

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS' AT RISK

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY MAKER

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Introduction

The ministry of education, the school inspectorates, local public administrations, in a word, the policy makers are in charge with elaborating and implementing strategies designed to reduce early school leaving. The guide aims to support the policy makers in this approach by submitting 10 steps to follow. The first step consists in describing the general framework that urges policy makers to act. To this purpose they must analyse the early school leaving phenomenon (step 2) and elaborate an evidence-based strategy for the early school leaving phenomenon (step 3). This strategy should begin with the identification of the causes of school dropout (step 4) by analysing the causes that lead to the emergence of the school drop out risk and identifying the prevention ways of early school leaving phenomenon. The fifth step refers to presenting the main issues in establishing the objectives, strategic directions and specific actions that are critical to drawing up the strategy. Step 6 is concerned with detailing the main directions of the educational strategies to eradicate early school leaving and which are necessary for the implementation of the strategy: prevention, intervention and rewarding measures. In step 7, the guide presents the issues that will be undertaken for the implementation of the strategy monitoring at the level of each school. The conclusions reached after the performing the monitoring strategy will be used to revise the action plan (step 8), to assess the implementation of the strategy (step 9) and to establish the future action directions (step 10).

General Framework

Early school leaving refers to stopping school attendance, dropping out of the educational system, regardless of the level reached, before getting a qualification or well rounded professional training or before graduating. From an economic point of view, early school leaving represents an indicator of the educational system efficiency, so that the higher the early school leaving rate, the less effective the educational system in question is.

The approach to the phenomenon consists in drawing a strategy of curricular and extracurricular programs and projects aimed at raising school attendance level and facilitating inclusion of those who initially drop out of school. The main institutions in charge with achieving and implementing these strategies are the ministry of education, the school inspectorates, local public administrations, i.e. the policy makers.

In order to set up the strategy for reducing early school leaving, the institutions in charge – policy makers, will undertake sociological research on the early school leaving phenomenon in the areas of interest and will identify the causes that lead to the occurrence of the risk of early school leaving.

Publications

From the School Inclusion Portal

- [Database of Publications](#)
Materials and strategies for preventing and combating early school leaving.
- [Early School Leaving - Lessons from Research for Policy Makers](#)
This report was written by Professor Roger Daleit provides an all-round overview on the problem of early school leaving in European countries, focusing on the starting up of this phenomenon, its causes and possible reasons.

The Analysis of the Early School Leaving Phenomenon

The school inspectorates:

1. Analyze the phenomenon from the perspective of the access to education, participation and equal opportunities and draws up strategies, curricular and extracurricular educational programs and projects aimed at raising rate of school attendance and support the students that abandoned school.
2. Together with the local public administrations, they will take action in the following directions regarding:
 - Abiding by the current law concerning the rights of the children/students who come from social categories that are disadvantaged out of different reasons (e.g. economical, ethnical, confessional, geographical) of participation to institutional training and education;
 - Drawing up projects of education laws meant for these categories of students;
 - Implementing and monitoring the projects and programs drawn up by the Ministry of education, with this aim in view;
 - Putting into practice the collaboration agreement with the strategic partners;
 - Obeying the stipulations of the agreements signed with organizations, international institutions, when drawing up and implementing the activities specific to the target group.
 - Organizing, coordinating, drawing up and editing strategy elements regarding the teachers' initial and lifelong training, as well as the strategies implementation methodology.
 - Collaborating with all the national institutions focused on problems concerning the education of students at risk, internal and external non governmental institutions, internal and external financial agencies, national minorities organizations or of the civil society interested in the problem of the students at early school leaving out risk.

Publications

From the School Inclusion Portal

- [Diagnostic study on the situation of school dropout and early school leaving in rural areas](#)
Prevent early school leaving by developing integrated socio-educational services and increasing involvement of community members selected to maintain the education system those at risk of leaving school.
- [Law for preventing and combating early school dropout and failure](#)
Proposal for a normative act in addition to the Law of National Education that takes the remarkable results validated by the best practices in some countries of the European Union.

The Elaboration of the Strategy Regarding Early School Leaving Phenomenon

In order to elaborate the strategy regarding the early school leaving phenomenon a sociological research will be undertaken to allow the identification of the phenomenon from the quantitative and qualitative point of view.

