully in the educational process. This approach is in line with international conventions and European priorities, focusing on eliminating educational exclusion and promoting participation for all students, particularly those with disabilities and special educational needs.

Italy

The Italian path towards scholastic inclusion began with the "Falcucci" law in 1977. Today in Italy school inclusion is granted by the Decreto Legislativo n.297/1994 (Testo Unico Scuola) and by the Law n. 170/2010 (Dyslexia and other development-related ailments). Since 2017 - with Art. 9 of Decreto Legislativo n. 66/2017 - a new governance has come into force, with different application levels depending on the territory involved, where a synergy of actions is asked for.
Inclusive education is a means to welcome all kinds of people into a school, regardless of their physical, cognitive, social, cultural or gender conditions, as a system that tries to answer to their personal needs. The final goal is integrating and involve the community in general: teachers, students, families, local authorities and environment.
In VET schools, inclusion is guaranteed by a broad teaching flexibility (new VET guidelines – DD 1400/2019) and by a regulatory model. An Individual Training Project (P.F.I.) is stipulated for each student.

Republic of Moldova
Source: Ministry of Educ[...] and Research of the Repu[...] Moldova

The Education Code of the Republic of Moldova (No. 152 of July 17, 2014, as subsequently amended and supplemented) establishes that *inclusive education aims to ensure equal access to education for all students, regardless of individual particularities, such as disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic or social differences*.

Sweden

In Sweden, *inclusive education is defined by the principles of ensuring that all students, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to and can succeed in education*.

The Education Act and the Curriculum for Compulsory Schools emphasize that education should meet the needs of all students, promote lifelong learning, and ensure that all students feel included and valued.

Although the term "inclusion" is not explicitly used in the legislation, the concepts of equality, accessibility, and community are central to the Swedish educational framework.

The Salamanca Declaration further supports the idea that all children have the right to a good education and that those needing special support should be educated alongside their peers.

Reduction in early school leaving – a national and international objective

1. The Swedish Government has set a target that all young people should start and complete upper secondary education.
2. From 2020, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child will become incorporated in Swedish law, and Sweden will thereby commit to the target of every child's right to education. Encouraging attendance and reducing early school leaving is one of five areas.
3. One of the Agenda 2030 goals is that, by 2030, all girls and boys will complete free, equitable and quality compulsory and upper secondary education.
4. An overall target in the Europa 2020 strategy is that dropout rates will be less than 10 percent. In Sweden, the proportion of people aged 18–24 that do not complete upper secondary education will be less than 7 percent.

Ukraine
Source:
https://zacon.rada.gov.ua;
https://mon.gov.ua

The implementation of inclusive education at the state level is a response to European integration processes and is associated with *the need to form an inclusive society capable of understanding and accepting the interests and needs of all citizens, organising an accessible and adaptive environment for educational, professional and other activities*.

The modern approach to education and vocational training for people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is established in the Laws of Ukraine **«On Education»**, **«On Complete General Secondary Education»**, **«On Professional (Vocational) Education»**, **«On Professional Pre-Higher Education»**, **«On Out-of-School Education»**, **«On Higher Education»**; the Resolution **«On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine»**; **the Concept for the Development of Inclusive Education**;

the Order «On Approval the National Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Space in Ukraine for the Period up to 2030»; the National Strategy for the Development of Inclusive Education until 2029.
The legal framework creates opportunities to obtain additional permanent or temporary support in the educational process based on educational needs, regardless of disability.

PART 2 – THE DROP-OUT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING

2.1 Perception among VET providers

The perception of VET providers on this phenomenon is essential for understanding and addressing its causes. During the project, several impressions and observations were collected from VET providers. They reflect a number of challenges and potential solutions identified.

VET providers perceive drop-out rates as a complex issue influenced by various individual, institutional, and systemic factors: large student groups, insufficient staffing and challenges in meeting the needs of students with neuropsychiatric disabilities are, for instance, some of the factors contributing to dropout.

