



European Education Area Strategic Framework
Working Group on Equality and Values in Education and Training
(2021-2025)

**Report from the PLA: Addressing social and territorial
inequalities in and through education,
12 and 13 December 2022, Paris, France**



INTRODUCTION

The second Peer Learning Activity (PLA) of the Working Group on Equality and Values, a collaborative effort of the European Commission and the French Ministry of National Education, took place in Paris (France) on 12-13 December 2022. The PLA brought together experts from twelve participating countries (AT, BE, CZ, EL, FR, HR, LT, PT, RO, RS, SK, TR) and four stakeholder organisations (EASNIE, ETUCE, LLLP, OECD). The PLA focused on the theme of 'addressing social and territorial inequalities in and through education'. The PLA agenda can be found in annex of this report.

This report is partially based on a background note prepared for the PLA and presents some of the major insights, findings, discussions and inspirational practices pertaining to the themes of the PLA. Through policy examples and exposure to various practices in France and other Member States, the PLA sought to identify key learning points on national policy implementation relating to the PLA theme. These will be integrated into a wider Issue paper on anti-discrimination in education.

1. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND¹

1.1. Social inequality

There is increasing evidence in the EU that territorial and social inequality is growing. This has been found by both international organisations and researchers.

A Science for Policy Brief², reporting on JRC (Joint Research Centre)³ research, compared nine OECD countries⁴ over 12 years using PISA data, points to the findings that show that sizeable improvements for disadvantaged 15-year-olds were only found in one country (Germany) when looking at the period 2003–2015. The average PISA scores of children with lower educated parents declined considerably during this period. The data also highlights the intersectionality between low socio-economic status (SES) and for instance ethnicity.

There is more recent evidence of rising levels of social segregation in European countries.⁵ A study in 2019, using PISA data, showed that social segregation was present throughout the EU and that such segregation within education systems was related to social inequality in student achievement. The higher the level of social segregation within an education system, the stronger the relationship between socio-economic status and student achievement in a country. The findings provide evidence that social segregation in education systems may contribute to the intergenerational transmission of educational (dis)advantage and thus serve to exacerbate wider problems of socioeconomic inequality in Europe. It is also worth noting that there were major disparities between EU countries.

The Council of Europe has noted that lower quality education in a school can be both the cause and consequence of school segregation. Schools attended by

¹ This chapter contains sections extracted from a background note prepared for the PLA

² https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/socio-economic-background-educational-inequalities_en

³ The JRC is the European Commission's science and knowledge service. It employs scientists to carry out research in order to provide independent scientific advice and support to EU policy.

⁴ Australia, Canada, England, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden

⁵ See e.g. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333118287_The_socio-spatial_dimension_of_educational_inequality_A_comparative_European_analysis.

socially disadvantaged students tend to have lower expectations of these children in terms of educational attainment.⁶

Finally, at a time when new media are increasingly critical for learning, a significant digital divide exists between privileged and less privileged individuals and communities. According to a Eurostat report in 2022,⁷ though 92% of EU households had internet access in 2021, a quarter of low-income households had no access to computers and broadband, with divergences across the EU affected by household income.

1.2. The rural-urban divide

Urban and rural schools both come with their specific challenges in terms of such educational inequalities.

In urban areas, educational inequalities are closely connected to issues relating to poverty and segregated neighbourhoods,⁸ which often lead to segregated schools. Such educational segregation keeps disadvantaged children away from social networks, jobs, and better salary opportunities, and has been linked to social exclusion.⁹ It has also been found that many teachers are not well prepared to teach in the diverse environments¹⁰ that characterise urban schools, and that teacher drop-out rates are high.¹¹ In addition to dealing with the poverty associated with certain urban neighbourhoods, teachers have been found to be ill-prepared to deal with the violence associated with certain urban environments, and some indicate they fear the neighbourhoods where they work.¹²

Cross-sectional evidence reveals a sizeable rural-urban gap in educational outcomes across a wide range of countries. 'Students in schools in urban and more economically developed environments often demonstrate higher achievement. This may be related to the availability of better teaching staff, better local community resources, or higher socioeconomic status (SES) of families in many urban classrooms'.¹³

A Policy Brief by the Rural NEET Youth Network¹⁴ (funded by COST - European Cooperation in Science and Technology) from 2022 identifies common findings when it comes to rural regions: higher travel; communication and training costs; costly or inadequate services; lack of quality teachers; limited educational, training, social and economic opportunities; and less social capital. The Policy Brief also notes that in 2020 there was a higher incidence of early leavers from education