1. Drawing up the necessary instruments for the sociological research (questionnaires, interview drafts, tests designed to identify students' learning styles, focus groups questions) and sending them to the school with the aim of putting them into practice
2. Organizing interviews with headteachers, students, teachers, parents, economic agents and local community representatives.
3. Observing students' behavior, the selection and application by the teachers of didactic methods during the educational process, analyzing school documents and programs on prevention and eradication of early school leaving phenomenon.
4. Throughout school inspections, there are to be observed the following: students' behavior during the educational process, teachers' selection and application of didactic methods, the analysis of school documents and programs on prevention and eradicating early school leaving phenomenon.
5. Performing sociological research on the early school leaving phenomenon in the area of interest by collecting information from schools and filling in a synopsis of early school leaving that will be based on schools, educational levels and academic years and identifying early school leaving.

Publications

From the School Inclusion Portal

- [Local Strategy for Prevention and Combating Early School Leaving in the city Campulung](#)
A local strategy to prevent and combat early school leaving.
- [The extended school program - strategy, effective in preventing school failure](#)
Concrete solutions based on specific situations, which can serve as inspiration for those who want taking the idea of extended hours (after school) and the Day Center for children in need in school.

Identification of the Causes

Within the analysis regarding the early school leaving phenomenon causes in the area and the prevention ways, an important aspect in settling them, is represented by the identification of students at risk, because the whole strategy that will be drawn up refers to the prevention of this phenomenon.

1. Analysing the causes that lead to the emergence of the early school leaving risk, in order to prevent the early school leaving phenomenon (causes that involve the socio-economic situation of the families – material situation, relations within the family, family's lack of interest, families' low level of education, the quality of their housing conditions, the family atmosphere, lack of learning support, reluctant parents, causes related to school – organisation and didactic methods, teachers' inadequate attitude, schools' facilities, schools' lack of interest, causes related to students – their psychological profile, personality traits, students' attitude towards the educational process, students' low potential).
2. Identifying the prevention ways of early school leaving phenomenon.

Publications

From the School Inclusion Portal

- [Methods for the Prevention of Early School Leaving](#)
Publication related to the project "School – a necessity, not just a right" aiming at supporting long term social integration of students at risk of early school leaving and preventing them from leaving school.
- [Mediated Learning Experience Inside and Outside the Classroom](#)
This publication can turn an average or uninterested person into a person willing to learn.

Drawing up the Strategy

After processing sociological data, there will be drawn up a strategy involving the objectives, the strategic directions and the specific actions aimed at:

- a. Assuring the access to basic education for all the children, young people and grownups through programs that are up-to-date and adjusted to target groups through a coherent policy and through adequate means.
- b. Total inclusion of young children in pre-school education;
- c. Equity change over in education and shaping the basic skills for everybody (children, teenagers, adults) so as to foster the subsequent professional training and participation to the active life;
- d. Equipping schools with modern educational means, with information and communication networks access, school library's adequate equipping
- e. Young people training for long life education, through varying and extending the educational offer by means of a partnership with the main actors of the educational processes (public institutions, civil society, social partners, innovation and educational resources centers);
- f. Assuring the quality of personalized and educational services support for the disabled children, school guidance and professional counseling.

Publications

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- [Local Strategy for Prevention and Combating Early School Leaving in the city Campulung](#)
Local strategy to prevent and combat early school leaving, with application to the City Câmpulung Romania.
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The Implementation of the Strategy

1. The strategy elaborated by the school inspectorates will be sent, in order to be implemented, to the school network.

The main directions of the educational strategies to eradicate early school leaving are: prevention, intervention and rewarding measures.

- a) Prevention** is aimed at avoiding the instauration of conditions susceptible of fostering the triggering the process leading to early school leaving. The consolidation of participation to high quality education and caring services was admitted as being one of the most efficient measures to assure a favorable beginning in education and to develop endurance. Nevertheless, it is necessary to improve the access to education and high quality caring services meant for pre-school children.

Other possible obstacles against the success of the school performance can be excluded by means of increasing access to the educational path and improving the quality and the status of the educational professional branches.

The career and orientation counselor/the form master can contribute to preventing school drop out by making students aware of the measures (benefits) resulting from carrying on one's education and instruction within a school (in formal environment), in conjunction with a better self knowledge of the student at school dropout risk.

- b) Intervention** addresses the difficulties that come up at an early stage in order to stop early school leaving.

Intervention modalities at Community level

- Informing the community on the reality
- Drawing attention to the seriousness and consequences at the socio-economic level, taking into consideration that the school abandon caused by poverty will bring on poverty;
- Poor school and professional training creates premises for a high rate of unemployment and for a poor financial situation;
- Those who left school early are prone to not having moral and civic values necessary to be a parent and a community citizen.