There is a recognition that more resources, such as additional staff and specialized support, are necessary to effectively reduce dropout rates and promote inclusion: teachers express a desire to create inclusive environments but feel hindered by these practical limitations.

Students often enter VET pathways without clear motivation or interest, leading to disengagement, while socio-emotional challenges further contribute to drop-outs. Institutions are working to create supportive environments through holistic educational approaches that integrate cognitive, emotional, and practical skills. Systemically, efforts are being made to enhance the image and attractiveness of VET, aligning programs more closely with job market demands and improving support structures. Throughout the project and after discussing with experts and trainers it is obvious that VET is lacking expertise in preventing dropout both a t the administrative and the educational level. A main issue that was mentioned throughout was that there are no special education needs trainers when it comes to specialties training (ie. Pumpers, electricians, make-up artists etc.) the special education needs are only covered concerning courses like literature, math, economics, physics etc.

Additionally, targeted interventions aim to address the specific needs of at-risk groups like migrants and Roma students, reducing inequalities in education and employment outcomes: there is no training for employees that are overseeing traineeships resulting in refusing undertaking trainees with special education needs and/or from socially vulnerable groups (ie. Romani, immigrants, refugees etc.)

Highlighted needs are:

to improve outgoing orientation/guidance from lower secondary schools to prevent students from making choices that are far removed from their interests and inclinations. To this end, vocational schools should also organise incoming orientation meetings, which cannot be reduced to mere Open Days;

1. to focus attention right from the first two years of VET (common to all courses of study) on the characterisation of the course of study undertaken to involve the student in a life project;

2. to increase teachers' preparation in recognising the first signs of implicit drop-out, also by equipping themselves with specific monitoring and early warning tools;
3. to relate more with the territory and go beyond the classroom to meet companies and the community;
4. to involve and to support actively families in their educational tasks;
5. to increase internship experiences abroad for catching best practices on the topic;
6. to take more into account each student's learning time and diversity;
7. to involve students in school and extracurricular leisure and/or sports activities
8. to revalue schools through concrete investments, restoring social legitimacy to the role of the teacher

2.2 The current situation in EQAVET4INCLUSION Countries

Greece
Source: https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/; Unicef, 2023; Eurostat 2024

Greece has achieved a significant milestone in reducing the number of early school leavers, with only 3.7% of young people aged 18-24 leaving education and training early in 2023, according to recent data from Eurostat.
In 2023, 15.3% of Greek youth were classified as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Additionally, Greece faced a high youth unemployment rate (ages 15-29) with 25.28% of young people not employed.

Italy
Source: https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/

Based on the findings from the 56th CENSIS Report on the country's social conditions for 2022, Italy experiences a significant issue with early school dropouts.
12.7% (16,5% in the South) of individuals aged 18-24 have exited the education and training system, compared to the European average of 9.7%. I
In the EU, 85.2% of people aged 25-34 hold a diploma, whereas in Italy, this percentage is 76.8% (71.2% in the South), and it falls further to.
Only 26.8% of Italians (20.7% in the South) aged 30-34 possess a degree or higher qualification (EU average is 41.6%).
Italy also leads Europe in the proportion of NEETs (young people not in education, employment, or training), with 23.1% of those aged 15-29 (32.2% in the South) falling into this category, in contrast to the EU average of 13.1%.

Republic of Moldova
Source: statista.com;
UNICEF 2023; ETF, 2023

Based on the findings from the study "Key policy developments in education, training and employment-Moldova 2023", Moldova experiences a significant issue with early school dropouts: 21.5% of individuals aged 18-24 have exited the education and training system.
In Moldova the youth unemployment rate amounted to 3.51 percent in 2023.
The share of young people not in employment, education nor training (NEET) remained high at 28.6 percent in 2023.

Sweden

High school dropout rates are the same among immigrant and Swedish-born students, according to a new report from three central Swedish counties which shows that, as long as a pupil is not a very recent immigrant, social and economic factors decide whether or not he or she manages to complete high school (gymnasium) and then potentially make it to university.