⁶ <https://rm.coe.int/fighting-school-segregation-in-europe-through-inclusive-education-a-posi/168073fb65>, p. 11

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Digital_economy_and_society_statistics_-_households_and_individuals

⁸ The Urban Agenda for the EU, from 2016, attempts to address some of these issues through efforts to improve education and training (see e.g. p. 31 and p. 49 in the Review of the contributions of the Urban Agenda for the EU to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda). See: <https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/news/review-contributions-urban-agenda-eu-new-urban-agenda>; See also: https://www.parlementairemonitor.nl/9353000/1/j9vviij5epmi1ey0/vk4d64ji5tzz?ctx=vq9hm2q38wdd&tab=1&start_tab0=100

⁹ https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-10/Just%20city%20-%20Article%206%20_PDF.pdf

¹⁰ For example religious, racial, language and ethnic diversity.

¹¹ https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/13800735/The_challenges_of_beginning_teachers_in_urban_primary_schools.pdf; note that this particular study is from the Netherlands.

¹² idem

¹³

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356145741_Scaffolding_the_Learning_in_Rural_and_Urban_Schools_Similarities_and_Differences; p.213

¹⁴ <https://rnyobservatory.eu/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Policy-Brief-Challenges-Education-Rural-Areas.pdf>

and training among young people in rural areas (10.5%) and suburbs (11.2%), compared to those in cities (8.7%).

1.3. Specific challenges

Certain specific challenges identified in the existing research relating to social and territorial inequalities are perhaps more difficult to address and call for more involved and multi-level solutions but are worth mentioning here.

One of the factors that has been associated with continuing (and even growing) socio-economic disparities and educational outcomes is **tracking and especially early tracking**. Nevertheless, most European education systems have tracking as a central element of their education system. The *Eurydice Policy Brief on Equity in school education in Europe: Structures, policies and student performance* points to the finding that: 'Tracking, or the assigning of students to different educational programmes, is indeed one of the major factors shaping the stratification of education systems. It has been found to influence equity in education to a considerable extent.'¹⁵ (p.11) This is also confirmed by the EENEE report on *Patterns of school segregation* which finds that 'Countries with comprehensive school systems have significantly smaller differences between schools than countries with earlier streaming, which is likely to be the result of selective admission to streams.'¹⁶ (p.29)¹⁶.

A second specific challenge relates to **parental choice** and free market mechanisms. Many parents, especially middle-class parents, tend to firmly invest in getting their children into a preferred school. This can result in avoiding certain schools, or efforts to collectively change the composition of a school, but also in moving away from perceived 'risky' environments to residential areas in which one's preferred schools are located.¹⁷ Low-income families tend to lack the financial means to live near higher quality schools. Therefore, students from disadvantaged social backgrounds often only have access to poorly performing schools.¹⁸ Market-oriented trends can also exacerbate this situation.¹⁹

A study comparing rural education in Portugal, Finland and France (Ferreira, 2011) points out that in terms of the urban-rural resource inequality gap, persistent challenges relate to the '**way of life**' in more rural communities, where limited cultural resources are available.²⁰ Family 'culture' and traditions tend to be stronger and there can be more pressure for children to engage in time-consuming family chores, reducing study time. Teaching salaries in rural areas also tend to be lower, according to this study, making teaching less attractive. Teaching realities in rural communities were found to be less important in terms of national and regional policy making.

¹⁵ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/517ee2ef-4404-11eb-b59f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

¹⁶ <https://eenee.eu/en/resources/library/patterns-of-school-segregation-in-europe/>

¹⁷ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0042098019868377>

¹⁸ <https://www.cairn.info/revue-economique-2021-5-page-717.htm?contenu=article>

¹⁹ See: <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion/article/view/4289/4289>

²⁰ <https://www.cairn.info/revue-education-et-societes-2011-2-page-109.htm>

2. HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PLA DISCUSSIONS

2.1. Challenges

Beyond the challenges identified in the existing research, the following challenges were raised during the PLA in Paris:

