



Implementing evidence-informed practice for school inclusion - Guidelines for policymakers

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DIGITAL SOCIETY SCHOOL



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INTRODUCTION

In rapidly changing societies of today and tomorrow education will continue to play a significant role in shaping the futures of individuals and societies. There is no doubt that in the future, education will remain the institution crucial for reducing growing social inequalities in exclusions. The question that, however, remains open is *how* it will address these issues.

There is a growing consensus (see EC 2018, EU 2023, OECD 2022; also Brown 2017, Rose et al. 2017) that effective teaching and leadership in education is based on evidence-informed practice (or EIP), and that EIP results in improving student learning and achievement. An emerging evidence-base indicates that, if educators engage with research-evidence to make or change decisions, embark on new courses of action, or develop new practices, this can have a positive impact for both teaching and learning outcomes. There is also a myriad of social and moral imperatives which, together, present the case for educators to engage with research-evidence whenever it is possible for them to do so and even more so when teaching and learning address socially inclusive education.

However, engaging with evidence cannot only be the imperative for teachers, but also for educational policymakers at various levels of decision-making: at the school, local, regional, national, and international level. Today, perhaps more than ever, it is crucial that the entire educational system engages with evidence, research, data, and knowledge when shaping the educational experience and opportunities of youth. Utilizing research at various levels of the educational system is crucial in order to detect various issues in education; to gain insight into the effectiveness and efficiency of particular measures; to ensure efficient resource management, if we name only a few areas that can benefit greatly from utilising existing knowledge. If we will not make an effort to reflect on our educational practices and decision-making, then we risk a mindless perpetuation of either educational tradition or trends and fashions without actually knowing what our doing actually does.

On the following pages we present guidelines that school leaders and policymakers at various levels of the educational system should consider when planning educational processes and change, and we urge them to maintain and strengthen their efforts in providing all students with meaningful access to the full range of opportunities education should offer.

The document is structured in three main sections. The first section establishes some basic definitions of three fundamental concepts: evidence-informed practice, social inclusion, and policymaking. The next section contains guidelines for policymakers who aim to encourage and facilitate evidence-informed practices in education. The guidelines are structured according to the level of policymaking. We invite readers to use the guidelines as they see most appropriate to their needs: the guidelines can serve as a checklist when developing policy; as ideas for approaching challenges; or as simple food for thought. The last section offers some examples of collaborations between policy and decision-makers at various levels and aims to provide you with some ideas into the possibilities of using evidence to foster social inclusion as well as it serves as a testament to the variety of evidence-informed practices different stakeholders already use in their everyday educational practice.

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1 DEFINITIONS

1.1 EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE

To provide a basic and working definition, we suggest EIP can be understood as *educators' engagement with data, research, and their conceptualisation by educators*. Of course, there must be a purpose to this engagement and, in our experience, *EIP is most effective when it is directed at improving aspects of educators' teaching, decision-making, leadership or ongoing professional learning*.

In formulating a more specific definition, we can say that EIP occurs in situations in which teaching, and leadership practice is consciously informed by knowledge such as:

- formal research produced by researchers;
- evidence derived from practitioner inquiry; and/or
- evidence derived from routinely collected school or system-level data (for example, student assessment data).

1.2 SOCIAL INCLUSION

In the broadest sense we understand social inclusion as an imperative to reduce the opportunity gaps between students that arise out of their personal and/or social circumstances. At the school level, social inclusion means paying attention to the various ways students are enabled or prevented to pursue academic and other educationally relevant goals and engaging with activities that are necessary to address the challenges related to their social inclusion/exclusion, which among others also includes observing, engaging with data, evaluation, research and acting on both ours and other professionals' observations and evidence.

1.3 POLICY-MAKING

Policy-making is for the purpose of our project, defined as evidence based and conceptualised act or process of setting, enabling and directing the course of action to be pursued in the field of education at international level (e.g. European Commission or its directorates); national or federal level (government or its ministry and its public agencies), local level (regional or local administration responsible for education) and at the school level (governing bodies, heads of schools as well as associations of teachers). The aim of policymaking at all the above-mentioned levels should be setting, enabling, and directing evidence based inclusive teaching and learning practices.

2 GUIDELINES

2.1 GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

As researchers and practitioners in the field of education we encourage international actors and their agencies to:

- support existing international comparative research (e.g., PISA, TIMSS) and further develop their sections addressing inclusion and education attainment of young generations irrespective of their origin and social status of their families;
- maintain, further develop, and financially support international collaborations exchanges of teacher students and teachers at all levels of the education system (e. g. ERASMUS+). Special initiatives should be developed to foster collaboration among teachers from different levels of education and particularly related to evidence-based inclusive teaching and learning;
- continue to encourage and support EU member states and candidate countries (also financially) to participate in international comparative research and exchange while also promoting and facilitating the possibility to use acquired evidence according to nationally recognized needs and priorities relevant for specific national education systems;
- provide formal, financial, and operative support for education institutions in member states to be in position to establish and maintain online platforms that aggregate research evidence and ensure that platforms are relevant, open source and friendly to the user.