The dropout rate from higher vocational education in Sweden was higher among foreign-born students than those born in Sweden. In 2021, roughly 29 percent of the foreign-born students who got admitted to a course in higher vocational education dropped out, compared to 18 percent of the Swedish-born. Moreover, the graduation rate was higher among the latter group than among the former.
One peculiarity regarding dropout in Sweden is the upper age limit. It is not possible to enroll in the conventional upper secondary school after the age of 20 in Sweden. A large part of those who dropout only to take up their education again do so in other school bodies, such as adult education (KomVux) or so called Folk Schools (Folkhögskola).

2.3 Existing strategies for prevention of drop-out in EQAVET4INCLUSION Countries

Greece

Greece employs a comprehensive approach to prevent drop-out in vocational education and training (VET), focusing on early identification and intervention, inclusive support structures, professional development for educators, strategic planning, and community engagement. Early identification mechanisms regularly monitor student performance to provide timely personalized support, including counseling and tutoring. Inclusive support structures like the Centers of Interdisciplinary Assessment and Counseling Support (KEDASY) ensure that students with diverse needs receive the necessary resources. Extensive teacher training programs emphasize inclusive teaching practices and socio-emotional learning to create engaging learning environments. The national action plan "Education and Training for All" sets specific goals to promote inclusive education and reduce drop-out rates. Additionally, parental and community involvement initiatives raise awareness and support students outside the school environment. This multifaceted strategy aims to keep students engaged and reduce drop-out rates in VET programs.

It's interesting to mention two best practices: the "Reinforcement of Inclusive Support Structures" and the "Strategic Action Plan - Education and Training for All"

1. Reinforcement of Inclusive Support Structures

The Greek Ministry of Education has established support structures such as the Centers of Interdisciplinary Assessment and Counseling Support (KEDASY) and the Interdisciplinary Educational Evaluation and Support Committees (EDY). These centers are designed to provide comprehensive support to students with diverse needs, helping to identify and address issues early on to prevent drop-out. The focus is on creating an inclusive educational environment that supports all students, particularly those with disabilities or special educational needs, ensuring they have the necessary resources and assistance to stay engaged in their education.

2. Strategic Action Plan "Education and Training for All"

This national action plan includes specific goals and measures aimed at promoting inclusive education and reducing drop-out rates. It emphasizes the importance of tailored educational pathways and support systems to accommodate the needs of all students, including those at risk of exclusion. The plan also involves professional development for educators to equip them with the skills to support

	students effectively, fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment

Italy	Many projects involving private and public bodies are interesting/have interested Italians. Among many projects we remember three examples: "A.C.C.E.S.S. (Active Cross-sectoral Cooperation for Educational and Social Success)", Erasmus+ project awarded as good practice; Community educational Alliance "Bovio-Colletta" School; Pe-Co, from Emilia-Romagna Region. **1. A.C.C.E.S.S. project** ACCESS aims to face, in a preventive way, the problem of early school leaving (ESL) linked to school-related factors, by reinforcing pedagogical quality and innovation through the improvement of teachers' skills and the creation of a positive learning environment. Its objectives were pursued through the implementation of innovative solutions working on these strategic assets: - teachers' best understanding of the dynamics of the ESL, risk factors and of protective elements actions for the periodic monitoring of risk factors: early warning system; - strengthening teachers' skills to provide learning support for all students; - building effective partnerships and inter-sectorial cooperation activities between schools of different types and levels, and between schools and external players both in terms of local contexts and in a multi-professional and transnational perspective; - creating conditions for potential future teachers to get in contact with situation of early school leaving and for teacher educators to implement actions focused on ESL. **2. Community educational Alliance "Bovio-Colletta" School** The Community Educational Alliance involving the school "Bovio-Colletta" is the result of a co-design process structured, carried out by the City of Naples and by the Department of Education and Social Policies. It involves 4 Municipalities and 10 schools and aims to promote the relationships between the different players addressing the educational poverty in individual schools and at the territorial level. The goal is to create an institutional place for discussion and co-design, where the third sector and schools meet to reflect on the needs of children and the processes of learning and socialization. The actions carried out with the Bovio-Colletta school are: orientation, cultural mediation, language literacy, territorial knowledge, self-narrative, civic education, orientation teaching; they involve several

associations, the Adult Education Center and organizations active in cultural promotion, teachers, students and families, with a comprehensive approach to citizenship.