- A **shortage of teachers and educational resources available in many remote areas** was highlighted as an important concern. Similarly, the lack of access to extracurricular activities, and avenues to civic participation for young people, was highlighted.
- Another key issue raised by participants at the PLA concerned **how to connect micro and macro level approaches to addressing discrimination in schools**. In particular, how to address funding issues, tackle social stigma and raise awareness in a multi-level manner were outlined as important challenges.
- At the macro level, the challenge of harnessing **political will** to address educational segregation was also noted. A crucial question posed by participants thus concerned **how to convince authorities and schools that social cohesion and well-being is as important as learning outcomes**.
- Linked to the above, participants noted that **traditional and new media often form part of the problem** with respect to addressing discrimination - also the media that the students themselves access. Here, it was suggested that the media often does not raise awareness of causes and consequences of discrimination. In some cases, they also reinforce discriminatory tendencies (e.g. through implicit biases in representation).
- At the micro level, it was highlighted that there tends to be a **lack of coordination within schools when it comes to tackling existing discrimination**. It is often unclear who should lead in these efforts. Many schools also tend to reproduce inequalities and discriminate against certain students - whether implicitly or explicitly. In this context, it was stressed that schools can address discrimination, but that this needs to be embedded within broader community efforts.
- In terms of school-level considerations, it was also stressed that teachers often lack the **skills to teach in diverse classrooms**. Teachers' efficacy also greatly depends on their awareness of their own perspectives, assumptions and biases, and their ability to empathise with students from different backgrounds.
- Addressing **parental resistance** (and sometimes teacher resistance) was also identified as a crucial hurdle to overcome in taking steps against educational segregation.
- The **challenge of data collection** was also brought to fore, in particular with respect to how the occurrence of discrimination can best be measured and assessed and what constitutes reliable instruments. Participants also pointed to the overreliance on quantitative data, resulting in the neglect of important qualitative data.

The specific challenges identified above represent issues that policy measures need to take into consideration.

2.2. Points for attention

In response to the key challenges above, the following solutions emerged from the PLA discussions.

- With regards to the observed **shortage of teachers and educational resources available in many remote areas**, the potential of digital tools to provide students with access to high-quality instruction and course materials to 'level the playing field', was highlighted. In particular, hybrid or remote learning as well as online learning platforms and resource banks, could help ensure that students in remote areas are not limited to the resources available locally. At the same time, participants noted that several factors need to be considered before digital learning can truly make an impact in remote areas including: i) reliable internet connections, ii) access to the necessary devices and resources as well as iii) digital skills (on the part of teachers, learners and also parents – particularly for younger learners). It was also noted that the evidence-base suggests that a mix of face-to-face and online instruction is more effective than online learning on its own, pointing to the importance of maintaining an equilibrium between online and offline learning in leveraging this potential in remote settings.
- With respect to educational segregation, participants highlighted the need for **whole-school and community-based approaches**, to understand the holistic situation when it comes to discrimination, assess needs, priorities and identify/leverage existing local resources and expertise. It was recognised, however, that implementation of such approaches can be time and resource consuming. Consulting and cooperating with school stakeholders were outlined as essential, including students and, where possible, parents and social workers/psychologists, municipal workers, civil activists, researchers, local NGOs and other community based organisations and/or initiatives. It was also noted that such approaches can help to ensure stakeholder 'buy in' in the community.
- **Awareness-raising about the problem of educational segregation** at multiple levels involving all stakeholders in an active way, including the media, was highlighted as crucial to inspire the necessary political will to enact measures and tackle parental resistance. Beyond raising awareness about the problem and detrimental effects of educational segregation, these strategic efforts could also seek to effectively **communicate the proven benefits of desegregation**. This could include disseminating existing research evidence regarding the positive impact of desegregation for both low SES-learners (e.g. higher levels of motivation and professional ambition, increased well-being, and safety) and high-SES learners (e.g. benefits of diversity in school life such as cultural awareness and understanding).
- **Teacher training can also play a crucial role in preparing teachers to teach in diverse classrooms** (pre-service, in-service and training for teacher educators). This includes competences such as differentiated instruction and intercultural education to empower teachers with the competences to select and modify methods that will best meet the needs of diverse groups of students. It was noted that teachers further need to be empowered with the agency and competences to critically evaluate the representation of diversity in teaching materials; and to systematically reflect on the impact of their own practice.
- It was highlighted that **relevant training for school leaders** is also important to support the development and implementation of coherent school-level strategies.
- At practitioner level, **promoting active school or teacher networks** to tackle discrimination and share strategies was also highlighted as a key solution.