2.2 GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL/FEDERAL STAKEHOLDERS

As researchers and practitioners in the field of education we encourage our national actors and their agencies to:

- evaluate their systems of collecting and providing quality data for research and use in teaching and learning;
- support the formation of a comprehensive network facilitating comparative cooperation and collaboration of education institutions and teachers. Such networks promoting and enabling evidence dissemination and exchange among relevant actors at all levels of policymaking could facilitate more inclusive and thus cohesive societies;
- formally, financially and operatively support the above-mentioned networks;
- foster cooperation between the levels of the education system, with particular focus on facilitating and rewarding knowledge and data exchange and collaboration between pre-university institutions and universities;
- consider the need for using evidence-informed practices in teaching and learning when devising mechanisms and regulations evaluating and valuing the work of teachers at different levels of education;
- facilitate and support various national educational institutions (QA agencies, research institutes, examination centres) in their efforts to conceptualise, collect and disseminate the data they gather to the teachers and among the institutions at national level (e.g., Examination centre – Institute of education – Faculty of education).

- support and consult cooperative networks of relevant actors in civil society.
- support creating *knowledge brokers* incentives (e. g. as units or independent organs).
- support the establishment of units and processes that facilitate the incorporation of evidence into practice.

2.3 GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

As researchers and practitioners in the field of education we encourage local authorities to:

- establish working groups to conceptualise, plan and analyse data collections relevant at the local level;
- encourage groups consisting of professionals, experts, stakeholders (heads of schools, teachers, parents, administrators...) to meet regularly (at least two times annually) and conceptualise, plan and evaluate EIP and inclusion in their respective local community;
- encourage data collection and analysis, that should at least include: a) data on newborn children that will be placed in pre-primary institutions in the next five years (renewed each year); b) data on children that will be included in primary education in the next five years (also renewed each year); c) data on the number of immigrant children enrolling in pre-primary and primary education and the capacity (teachers, support teachers...) of respective schools and kindergartens to address their needs and inclusion in the local community and institutions;
- Promote communities of practice or networking to share good practices, scale up initiative, discuss data and make shared decisions;
- Facilitate partnerships between local schools and academia (e.g. collaborative research);
- support evaluation and submission of an annual report based on the collected data to the local community council, focusing specifically on harnessing EIP in fostering social inclusion.
- encourage schools and preschools in local communities to also serve as places of knowledge dissemination concerning evidence informed practice (EIP). Their regular meetings with the parents and its association at least once per year can also serve as the opportunity to present data and main findings related to the comparative presentation of the state of the art of EIP in local communities and at a particular school.

2.4 GUIDELINES FOR STAKEHOLDERS AT THE LEVEL OF THE SCHOOL

As researchers and practitioners in the field of education, we encourage teachers (educational practitioners) and heads of schools to:

Include EIP in school leadership practices:

- make the use of evidence in the decision-making process a priority for the school
- base the school strategy on a vision oriented towards a decision-making process informed by research evidence

- ensure the school development strategy promotes action plans which can stimulate teachers to engage in inquiry and assessment processes to support students' inclusion in school.
- Create a guidance plan to support staff to engage in inquiry processes and to review their teaching practice based on this.
- Disseminate the school's good practices in a broader context (community level/network).
- encourage school leaders to actively and directly monitor the performance of the school by making use of a variety of evidence, including student achievement data; surveys of parents, students, teachers, and the community; informal observations; and feedback. Use these data to inform their decision making and guide their leadership and the work of the school also reflecting on the effectiveness of the school's improvement strategies adopted.
- promote the use and analysis of different sorts of data to monitor the progress and make informed decisions.

Build a professional evidence use culture for inclusion in the school:

- include in the school management mechanisms a vision which encourages staff to experiment and engage in new teaching practices to support students' diversity and school inclusion.
- encourage staff to engage in meaningful conversations about research evidence in addition to established mechanisms and vision.
- support staff to conduct processes to collect, analyse, use research evidence and conduct research.
- encourage staff systematically and consistently to adopt an attitude and behaviour based on inquiry and improvement.
- encourage teachers and school staff to make use of evidence to inform their teaching practices.
- develop small-scale research projects at the school level.
- develop a school culture and understanding that all decision making should be guided by research evidence.

Ensure structure and allocate resources:

- allocate specific resources for EIP development
- allocate space and time to teachers to discuss and reflect on their practice.
- support staff with resources (space, time, financial, etc.) to conduct reflexive processes about their practice.
- foster collaboration between teachers and researchers and support it with necessary resources.
- establish impulse groups that can serve as core drivers of experimentation and change using EIP.
- identify the people in your school that act as crucial reference points for teachers and facilitate their professional development.
- pay attention to investing in developing teachers' necessary skills to collect, analyse and use data at classroom and school level.
- secure the necessary resources to facilitate data collection analysis and use.

Collaborative inquiry

- contribute to stimulating teachers to engage in collegial discussions and apply constructive feedback from peers to improve their professional knowledge and practice.

- promote practices that allow teachers to seek and apply constructive feedback from inspectors and experts to improve teaching practices.
- identify options for collaborating with universities and research centres.
- initiate and engage in professional discussions with staff in a range of forums to evaluate practice directed at improving professional knowledge and practice, and the educational outcomes of students.
- promote on a regular basis professional dialogue within the school and professional learning network(s) that is informed by feedback, analysis of current research and practice to improve the educational outcomes of students.
- facilitate exchanges of good practices with other schools in your area.
- engage actively in dialogue with other levels of decision-making to ensure a policy framework in which teachers can engage with evidence (school leadership association as an actor of initiating EIP at the local and national levels of policymaking).