3. Pe.Co.

PeCo aims to combat school dropout through a structured, student-centered approach within school settings (12 schools: 8 lower secondary schools and 4 upper secondary schools), including: the introduction of new educational services (listening centers for counseling and guidance activities for students, teachers and families as early as lower secondary schools); the creation of a multidisciplinary Institutional Table focused on school dropout; the definition of innovative guidelines on school dropout; the definition of new professional figures, capable of linking the school to the family; and moments of connection between school, business and territory.

Peco is funded by the Emilia Romagna Region (ESF funds).

Targeted projects against dropout financed by PNRR funds are currently active in many schools. The aim of the projects is to encourage the acquisition of a diploma by young people who left school early. Furthermore, projects will be activated to strengthen basic skills, to overcome territorial gaps and also some national projects in the most peripheral areas of the cities and the country. However, the funded projects have very complex reporting methods. Schools do not always have administrative staff capable of managing funds.

In Italy the rules and ministerial indications are innovative and advanced, but we are faced with a lack of investments or with available funds, but with complex reporting.

Republic of Moldova

In the Republic of Moldova, several strategies and good practices have been implemented to prevent school drop-out, especially in VET. Two practices had an impact and provide a relevant reference for more information: the "Child-Friendly School" program and "Scholarships and financial stimuli for students from disadvantaged backgrounds"

3. "Child-Friendly School" Program

This program, supported by UNICEF and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Research, aims to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment for all students, with a special focus on those at risk of dropping out.

Providing psychological counselling and support for students with emotional or behavioural problems are the key elements, as well as organizing extracurricular activities to stimulate students' interest and provide them with opportunities for personal and social development.

SÜDWIND

Teachers prepared to identify and respond to students' special needs and implement inclusive teaching methods is the third key component.

4. Scholarships and financial stimuli for students from disadvantaged backgrounds

There are provided scholarships and other forms of financial support to students from low-income families to prevent economic drop-out. Key elements are the allocation of scholarships for students from low-income families or for those with outstanding academic performance, as well as providing school supplies, uniforms, and other necessities to reduce the financial burden on families. The last thing is to provide financial stimuli for students who regularly attend classes and achieve good learning results.

Sweden

Reduction in early school leaving – a national objective
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From 2020, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child will become incorporated in Swedish law, and Sweden will thereby commit to the target of every child's right to education. Encouraging attendance and reducing early school leaving is one of five areas.
One of the Agenda 2030 goals in Sweden is that, by 2030, all girls and boys will complete free, equitable and quality compulsory and upper secondary education.
An overall target in the Europa 2020 strategy is that dropout rates will be less than 10 percent. In Sweden, the proportion of people aged 18–24 that do not complete upper secondary education will be less than 7 percent.
To achieve above goals, Swedish government initiated Plug In. Plug In is a collaboration project led by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) in collaboration with eight regions and over 70 municipalities. The project is based preventive measures at individual, organisational and system levels.

Intensive interventions at individual level in complex situations

- Coordination
- Case management and piloting
- Everyday support
- Adult support
- Social training

Targeted interventions (individual/group)

- Academic support, structural support
- Counselling, guidance, coaching and motivational interviewing
- Self-reinforcement activities, strengthening resilience, and support
- Motivation-stimulating programmes in individual curriculum plans

Universal measures involve all students

- Monitoring systems/Early Warning Systems
- Inclusive, safe climate that promotes learning and attendance,
- trusting relationships, positive teacher student interactions
- Increased collaboration between student health team and careers advisors and teachers
- Collaboration with parents/guardians
- Support to teachers, professional development
- High-quality teaching – adaptation to needs of students

The initiative Plug In activities involve local, regional and national levels, which has brought about coordination in the work to prevent early school leaving. The different levels have reinforced each other. This in turn has enabled a greater arena for both disseminating knowledge and practical experiences, and for lobbying work. Plug In's closely interlinked work emphasises the importance of a common strategy at several levels to optimise the efforts to prevent early school leaving.