Intervention Modalities at the level of FAMILIES;

- Creating an association of parents of children at risk of early school leaving in order to provide them with career counseling, teaching them some strategies to find a job, techniques to solve crisis situations, strategies to monitor and manage student's educational path;
- Organizing educational seminars in order to inform the parents on the optimal ways for student's going to school;
- Jobs fairs and parents' orientation towards training courses for qualifications required in the labour market;
- Financial support consisting in school aids and clothes, transport to and from school;
- Undertaking social investigation and offering social assistance, if necessary

Intervention modalities at school level :

Because one of the early school leaving causes is absenteeism, the intervention strategies must have in view the school too, mainly focusing on their quality of the instructive-educational intervention, the pertinence of the

contents in relation with the students' learning needs, the relevance of the methods and didactic styles for the students' cognitive situations, assessment system, etc.

Taking into account the intervention strategies that are required at the school level, very important to offer pedagogical counseling for teachers working with this category of students as well as training courses that aim the knowledge and use of some students' individualized and personalized intervention plans .

- Teachers' acquaintance with active and interactive learning techniques;
- Vocational counseling ;
- Students' classroom management ;

Intervention modalities at the students' level :

- Individual and group psycho pedagogical counseling ;
- Testing using psychological sets of tests in order to know the intellectual development level of the students' abilities and personality profiles;
- Organizing some extra preparation activities – “school after school” – for students with learning difficulties, with lacks in education caused by absenteeism;

We consider necessary a deeper understanding of both students and their families.

c) **The rewarding measures** offer opportunities of education and training for those that dropped school early.

They can consist in a financial or other sort of support with the aim of contributing to the young people's reintegration in the traditional educational systems or of offering a so called “second chance”.

2. Each school will draw up a specific action plan according to concrete situations that will be implemented with the agreement of students and parents. The action plan will include prevention measures, intervention measures and rewarding measures.
3. The action plan will be available for the school inspectorates and other external evaluation institutions.

Publications

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Local strategy to prevent and combat early school leaving, with application to the City Câmpulung Romania.
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Monitoring

Drawing up a strategy must take into consideration accurate information and allow a better orientation of the measures. A monitoring progress system of the early school leaving can contribute to the gradual adjustment of the strategies using the information, such as the individual motivation related to the early education leaving.

The strategy implementation monitoring at the level of each school will be undertaken through:

1. School inspection
2. Periodical reports regarding the absenteeism and school dropout
3. The analysis of the statistics at the end of the semesters and academic year
4. The internal assessment regarding quality assurance at the school level
5. Interviews with headteachers, students, parents, local community representatives and economic agents, in order to adjust the measures to their needs in order to diminish early school leaving percents and students' support during school years.

Websites

- [Prevention of Early School Leaving – Handbook for Teachers and Consultants](#)
The program “Early School Leaving” has been developed to help students to develop a positive attitude towards the role of education and their future.

Revision of the Action Plan

1. Following the inspections, recommendations will be made to improve the action plan according to early school leaving diminishing strategy implementation results;
2. Each school will draw up, periodically, an assessment of the level activities achievement within the strategy and will suggest improvement measures for the unsatisfying outcomes.

Publication

From the School Inclusion Portal

- [A project for the formative assessment for the class council](#)
A project based on the idea of activity-based planning, on the search for common indicators for the assessment of learning, and on active, inductive and cooperative methods.

The Assessment of the Strategy Implementation

1. After achieving the periodical monitoring of the level implementation of the diminishing school dropout strategy, at the end of the academic year, a statistic report will be drawn up using the information offered by schools, as well as that gathered from the inspections and interviews with teachers, students, parents, local community representatives.
2. The annual report will be made available for all the schools as well as for all the factors interested.

Publication

From the School Inclusion Portal

- [Prevention of Early School Leaving – Handbook for Teachers and Consultants](#)
The program “Early School Leaving” has been developed to help students to develop a positive attitude towards the role of education and their future.

Future Action Directions

Based on the information included in the annual report, drawn up as a result of the implementation level assessment of the early school leaving phenomenon strategy, the strategy will be adjusted so as to reach the objective set by the European Union, i.e. under 10%, by 2020. Each school settles the aim gradually, according to the concrete conditions. The new action plan will include prevention measures, intervention measures and rewarding measures according to the objective set by the European Union.

Publication

From the School Inclusion Portal

- [Prevention of Early School Leaving – Handbook for Teachers and Consultants](#)
The program “Early School Leaving” has been developed to help students to develop a positive attitude towards the role of education and their future.
- [A review of School Based Measures aimed at Addressing Educational Disadvantage](#)
Report to Educational Disadvantage Committees based almost exclusively on the results of programme evaluations.