In order for **school leaders, teachers or other school staff** to pursue these actions, we recommend the ***School Development and Coaching plan for Evidence-Informed Practice for Inclusion*** resource package, developed through the EIPSI project. The [resource package](#) offers schools the opportunity to conduct a self-assessment on the school's existing or potential capacity to implement an evidence-informed practice approach to inclusion, allows the school to explore relevant guidelines for the implementation of EIP, as well as provides a coaching and an implementation plan for EIP, along with relevant guidelines and ideas for implementation.

3 REPOSITORY OF GOOD PRACTICES

3.1 GOOD PRACTICES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

3.1.1 Primary and secondary school collaboration for social inclusion

Instigator: Osnovna šola Lava (primary and lower secondary school) and Gimnazija Celje Center (upper secondary school)

About: Both schools are in the same town – Celje, Slovenia. Throughout the years, many students from the Lava primary and lower secondary school have continued their education at the Gimnazija Celje Center gymnasium. At one point the gymnasium has recognized that they know little about their first-year students at the beginning of their first year, which meant that they needed quite some time to get to know the specifics of the new generation with regards to the students' knowledge in certain subject areas or any specific issues particular students may be dealing with. To improve the educational process for the newcomers, they have established a partnership with one of the local primary and lower secondary schools – Osnovna šola Lava. Teachers from both schools meet yearly at meetings where teachers from primary school share their observations, experiences, and knowledge about the generation with teachers from the upper secondary school. This enables the latter to plan and coordinate specific activities based on the knowledge about the students they get from their colleagues which results in educational activities that address the students' specifics without losing time by getting to know them first.

Website: /

Language: /

3.1.2 Evidence-based transformation in a Primary school for social inclusion

Instigator: Primary School Emili Juncalleda

About: From the neighbourhood of Navas (Barcelona), the public school Emili Juncalleda presents its experience of immersion in a process of reflected and consensual changes with the aim of improving its educational practice to achieve attention to diversity and ensure the optimal development of students. The beginning of this transformation arose from the projects "Tools for educational change" and "Networks for change", which have provided the pedagogical theoretical foundation for the innovation process. The involvement of the school in the project has allowed the consolidation of these initiatives, contributing to sensitise the members of the school towards the use of scientific evidence for the foundation and development of sustainable and effective innovation processes. Thus, this video allows to know from the hand of the teaching team, the experience of the center on how to carry out evidence-based improvement processes and at the same time can serve as inspiration for other centers that want to initiate similar processes. It also explains where it comes from and what their educational practice consists of, what process has been followed to implement it in the last 3 years and the consequences of the same, both for students and teachers.

Website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uiR2_cnKYQ

<https://agora.xtec.cat/ceipemili-juncadella/>

Language: Catalan

3.1.3 'Gheorghe Lazăr' National College – Bucharest, Romania

Instigator: Ministry of Education, Romania

About: `Gheorghe Lazăr` National College (lower and upper secondary levels) in Bucharest, Romania, is one of the 34 pilot schools in Romania, testing innovative elements at the level of organising the curriculum plan, the school year structure or evaluation - the basis for measures already implemented at the system level: shorter learning periods alternating with rest periods, replacing tests with other types of evaluations, eliminating semester averages.

The National College was one of the first six such educational institutions. The Ministry of Education approved the College to reorganise the common core curriculum in the 11th and 12th grade in such a way as to allow students to focus on the subjects of interest in relation to the baccalaureate and university admission exams. Also, the College organises teaching and learning in a blended learning system, with alternating in-person and online teaching, either periodically or regularly as part of the weekly schedule. This model was initially piloted for the middle school level, and was later expanded to high school levels, including evening and post-high school education. The aim of piloting this model is to optimise the use of the existing infrastructure and, more importantly, reduce school dropout rates. The piloting takes place from 2021 to 2025 and it is part of a national initiative by the Ministry of Education, informed by international educational research, aiming to gather data at school level in order to make evidence-informed decisions regarding the expansion of the pilot models to other schools locally, regionally or nationally, in an attempt to increase school autonomy and curricular decentralisation.

Website: https://www.edu.ro/scoli_pilot

Language: Romanian

3.1.4 Project Character (Caracterul)

Instigator: CMBRAE

About: Character is an educational project aiming at developing positive and adjusted behaviours in students, building strong characters and making students understand the importance of moral and ethical values and norms. Thus, positive behaviours are stimulated, enforced and promoted through educative means, while negative, uncooperative behaviours are changed by actively involving students in the proposed attractive and interactive activities of the project. The main objectives of the project are related to the process of educating and modelling of students' characters, developing positive traits, such as: being attentive, cooperative, honest, sincere, grateful and forgiving. The project is usually finalised with a contest entitled "My dream". The benefits of building characters are: improved relationships with peers, a positive, stimulating learning environment, safer schools, stronger families and better communities. This project is optional and can be applied at school level, every year.