Ukraine

In Ukraine many initiatives/actions involving private and public bodies are ongoing. Among them we remember three examples: 1. Youth is a force that changes the world; 2. Social passport of the group/VET school; 3. Career Development / Career Advice Centers

1. Youth is a force that changes the world

The war has changed Ukrainian youth much more than the coronavirus pandemic that has shaken the world. According to the survey, 87% of adolescents experienced the greatest changes in their lives during the full-scale war, while 13% experienced the greatest changes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most students at VET schools said that music, socializing, social media, and walking help them to distract themselves from their fears and worries the most. Sports and computer games help as well. Many students also noted that volunteer work, live communication, and a sense of support are extremely important. Therefore, under the title "Youth is a force that changes the world" we have collected creative and innovative social initiatives that help VET students to be proactive, feel responsible for their lives and professional development, and find support. Preparing vocational school students for volunteering helps to prevent drop-outs, as it provides:

- support for volunteer training, exchange of projects between different vocational schools
- bringing together students from different vocational schools to implement volunteer projects
- improvement of students' communication skills
- cultural mediation with people in need of social support
- involving students in activities that unite them, where they can communicate, exchange views and implement their own projects.

2. Social passport of the group/VET school

A social passport is a document containing up-to-date information about the potential and social characteristics of the group/VET school. It encompasses students' personal details and background information: the data on the state of students' health, students' social behaviour and environment, the types of extracurricular activities students are involved in, and the possible risks the students of the group/ VET school might encounter.

There are no unified requirements for the VET schools how to develop a social passport: this document enables the educators to examine the needs of students and to identify those students who may belong to the risk group and need special support (for example, those who are in difficult life situations; who are in conflict with the law; orphans and those who are deprived of parental care; children from the large, single-parent and low-income families, etc.).

3. Career Development / Career Advice Centers

The purpose of the centers is to increase the VET education status; to promote entrepreneurial initiative; to master self-presentation skills; to prepare for job interviews; to write CVs; to prepare for adaptation in the workplace; to plan successful career development of students; to engage employers in effective cooperation to employ VET school graduates.

The work of career advice centers supports students in making career decisions, identifying and exploiting their professional potential, and facilitating their adaptation to the requirements and changes in the labor market.

PART 3 – RECOMMENDATION ON FURTHER STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION OF DROP-OUT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

3.1 How to prevent drop-outs in VET: EQAVET4INCLUSION recommendations

In the complex landscape of modern governance of the education and vocational training system, crafting effective policies is crucial to addressing social challenges and promoting the important challenge related to the phenomenon of drop-out. Policy recommendations play a pivotal role in this process, providing evidence-based guidance to policymakers, stakeholders, and the broader community. These recommendations are formulated through rigorous analysis, based on data, research, and insights developed over time within the EQAVET4INCLUSION project, to propose concrete steps that can lead to desirable outcomes in combating the phenomenon.

The following policy recommendations are based on the results of the work of the EQAVET4INCLUSION partnership and aim to address key areas of concern, suggesting those to focus on and proposing some interventions deemed strategic to prevent early school leaving or to intervene promptly if cases occur. By adopting these recommendations, policymakers and stakeholders (teachers, school management officers, guidance counsellors) can navigate the complexities of contemporary issues and drive positive change in the education sector.

3.1.1. Flexible range of options meets students' demand

Studies show that those who leave upper secondary school early are less likely to have started the programme they initially applied for than other students. The differences are not enormous, but they are consistent, and they apply for both women and men and for students in all subject areas. Schools with a high proportion of students who complete their education have a high proportion of students who follow the course they chose initially. It is widely known that many students feel unsure about their upper secondary school choices during the initial period of their course. Opportunities to change programme and specialisations are therefore important in order that students who want to change course continue with their upper secondary education.

