INCLUD-ED:

Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe from Education

In today's knowledge society, education can act as a powerful resource to achieve the European goal of social cohesion. However, at present, most school systems are failing as is demonstrated by the fact that many individuals, and their communities, are being excluded, both educationally and socially, from benefits that should be available to all. Similarly to the field of medicine in which only those treatments that have been proven to be effective when curing a particular disease are implemented, there is a need to identify those educational and social actions that research has shown can reverse social and educational exclusion.

Research objectives

The INCLUD-ED project is an integrated project which aims to analyse educational actions that contribute to social cohesion and educational actions that lead to social exclusion. It does so within the context of the European knowledge based society, and provides key elements and lines of action to improve educational and social policy. In other words, the INCLUD-ED project is oriented towards clarifying what works and what does not work in terms of student success and social inclusion. The project concentrates **on describing the elements that can influence school failure or success and their relationship with other areas of society (housing, health, employment, and social and political participation). There is a specific focus on social groups which are vulnerable to being socially excluded (young people, migrants, cultural groups e.g. Roma, women, and people with disabilities)**. The project explores how educational results influence employment opportunities, access to housing and health and participation in public spaces for members of the vulnerable groups targeted and for all members of society in general.

Results to date:

1. INCLUD-ED has identified **successful actions that contribute to overcoming school failure.** Some of these are: heterogeneous grouping with the reallocation of existing human resources, extending the learning time, and family education. These successful actions have proven wrong those discourses that tend to blame students or their environment for school failure. On the contrary, it has been found that **when these actions are implemented in schools with predominantly immigrant and minority student populations located in disadvantaged areas, their educational results improve**.

European Research Area

2. **The participation of families and community members** becomes a significant potential resource to enhance educational and social inclusion. Five types of participation were identified: informative, consultative, evaluative (i.e. of the school and the students), participation in decision making (including academic aspects) and educative. The last three have been found to promote educational success.

3. **Family Education as a successful action.** Previous theories and research had already demonstrated that **promoting cultural and educational interaction between students and social agents, more particularly with family members, enhances student achievement**. It has been found that family education programmes greatly encourage student motivation and academic success.

4. **Overcoming the ghetto situation: From the school to all areas of society**. It has been found that once successful actions have transformed the school, the process can be extended to other areas of society (i.e. employment, housing, health, political and social participation) in order to also overcome social exclusion in those areas. The main finding consists of recreating the research-based successful actions identified by engaging in a dialogue with the people who live in the area.

Future results:

1. The connection between processes of social exclusion and inclusion and educational opportunities from the social agent's perspective will be analysed in relation to five vulnerable groups (migrants, women, cultural groups, young people, and people with disabilities). Successful actions which contribute to overcoming educational exclusion will be identified.

2. Mixed interventions between educational policy and other areas of social policies will be analysed and successful actions will be identified which are taking steps towards overcoming social exclusion and building social cohesion in Europe.

3. Policy recommendations will be formulated in relation to the strategies developed by communities to reduce or prevent inequalities, and foster social inclusion and empowerment.

For more information, please visit the following website: http://www.ub.edu/includ-ed
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