Website: www.cmbrae.ro

Language: Romanian

3.1.5 Project Talking about me (Să-ți vorbesc despre mine)

Instigator: CMBRAE

About: **Project Talking to you about me**, puts an emphasis on personal development, growth and empowerment of students (pre-school and school level). It focuses on a few main objectives: manifesting interest for self-knowledge, developing a positive attitude towards self and other people, adequate expression of emotions in social interactions with peers and known adults, creating contexts for a free expression of emotions and creativity, identifying favourite games and activities as a premise for exploring different jobs. The project actively involves students and teachers, but also school counsellors and parents.

During the project, through counselling sessions, parents are equipped with effective communication strategies and ability to relate to their children. The expected results of the project are: positive attitude towards self and others, healthy, balanced life style, healthy relationships with others in school and out of school contexts.

Website: www.cmbrae.ro

Language: Romanian

3.2 GOOD PRACTICES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

3.2.1 Networks for Change - Barcelona

Instigator: Barcelona Education Consortium

About: Since 2017, the Barcelona Education Consortium has led the Networks for Change program with the aim of promoting the educational transformation of the city. The aim is to advance the head of an equitable and quality education system. Networks as a context for professional and peer learning are a strategy to promote this orientation towards change in Barcelona's schools. The action of the networks is based on the deep reflection on practices from the theoretical frameworks of up-to-date research. In the 2020-2021 academic year, a total of 222 centers renewed their confidence in the program by working in 18 networks in the city of Barcelona. Starting from the pedagogical reflection on the horizon of change of the first three years of Networks for Change, in this second stage of the program we are taking a step further, seeking the impact on schools and their transformation.

Website: [Xarxes per al canvi \(edubcn.cat\)](http://Xarxes.per.al.canvi(edubcn.cat))

Language: Catalan

3.2.2 The Romanian-Danish Center for Integrated Education (RODACIE) – Bucharest, Romania

Instigator: General Office for Social Assistance and Child Protection, District 1, Bucharest, Romania

About: The Romanian-Danish Center for Integrated Education was a project officially launched in 2012, implemented by the General Office for Social Assistance and Child Protection, District 1, Bucharest (subordinated to the Local Townhall), in partnership with the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Science, University of Bucharest, VIA University College, Denmark and the Center for Resources and Training in Social Professions – ProVocație. By borrowing the Danish model, the project created the first crèche following the Danish best-practices in early education, within a public education institution. The project was partly funded through local funding and also by the Velux Foundation.

Following the pilot project (2011 – 2015), based on the evidence from research and practice, the initiative was extended to other three public creches and two kindergartens, funded by the local budget, also including teacher training. Apart from focusing on research evidence-informed practices and a guided transfer of (adapted) practices, the project also represents one successful example of stakeholder cooperation at local level.

Website: <http://www.dgasp-sectorul1.ro/>

Language: Romanian

3.2.3 The municipality of Žalec as an important mediator in the integration of migrant children

Instigator: Municipality of Žalec

About: The Municipality of Žalec systematically monitors the number of migrant children in its jurisdiction every year, focusing on the country of origin as an indicator of each child's mother tongue. This allows them to track the changing composition of the migrant population and adjust their strategies and actions to promote the integration of migrant children. For example, in recent years they have noticed a significant increase in migrant families from Albania. Unlike other migrant groups, most of whom come from the former Yugoslav republics and speak a Slavic language, which makes it easier to learn Slovenian, the Albanian language is a very distinct language that does not resemble Slovenian and is therefore more difficult for Albanian children to learn. Considering these data, the municipality acts as a mediator between children, families, preschools and schools in the area. It offers language classes to Albanian groups, with a focus on women, since they usually bring the children to school and are less proficient in Slovenian than men. To promote communication between families and educational institutions, they specifically support language learning for Albanian women. They also provide funding for translators in preschools and for additional language learning programmes for primary school children, and also fund non-governmental organisations that provide free school-related activities for migrant children.

Website: /

Language: slovenian

3.2.4 RoDaWell – The Romanian-Danish Centre for Children’s Wellbeing – Bucharest, Romania (County level)

Instigator: University of Bucharest and VIA University College Denmark

About: Following the successful implementation of the RODACIE project in District 1, Bucharest, the RoDaWell project was implemented between 2017 and 2019, in Bucharest, Romania, with the aim to generate learning performance by creating and promoting an education model that emphasises the psychological well-being dimension of children (well-being) in kindergartens and primary schools. The project was aimed at educational institutions with a large number of children (compared to the average at the network level), vulnerable to situations of risk such as: special educational requirements, poverty, parental migration, neglect, abuse or health problems.

The purpose of the research conducted in this project was to implement an educational intervention characterised by several components, inspired by the Danish model, addressed to children aged 3 to 10, initially starting from two kindergartens and two primary schools in disadvantaged social environments located in Bucharest. There was a longitudinally comparison of the well-being and academic performance of these children with a control group. The intervention was built starting from the success of the RODACIE program developed by Romanian and Danish educational experts and piloted between 2011 and 2015 in a nursery in Bucharest.

The activities of the project comprised: collaboration with kindergartens and primary schools to develop individualised intervention plans for children's well-being, exchange of experience and study visits of teachers in Danish schools, development of research projects to evaluate both the perception of teachers and children regarding well-being, as well as the factors that favour well-being. Following the research, the school interventions were based on the four major wellbeing factors based on research-evidence: the child's

autonomy, the child's interactions within the school, the learning environment and inclusion. The project also developed several tools to be used by schools interested in addressing children's wellbeing in schools (a guide to wellbeing, RoDaWell exercises, wellbeing principle cards, a working sheet for pupils and a self-assessment tool for schools).