Specific projects, beyond the school curriculum, are often delegated to individual schools and are not always effective and long-lasting: it is suggested to create national projects that are stable over time and specific contracts with teachers and educators.

Commentato [BT1]: I have tried to insert some examples from the best practices collected (and highlighted) by partners BUT it seems there isn't best practices that I could insert if not Italian ones...

Commentato [BT2]: It' s necessary, in my opinion, to underline what kind of studies...we could create a note with their title and the source

3.1.2. Good induction process provides reassurance and inspiration

Another significant factor is the induction process. A well planned and implemented induction process at the beginning of the course minimises the risk that students will leave school if they do not settle down. As well as giving students an understanding of the programme content, student involvement and work methods, the induction process serves to create a secure, positive working climate within the programme.

During EQAVET4INCLUSION activities and contacts with teachers and VET managers, it's been clear that a holistic approach is needed, on the student as a person and not just as a "learning mind". A global and integrated approach to the person is necessary: not only school, but also social life, welcoming environments, active stimuli. In fact, many VET students experience strong socio-cultural disadvantages, and this is one of the main causes of dropout: a professional educator who supports the work of teachers should be introduced in VET schools in a systemic and not occasional way. Sometimes teachers do not always have pedagogical and sociological knowledge capable of guiding them in their daily actions. Specific training is essential.

3.1.3. Study and career guidance to make the right choices

Career guidance traditionally plays an important role in an educational institution because it connects the education system with the country's economic system and links the present with the future. Therefore, education should not only provide subject-specific training but also create favourable conditions for the professional self-determination of students.

There is a major need for qualified study and career guidance, but the quality of the guidance on offer is uneven. Studies show that students' expectations of guidance ahead of their upper secondary school choice are high, but after they have made their upper secondary school choice, they have not received the expected help in recognising their own strengths and weakness and what they have an aptitude for. At the same time, competition between upper secondary schools means that students in primary/lower secondary schools are faced with extensive marketing and many alternatives that are difficult to comprehend and process. Study and careers advisors at upper secondary schools help students who regret their choice of programme or specialisation to look at alternatives and to consider the consequences of various decisions. They support mentors, teachers and head teachers ahead of decisions relating to an individual student's study plans. Cooperation between management, teachers and study and careers advisors at upper secondary schools is significant for students who need to adapt to be able to complete their upper secondary education.

Commentato [BT3]: It's necessary, in my opinion, to underline what kind of studies...we should create a note with their title and the source

One of the results of EQVET4INCLUSION national workshops conducts to the idea that it's important for VET schools to adopt a school policy on career guidance (and dropout prevention) linked to the Vision and the mission of the educational institution; sufficient attention should be paid to career guidance and career advice throughout the entire learning process, including the training of professional "career guidance leaders" and career coaches.

It is also important to improve the integration of education, training and work to generate professional skills in line with the expectations of production systems. In Italy we are working in this direction. In fact, the "PCTO" - paths for transversal skills and orientation - integrate training at school with training periods in companies, in school laboratories or in simulation environments.

3.1.4. Fine-meshed safety net captures need

Established procedures to quickly develop measures adapted to the individual are extremely important for capturing students' needs. The overarching aim is to achieve effective cooperation between students, legal guardians, teachers, mentors, student health service staff, study and careers advisors and head teachers to give each student the right education initiatives and flexible solutions to allow him or her to perform to the best of his or her full ability. The significant feature of the work method is frequent, regular meetings between mentors, students and various members of staff before decisions are made and follow-up takes place on measures for students who risk failing to achieve their targets. The role of the mentor is important, not least in terms of being aware of each student and eliminating the risk that an individual student might fail because the school has not noticed the needs and employed resources to help him or her.

It could be also useful to structure time at school not only with theoretical and practical laboratory lessons, but also with play spaces and unstructured moments of collective study, but always in the presence of trained adults (professional educators), in a semi-convivial space to keep the school alive for a long time.