- Similarly, **promoting cooperation among students**, for instance through international projects, was highlighted as an approach to ensure student agency and participation in fostering more diverse and socially equitable learning environments.
- The importance of **mentorship and role model initiatives** in order to promote positive attitudes towards school and career ambitions was also highlighted as particularly important for students that have access to fewer 'natural mentoring relationships' (e.g. low-SES learners, learners in rural areas).
- **Increasing funding and other resources** are needed to make necessary changes, including to ensure that all schools have the professional expertise and the necessary means to implement inclusive education. It was stressed that attempts to desegregate are often carried out via short-term funding allocations based on political will. This approach makes it difficult to ensure sustainable results and the institutionalisation of good practices. It is thus essential to ensure that the process is carried out in a sustainable manner with clear, long-term objectives.

3. INSPIRING PRACTICES FROM FRANCE

The French PLA included examples of how the French authorities are seeking to tackle both social and territorial inequalities. These included the following:

BOX 2: TACKLING TERRITORIAL INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION IN THE MEUSE

The Meuse is a very rural French *département* (administrative district) located on the border of Luxembourg and Belgium, which contains only three towns with more than 5,000 inhabitants, and is characterised by social and geographic isolation, as well as a high degree of deprivation. School pupils have an average journey of 45-60 minutes to and from school.

To combat any potential educational disadvantage, the educational authorities established a collaborative strategy, supported by the national *Territoires éducatifs ruraux* (TER) (rural educational territories) programme.²¹ The strategy involves providing more resources to ensure a lower teacher-pupil ratio, smaller classes (less than 20 students), mutualising the facilities and resources of three networked secondary schools and training teachers to support retention in the local schools. The priorities are learning, sport, culture, but also nutrition: each child has the option to have breakfast on arrival at school. The strategy brings together a range of local stakeholders, including the health and welfare authorities. All children learn at least two foreign languages to facilitate mobility and access to further learning in and exchanges with neighbouring countries. As a result of the strategy, pupils in the Meuse district achieve results above the national average.

BOX 3: TACKLING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION IN TOULOUSE

An international comparative study carried out in 2015 by the French government researchers (CNESCO)²² showed that there was a relatively high degree of social segregation in French schools, with a high concentration of social deprivation in the

²¹ <https://www.education.gouv.fr/les-territoires-educatifs-ruraux-308601>

²² <https://www.cnesco.fr/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Etat-des-lieux-Mixite-C3%A9-C3%A0-l%C3%A9coleFrance1.pdf>; <https://www.cnesco.fr/mixites-sociales/etat-des-lieux-de-la-mixite-sociale/>

public sector schools. As a result, since 2015, the French educational authorities have been implementing policies aiming to improve social diversity in schools.

This was the case for example in the city of Toulouse, where socially disadvantaged students were found to be concentrated in public schools in particular districts. An action plan was implemented in 2017 which aimed to tackle this divide. The action plan included: reprofiling the schools into 10 secondary schools with a transport time of no more than 15-20 minutes for all, limiting the number of pupils (maximum class size of 25), training teachers, introducing special roles for 'social mixing' teachers to support the transition from primary to secondary school, providing educational support activities during the lunch break for pupils who needed extra support, and ensuring that lunch was available at all schools. An evaluation²³ of the outcomes of the programme has shown two important results: a narrowing of the differences in achievements between different schools and an overall improvement in educational outcomes.

BOX 4: POLICY INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL DIVERSITY IN PARISIAN SCHOOLS

Two recent policy initiatives were introduced in Parisian schools aiming to strengthen social diversity: (1) the experimentation of multi-school catchment areas from 2017 (targeting middle schools) and (2) the AFFELNET school choice reform of 2021 (targeting high schools). Both initiatives highlight the importance of the rules that govern the placement of students to schools as tools for promoting social diversity.

The **multi-school catchment area initiative**²⁴ aimed to tackle the high degree of segregation based on socio-economic status (SES) in Parisian middle schools, with low and high SES students concentrated strongly in schools in different areas of Paris. The initiative aimed to merge schools' catchment areas to rebalance their social intake; an approach which is feasible where middle schools are geographically close but have contrasting social profiles, as in Paris. Three two-school catchment areas were set up in the 18th and 19th *arrondissements*, involving about 1,000 students each year when they entered sixth grade (the first year of middle school). Two methods were used to assign students to the middle schools in the merged catchment areas: 'alternating entry'²⁵ (Berlioz-Coysevox catchment area) and 'regulated choice of school'²⁶ (Bergson-Pailleron and Curie-Philippe catchment areas). In the Berlioz-Coysevox and Bergson-Pailleron areas, social diversity increased significantly in the sixth grade and the rate of avoidance for private schools decreased from 15% to 30% between 2016 and 2019. In the Curie-Philippe area, the scheme led to a 20% decrease in avoidance for private schools between 2016 and 2019, but its effects on social diversity have been more modest.