One relevant outcome of the project was the introduction of new quality indicators in the national requirements for quality assurance supporting educational institutions (re)accreditation and external evaluation. Namely, the indicator refers to the systematic collection of data (from the community and school level) regarding the risk factors which can affect school participation, children's wellbeing and their pre/school performance, as well as ensuring the relevance of learning activities for children's wellbeing.

The project was implemented by the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Science, the University of Bucharest, in partnership with VIA University College Denmark, with the support of the Ministry of Education and the Romanian National Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education. The project was funded by the Velux Foundation.

Website: <https://rodawell.fpse.unibuc.ro/>

Language: Romanian (and English version of the website)

3.2.5 Project RESCUR, Surfing the Waves

Instigator: CMBRAE

About: RESCUR, Surfing the Waves is a Lifelong Learning Programme Comenius Project aiming at developing social-emotional skills and building resilience in children. The program is under the coordination of Prof. Carmel Cefai from the University of Malta. The program aims to build resilience in 4-11/12 years old children (kindergarten and primary level) and to develop social, emotional and cognitive competences in children, by teaching them how to use their strengths and resources in order to overcome obstacles and continue to grow and thrive in the different spheres of their lives. The main objectives of this program are: to develop and enhance social-emotional learning and resilience, promote positive and pro-social behaviours and healthy relationships, promote mental health and well-being in children, especially the vulnerable ones (disadvantaged, immigrants, Roma children, ESL, social exclusion, mental health problems, etc) and to improve academic engagement, motivation and learning. In order to achieve these goals, a good collaboration between school and family and an active involvement of the family in the activities proposed by the program, are a must.

Rescur, Surfing the Waves was developed as an answer to the social, cultural and economic challenges that many European children encounters nowadays. It offers a curriculum related to resilience for kindergartens and schools. The approach of resilience in schools also impact the teaching process itself leading to a paradigm shift and important changes at the level of school culture and school climate. The program is based on a few educational guides for teachers, parents and the guides with activities for children, according to their age level (kindergarten, early primary and late primary). The activity guides for children are structured in 6 main sections, containing different themes and sub-themes, on different topics such as: Developing communication skills (effective communication, assertiveness), Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships (healthy relationships, cooperation, empathy) Developing a growth mindset (positive and optimistic thinking, positive emotions), Developing self-determination (problem solving, autonomy and empowerment), Building on strengths (positive self-concept, self-esteem, using personal strengths for academic and social engagement), Turning challenges into opportunities (dealing with adversities and obstacles, loss, bullying, rejection, conflicts, changes and transitions). The program is piloted by schools at the local level, following a special training session and seems to be a promising approach. The curriculum

proposed by this project has been successfully implemented in the countries involved in it (Greece, Italy, Malta, etc).

Website: www.rescur.eu

Language: English

3.2.6 AMN Project for Guidance and Career Counselling

Instigator: CMBRAE

About: AMN is a platform used for career guidance, developed by AMN (Sibiu, Romania). It provides a set of educational tools (Toolkit) and can be used by students in the secondary and high-school education. By using the tools offered by this platform, students get to know themselves better, gain a clearer understanding of their professional and personal goals, acknowledging the necessary steps to be taken in order to achieve them.

AMN stands for: Assess-Manage-Navigate;

- Assess (evaluate) refers to the process of discovering personal skills, interests and talents;
- Manage-refers to the process of generating reports and managing the information achieved (each student receive an evaluation report with the results of the assessment process);
- Navigate-refers to the process of establishing appropriate counselling methods and identifying directions of study which can lead to achieving the proposed individual objectives;

AMN is used at the local level, by the schools in Bucharest, within a partnership between CMBRAE and AMN Sibiu. It is also involved in the survey regarding the educational and professional options of students of the 8th grade, which is done every school year by CMBRAE, at the local level (Bucharest).

Website: www.amn.ro, www.cmbrae.ro

Language: Romanian

3.3 GOOD PRACTICES AT THE NATIONAL/FEDERAL LEVEL

3.3.1 Curriculum.nu – Building the primary and secondary education of tomorrow, together

Instigator: VO-raad, PO-Raad, CNV onderwijs, de Algemene Onderwijsbond (Aob), de Federatie van Onderwijsvakorganisaties (FvOv), de Algemene Vereniging Schoolleiders (AVS), het Landelijk Aktie Komite Scholieren (LAKS) en Ouders en Onderwijs

About: In the Netherlands the Curriculum.nu was Curriculum.nu was created and implemented under the joint coordination of the VO-raad, the PO-Raad, CNV onderwijs, the Algemene Onderwijsbond (Aob), the Federatie van Onderwijsvakorganisaties (FvOv), the Algemene Vereniging Schoolleiders (AVS), the Landelijk Aktie Komite Scholieren (LAKS) and Ouders en Onderwijs. The implementation is done in cooperation with SLO, National Expertise Center for Curriculum Development.