3.1.5. A focus on attendance and rapid responses to absence

In schools with a high proportion of students who complete their upper secondary education, students are given information at an early stage about the importance of attending school. The schools prevent unauthorised absence by making students aware of the link between attendance at school and achievement of targets. By way of example, head teachers meet all classes to talk about the importance of attendance and the consequences of absence.

To limit the rate of absences it is essential to involve students in stimulating courses and activities. The school environment must be welcoming and the reference adults stable and

attentive. Families must be involved with knowledge and exchange meetings. Families must also be involved with training activities. Students must perceive that family, school and territory are connected to each other.

3.2 Some good solutions to help schools in prevention: EQAVET4INCLUSION sustainability plan

From the piloting phase of EQAVET4INCLUSION *curriculum* and *Quick Scan* results, it's been clear that

a) Participants recognized the importance of the EQAVET4Inclusion project in the context of developing and implementing *innovative tools for assessment and training*
b) It is important to have an *integrated approach and an active collaboration* between all the actors involved in VET
c) Solutions offered by the *training curricula* are useful in preventing dropout in vocational education
d) *Relationships with families* are an element considered essential but not always easy to implement
e) It is important to develop and implement *career advice methods and technologies* in educational institutions in accordance with the Five-Step Career Planning Strategy (5-SCP), *a SCORM course on choosing a profession without gender stereotypes*, and *a career advice Programme*

For these reasons, partners agreed on implementing strategies and actions that continue to support the project's long-term objectives, working on:

> **Commentato [BT4]:** This part is based on what partners suggested. Greek partner has given "personalized" ideas on how DIMITRA will do...I think could be the best to "personalize" these suggestions

1. The integration of the Quick Scan and EQAVET4INCLUSION curriculum into partners' existing routines and processes as well as to push the same for their schools' networks
2. Maintain (and continuously creating) national and European networks to support ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing on dropout prevention and inclusive education
3. Embedding the project outcomes into national and regional education policies to ensure long-term commitment and support
4. Maintaining an active online presence through websites and forums to provide resources, updates and support for teachers, educators and stakeholders
5. Publishing findings and best practices in academic journals and at conferences to contribute to the broader educational community and encourage the adoption of effective strategies

6. Pushing the Career Advice Centres/Career Development Centres and/or introducing the position of a career advisor.
7. Developing and implementing methods and technologies of career advice in accordance with the Five-Step Career Planning Strategy (5-SCP)
8. Developing and implementing a SCORM course in choosing a profession without gender stereotypes

Educational and professional orientation is a decisive prevention tool to ensure educational success. The most delicate phase is the transition from lower secondary school to upper secondary school. It is precisely in this period that the processes that lead to the generation of the NEET phenomenon take root.

Over the last twenty years, the belief has been consolidated, at a scientific and institutional level, that it is necessary to act from nursery school, according to a logic of continuity "along the entire lifespan" (Long life Guidance approach).

The strong responsibility of educators and institutions in promoting "life skills" must be underlined, as they allow young people to have a more conscious and critical understanding of the changing contexts of social and professional insertion, as well as better management of the various "transitions".

3.3 Next steps

- invest in teacher training, for the acquisition of adequate guidance skills: raise awareness among teaching and non-teaching staff about dropout and school success, with targeted training actions, both in the initial training phase and in service;

- strengthen the orientation system from a long-life perspective. Options for school choice must be provided, with specific interventions for groups most at risk of dropping out;

- increase flexibility in entering and exiting the courses of the second cycle of education. Allow flexible transitions from one study path to another;

- structurally insert into schools the presence of specialized professional figures to support the work of teachers: educators and psychologists.

Structure stable collaborative interventions with local services (social, educational, socio-health, employment);

- create links with other schools, with businesses, with trade associations, local authorities, families and other social and educational actors.

Information campaigns must be developed for the population to enhance VET peer courses. A change of mentality with respect to VET schools is necessary.

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