The **AFFELNET school choice reform of 2021** changed the way in which pupils were assigned to public high schools. The reform aimed to assign pupils to schools closer to home, reduce the academic stratification between schools and increase

²³ https://www.revue-urbanites.fr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Urbanite%CC%81s-16-Ben-Ayed-et-Butzbach-2022.pdf? x_tr sch=http& x_tr sl=fr& x_tr tl=en& x_tr hl=en& x_tr pto=sc

²⁴ <https://www.ipp.eu/en/publication/multi-school-catchment-areas-in-paris-what-results-after-three-years-2/>

²⁵ Under the 'alternating entry' (*montée alternée*) approach, all pupils entering sixth grade one year are assigned to one school, and then all pupils entering sixth grade the following year are assigned to the other school in the catchment area.

²⁶ Under the 'regulated school choice' approach, parents are asked to rank the two available schools in order of preference. Students are placed into 4 social groups based on their parents' SES, and places in each school are allocated among the 4 groups to match the distribution observed in the catchment area. Students are then assigned to the places reserved for their group by an algorithm that takes into account the parents' preference and priority criteria (e.g. disability, siblings, etc.)

social diversity while reducing parents' avoidance of disadvantaged public middle schools. The main changes introduced were a new proximity bonus based on distance to the high school and a new social bonus based on the socio-economic index of the pupil's middle school. The reform has already shown strong results, with a 30% reduction in the level of academic and social segregation in just the first year.

BOX 5: THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL DIVERSITY ON EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

The PLA provided the opportunity to present the results of a study looking at the effects of social diversity on educational and social outcomes.²⁷ In 2015, the French ministry of education launched a national initiative to increase social diversity in middle schools, which led to five types of actions being implemented on 22 sites in 2016 and 2017: (1) redrawing catchment areas; (2) closing/opening a school; (3) merging catchment areas + new algorithms for assigning pupils; (4) merging catchment areas + 'alternating entry'; (5) creation of special options (e.g. music, dance, international) to increase a school's attractiveness. The study showed that several types of action are effective in increasing social diversity, but only when initial gaps are large and where there is no adverse response (e.g. from the private sector). It also showed that an increase in social diversity does not change educational outcomes, but does improve some behavioural and social outcomes, such as school climate, safety of low-SES pupils, cooperation, solidarity and reduction of fatalism.

PLA participants also had the opportunity to visit two inspiring practices in the Parisian suburb of Cergy-Pontoise:

- **The 'Cité éducative' of Cergy**^{28,29} is an alliance of French educational actors in urban policy priority neighbourhoods, encompassing educational institutions, parents, national and local authorities, NGOs, social workers, communities and citizens. The initiative is a part of the wider *Cité Éducative* programme of the French national government³⁰, which operates as an experimental platform for educational and other stakeholders to collaborate to strengthen school support and improve the conditions of education in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The town of Cergy, which includes some 15,200 young people, gained the *Cité Éducative* label in 2022, and brings together a range of committed stakeholders including the local municipality, the Prefecture, the national education ministry, NGOs (including the '*Coup de Pouce*'³¹ (helping hand) NGO which seeks to tackle early school leaving, the '*Enfants et Familles*' (children and families) NGO which aims to facilitate school-community relations and the NGO '*3RE - Acteurs de la réussite*' (stakeholders for success) which provides one-to-one coaching for learners facing particular difficulties), the local schools, the university and business school of Cergy, and health and social authorities. It implements a range of initiatives including the provision of mediators in and around schools (via the NGO Citeo³²), artistic and cultural activities (e.g. dance show) and encouraging educational pathways to tertiary level through familiarising secondary school pupils with the local higher education institutions

²⁷ <https://www.sciencespo.fr/liepp/fr/content/mixite-sociale-dans-les-colleges-0.html>

²⁸ <https://www.cergy.fr/notre-ville/visite/en-labels/le-label-cites-educatives/>

²⁹ <https://www.citeseducatives.fr/cite/cergy>

³⁰ <https://www.citeseducatives.fr/>

³¹ <https://www.coupdepouceassociation.fr/>

³² <https://www.citeo.org/>

(supported by the national '*Cordée de la réussite*' (roped together for success) programme³³).