Website: <https://curriculum.nu/>

Language: Dutch

3.3.2 OrKa – Programme for in-depth analysis of national examination

Instigator: National Examination Centre of Slovenia

About: The OrKa programme was developed as an initiative of the National Examination Centre of Slovenia. Every year the centre gathers data on student performance in various grades of the primary school. While the teachers and school heads had insight into the achievement of their school and their individual pupils by subject, the centre knew that the gathered data had the potential to offer in-depth insight into the performance of different students by e.g., gender, language spoken at home, the teacher of the subject etc. These types of analyses were, however, extremely time-consuming for teachers and schools as they do not operate with these kinds of analyses regularly. The centre has thus decided to create an online programme that offers these kinds of insights to practitioners in an easier way while also offering schools the chance to participate at workshops, at which the centre employees present the functioning and possibilities of the programme to schools, while also working with them to tackle areas the schools wish to develop or improve on. We have also prepared a comprehensive manual practitioners can use when engaging with the programme by themselves.

Website: <https://www.ric.si/nacionalno-preverjanje-znanja/orka/>

Language: Slovene

3.3.3 Teacher training "From research to the classroom"

Instigator: Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology - FECYT with experts

About: The Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology - FECYT, in collaboration with a group of experts in areas such as psychology, educational sciences or neurosciences, has developed a teacher training course, through the Internet, with the aim of improving knowledge, practice and educational decision-making guided by scientific research. It is aimed at reducing the gap between educational research and classroom practice with the objective of providing the different agents involved in education with the best available evidence. The training is structured in five modules, each with key pills in the form of a video, infographic or informative text. The courses are as follows: Module 1. What Is Research-Guided Education? Module 2. The Brain as the Organ of Education, Module 3. "A Study Says That....", Module 4. Educational Practices With Solid Evidence of Effectiveness and Module 5. In Action. The course will be offered through the different regional teacher training centres.

Website: <https://www.fecyt.es/es/FECYTedu/formacion-del-profesorado-de-la-investigacion-al-aula>

Language: Spanish

3.3.4 Towards Evidence-Based Policy-Making in Education: Mechanisms for knowledge mobilisation and research brokering in education – Romania

Instigator: Center for Development and Training in Higher Education, University of Bucharest, Romania

About: The research project, developed for a period of three years (2015 – 2017), was focused on the relationship between educational research and its use in the policy-making process in the Romanian educational system. Following conclusions drawn from previous research and starting from the premise

there is a higher probability for educational policy to generate long-term and more significant systemic changes if based on relevant research, the project examined the knowledge-mobilisation process between research and policy-making and the particular roles of the parties involved.

The project used a mixed methodological approach, combining a survey with researchers, interviews with university managers and focus groups with researchers and policy-makers. The research identified some of the missing links, mostly related to the production of research and its relevance to societal needs, with the financing bodies also exerting a relevant role.

The results focused on research production mechanisms, showed different opinions, obstacles and opportunities arising from the mobilisation of research into policy and, finally, offered suggestions for improvement. Two particularly relevant aspects of the project referred to the way in which the context of research influences the utilisation of educational research in policy-making and practice and to the impact of postgraduate studies on the teachers' practice.

The research project was funded by the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation, CNCS-UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-RU-TE-2014-4-1605, Contract number 367/1/10/2015.

Website: <https://impact2research.myfreesites.net/>

Language: Romanian/English

3.3.5 “Schools of Evidence” - Catalonia

Instigator: the Catalan Institute of Public Policy Evaluation (Ivàlua) and the Jaume Bofill Foundation.

About: As a public policy, the strategy for promoting the use of evidence and educational research was presented in November 2019, with the ultimate purpose of improving education and reducing educational inequalities. The general objectives of the program are to: a) Collect, disseminate, and generate solid evidence on educational policies and practices, on its effectiveness and efficiency; b) Create opportunities to share and transfer knowledge about what works to improve education; c) Devote pilot initiatives based on evidence, and d) Promote an assessment culture and the practice of controlled and rigorous experimentation within the Administration and the educational community, connecting decision-making processes with international evidence-based / informed trends. The initiative is currently stalled and there is no data when it will be resumed, nevertheless it appears as the first public attempt to put at the same table different educational stakeholders to discuss the EIP and to plan actions to move it forward.

Website: <https://fundaciobofill.cat/en/evidence-schools-research-for-educational-improvement>

Language: Catalan

3.3.6 Project CRED (Curriculum Relevant, Educație Deschisă - Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All)

Instigator: CMBRAE

About: The general objective of this project is to prevent early school leaving, through systemic measures of innovative and sustainable application of the new national curriculum, aiming to increase access to quality learning experiences for students in primary and middle school education. CRED is a challenging project, as it aims to find and implement the right balance between the application of European norms and models

in education and the traditional ways of teaching these competence-centred contents. The project has 5 main specific objectives:

1. Facilitating a unitary and coherent curricular approach centred on competences, among decision-makers and educational partners, in order to ensure equal opportunities for students belonging to vulnerable groups, including those integrated in the Second-chance program;
2. Promoting didactic approaches centred on competences, through the development and use of open educational resources relevant for the classroom application of the new curriculum for primary and secondary education (all the material created will be accessible on the Virtual School Library) ;
3. Curricular qualification of 55000 primary and secondary education teachers for a methodological approach centred on key competences, in accordance with the new curriculum and the adaptation of learning activities to the specific needs of each student, including those at risk of early school leaving. This objective aims to improve the teaching skills in pre-university education in order to promote high quality educational services and an inclusive school climate. The training program included face-to-face and online training, classroom/school applications, feedback and support, mentoring and portfolio assessment;
4. Increasing the quality and relevance of activities in schools with a vulnerable population, in order to reduce early leaving by implementing innovative projects focused on developing key skills of at least 2500 students and motivational curricular and extracurricular learning contexts. It addresses especially disadvantaged communities.
5. Carrying out research and thematic studies regarding the application of the new curriculum from the perspective of developing key skills and supporting students who belong to vulnerable groups.

This project is important and unique at the national level, as it trained 55000 teachers and produced an impressive number of open educational resources, available for everyone on the digital platform above-mentioned.

Website: <https://www.educred.ro/eu-sunt-cred/despre-proiectul-cred/>

Language: Romanian

3.3.7 Project ROSE (Romanian Secondary Education Project)

Instigator: CMBRAE

About: Project ROSE aims to reduce dropout in upper secondary and tertiary education and to increase the rate of success at the baccalaureate exam in the involved educational institutions. The project is under the coordination of the Ministry of National Education and the main target groups are the disadvantaged ones. It includes 3 main components: the first and the second aim to address the academic and social factors leading to low academic performance in secondary and tertiary education. The third component includes activities related to management, monitoring and evaluation. It also includes an analysis of existing demand-side programs that are currently under implementation, addressing the needs of disadvantaged upper secondary students. Component 1 includes two sub-components. Sub-component 1.1 School-based and Systemic Interventions, aims at reducing the dropout rate in the low performing public high schools, increasing the graduation rate and improving the rate of success in the baccalaureate exam, through remedial classes, tutoring, vocational counselling, coaching, mediation and personal development, as well as extra-curricular activities (trips, internships, competition, school networking activities, etc). Sub-component 1.2-Systemic Interventions aims to support high schools to increase the transition rate to higher education, through activities, such as: revision of the upper secondary education curriculum; training teachers and public schools director on implementing the revised curriculum, on adapting the curriculum to the needs and abilities of different students; improving teaching conditions; revising and updating the Baccalaureate exam bank of items and training teachers in the area of assessment and improvement of existing

information and technologies platform; development of digital teaching and learning materials meant to improve teaching and learning processes. Component 2 - University-Level Interventions and Bridge Programs aiming to support the needs of students at risk of dropping out of public faculties, through activities, such as: remedial programs, tutoring, counselling, guidance and support services, coaching services, workshops in specific areas, etc. The project aims to support a number of 60000 at risk students from 300 faculties (85% of the public faculties). Also, this component made it possible for the faculties to implement summer bridge programs that included activities such as: summer courses for high school students; partnerships between high schools, universities and the labour market, in order to promote the benefits of higher education and professional insertion; tutoring programs in campus; creation of learning centres in public universities with the goal to develop specific competences and ensure academic support services for high school students. Within this component, a number of 160 bridge programs were offered for approximately 8000 high school students. Component 3 – Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation was already presented above.

Website: <http://proiecte.pmu.ro/web/guest/rose>

Language: English/Romanian

3.3.8 Project QIE (Quality inclusive education)

Instigator: CMBRAE

About: Project QIE-Quality Inclusive Education was designed and implemented by UNICEF Romania. It started from the challenging reality that many Romanian children are still out of school and do not have access to a quality and inclusive education, especially in the disadvantaged areas, making it impossible for them to develop, thrive and have successful, fulfilled lives. Children facing the highest risk of dropping out of school mostly come from rural areas, poor families, Roma communities or have a disability. The drop-out rate in the rural areas is three times higher than in urban areas, according to the official statistics. Moreover, comparing to other children, Roma children are six times less likely to complete secondary education, due to various factors among which could be mentioned poverty, discrimination, low educational status of parents, poor involvement of the family in school life, lack or poor communication between school and family, etc. The solutions proposed by UNICEF in Romania came in the form of QIE project, which aimed to ensure that all children start school at the right age, stay in school and learn. In order to achieve this objective, the project focused on developing a school-family-community partnership for child participation and support. The program was implemented since 2014 in many schools from disadvantaged areas. The interventions of the project were centred on: training school managers and teachers to support each child in more effective ways; providing improved teaching methods; developing partnerships with families and supporting them in improving their parental skills; raising children's self-esteem and educational aspirations; enhancing the community interest and support for education. The results of the programme were impressive. Thus, 83% of at-risk children were prevented from dropping out; school participation increased for 67% of at-risk children; school performance increased for 53% children. As UNICEF states "Investing in quality education for all children is a smart investment".

Website: <https://www.unicef.org/romania/quality-inclusive-education-package>

Language: Romanian

3.3.9 Virtual Enterprises (VEs) (Firme de Exercițiu)- National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development – part of Ministry of Education of Romania

Investigator: CMBRAE

About: Virtual Enterprises (VEs), also known as *Practice Firms* or *Simulated Companies*, are imaginative entities created within an educational or training program to provide students with practical experience in the business field. These firms are simulated and do not engage in actual commercial activities.

In a virtual enterprise program, students are divided into departments and are responsible for various activities specific to a company, such as sales, marketing, accounting, human resources, and administration. They learn to collaborate as a team, develop their communication and negotiation skills, manage budgets, interact with clients, and solve business-related problems.

Virtual enterprises provide a safe and controlled environment for students to apply theoretical knowledge and gain a better understanding of the practical aspects of managing a business. They are commonly implemented in secondary schools, vocational schools, or universities, often integrated into economics or management-focused study programs.

The main purpose of virtual enterprises is to prepare students for the professional world and familiarize them with the realities and challenges of the business environment. By participating in a virtual enterprise, students can acquire practical skills, as well as an understanding of business management, decision-making, and customer interaction.

It is important to note that virtual enterprises do not have a commercial purpose but are focused on learning and developing professional skills.

Website: https://vocational-skills.ec.europa.eu/ncps/national-centre-technical-and-vocational-education-and-training-development-centrul-national-de_en

Language: Romanian/English

3.3.10 Personal Development and Guidance and Counselling in the School Curriculum and manuals for students

Instigator: CMBRAE

About: The new curriculum developed for the primary and lower secondary school level as a distinctive curricular area, compulsory and in the new framework as a response to challenges. Counselling and personal development indicates the positive results for students from well-being perspective, development of transferable skills and inclusive behaviours and attitudes. The general competences indicate 4 domains: self-knowledge and healthy lifestyle, socio-emotional development, learning management, career management competences. The responsibilities of teachers consist in the implementation with professionalism and qualitative work the national framework plans in each school. Some of the innovative aspects refer to non-cognitive skills, accent on competencies development and experiential learning, focus on the student and the partnership between teachers and school counsellors, The new CPD create context to develop attractive and creative resources, as manuals for students.

Website: https://programe.ise.ro/portals/1/2013_cp_i_ii/55_dezvoltare%20personala_cp_ii_omen.pdf

<https://programe.ise.ro/portals/1/curriculum/2017-progr/118-consiliere%20si%20dezvoltare%20personala.pdf>

<https://www.manuale.edu.ro/> (Dezvoltare personală, Consiliere și dezvoltare personală)

Language: Romanian

3.4 GOOD PRACTICES AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

3.4.1 Promoting Education Decision Makers' Use of Evidence in Flanders

Instigator: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – OECD

About: As part of the OECD work on strategic education governance, this report identifies lessons learnt to support the further development of standardised tests. In supporting countries in identifying the best ways to achieve national objectives in a context of multi-level governance structures and complex environments, OECD analyses the Flemish experience with the introduction of standardised tests. The report uses a research-based framework to engage stakeholders in thinking about the opportunities standardised tests could bring for their work. It builds on feedback from key stakeholders regarding their beliefs, hopes and concerns about the introduction of standardised tests in the Flemish schools. The feedback was collected during several structured discussions and a stakeholder reflection seminar. As a result, it describes how to further develop capability and motivation of decision makers at all levels of the education system to use evidence effectively for practice, teaching and quality assurance.

Website: [Promoting Education Decision Makers' Use of Evidence in Flanders | Educational Research and Innovation | OECD iLibrary \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#)

Language: English

3.4.2 OECD Education and Skills Today: What Romania can learn from other countries to inform its strategic vision for education

Instigator: OECD & the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) & The Romanian Presidential Administration

About: In 2016, the Romanian Presidential Administration launched the 'Educated Romania' initiative, a nation-wide consultation process, aiming to identify a vision, objectives, and action plans for the Romanian educational system at the 2030 horizon. As part of this process, the Romanian Presidential Administration worked with the OECD and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM)* to develop a series of policy perspectives that provide international insights to help address some of the main educational challenges identified throughout the consultation process. These policy briefs addressed four topics: [the teaching profession](#), [professional leadership in schools](#), [access to quality early education](#) and [educational equity](#). Each of these briefs were based on research data and evidence, mainly drawn from PISA, but also from European data (Eurostat, Education and Training Monitor etc.). The briefs make reference to research evidence, comprise international advice on the specific topics, as well as specific advice for the Romanian case. In other words, 'it draws on international evidence and examples to suggest ways in which Romania could work towards achieving the above goals'.

The overall analysis, including the four policy-briefs, is structured starting from relevant evidence and best-practice examples, shape specific proposals for practitioners and also offer alternatives and specific measures to be addressed by policy-makers. The recommendations could be extended/transferred to other contexts, following a similar analysis.

Website: <https://oecdedutoday.com/romania-strategic-vision-education/>

Language: English

3.4.3 CO:RE: Children online: Research and evidence – A knowledge base on children and youth in the digital age

Instigator: European Union’s Horizon 2020 EU.3.6.1.1 – The mechanisms to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth DT-TRANSFORMATIONS-07-2019 – The impact of technological transformations on children and youth

About: The CO:RE project is a Horizon project, aimed at compiling relevant data, theories, tools, research etc. regarding children and youth in the digital age. The aim of the project is to provide relevant stakeholders – from parents to governments – with the evidence needed to make informed decisions regarding children and youth. The project partners have compiled and created a platform for gathering and annotating evidence. Furthermore, they also gather the available datasets, that can be used to further research existing collected data. They also highlight key topics in the area, and have a section dedicated to theoretical questions and methodological questions, emphasizing ethical issues in research. All of these is readily available at the website they created and curate, thus “enabling access to empirical data, bridging evidence to education and policy and offering resources and tools to anyone concerned with children and media”.

Website: <https://core-evidence.eu/>

Language: English; other