- '**Internat d'excellence**' de Cergy³⁴ (the 'Boarding school of excellence' of Cergy) forms part of a French initiative of 'boarding schools of excellence', where a select group of students and the adults who supervise them live on the school premises throughout the week (Monday-Friday). The initiative aims to respond to specific difficulties encountered by disadvantaged students, who often do not benefit from a favourable home environment for successful studies. These difficulties can be social, economic, or family related. Beyond housing, participating students at the Boarding School of Cergy benefit from personalised educational support including homework support and needs-based psycho-social support. They are also offered sports and cultural activities to enjoy collectively. The admission process for the boarding school is based on individual applications from students and their families who seek to temporarily change the students' living environment to succeed academically, prepare for their professional futures, develop their sense of community life and responsibilities.

4. INSPIRING PRACTICES FROM OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, PROJECTS AND ORGANISATIONS

The PLA also showcased important EU projects and initiatives such as the ECASS project.

BOX 6: ECASS – European Cities Against School Segregation³⁵

ECASS is an international project aiming to create innovative solutions for local governments to tackle school segregation in European cities, specifically Barcelona, Milano and Oslo. It is designed as a knowledge exchange project between academic experts in the area of educational inclusion and school segregation studies and local policymakers to design, test and apply innovative solutions. It has produced a range of materials to support stakeholders in combatting school integration. These include: training materials³⁶ to learn about school segregation, its causes and consequences, and what can be done; European guidelines³⁷ to inspire policies to tackle school segregation; the analysis and proposals on information policies³⁸ to reduce school segregation dynamics and some reflections on challenges³⁹ faced by segregated schools in relation to the Covid pandemic.

Other inspiring practices which were shared from other participating countries and organisations include the following:

- **TEIP - Programme for Priority Intervention Educational Areas⁴⁰** is a Portuguese initiative that aims to promote educational inclusion in schools located in disadvantaged areas. Through the programme, specific improvement plans are developed to promote an improvement cycle in each cluster of schools, in order to reach students at risk of social exclusion. Through the study '25 years of the TEIP Program in Portugal', an interactive e-book presenting 10 case studies carried out in TEIP schools was made available in 2022. The book covers schools in various regions of the country

³³ <https://www.cordeesdelareussite.fr/>

³⁴ <http://www.clg-touleuses-cergy.ac-versailles.fr/spip.php?rubrique123>

³⁵ <https://www.ecass.eu/>

³⁶ <https://www.ecass.eu/training-materials/>

³⁷ <https://www.ecass.eu/european-guidelines/>

³⁸ <https://www.ecass.eu/information-policies-2/>

³⁹ <https://www.ecass.eu/covid-and-segregation/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/toolkitsforschools/detail.cfm?n=434>

illustrating the processes of innovation, inclusion and promotion of school success initiated through the programme.⁴¹

- **Inschool**⁴² is an Erasmus+ KA3 Social inclusion through education project aiming to significantly increase the knowledge and skills of school leaders, teachers and student teachers to work inclusively with the increasing range of diverse learners in their schools. Key activities include national focus groups with school leaders, teachers and student teachers in relation to inclusive education and inclusive pedagogies, an international trainers' event to allow participants to familiarise with the materials of the project and tailor them for their contexts, face-to-face courses for school leaders and teachers focused on changing culture and school practices and the piloting of training courses for student/newly qualified teachers to collect feedback on the training courses developed.
- **EU rural virtual classroom**⁴³ is an Erasmus+ funded project coordinated by partners in four EU Member States (Spain, Italy, Ireland, and Lithuania) which aims to become a collaborative virtual educational space in real time where rural schools can support each other to overcome scarcities around available teachers, content and activities. The project aims to offer a platform for collaborative educational projects, a teaching area of workshops and classes in real time (multigrade, multilingual classrooms), a professional development and resources area for teachers and a community area for members (schools, professionals / entities from the educational field and relevant rural development actors). Access is free to all schools registered as members.
- **Schools For All**⁴⁴ is a project being implemented under the 'Local Development and Poverty Reduction' programme in Greece, by the European Wergeland Centre (EWC), under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and with the support of the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP). Through the project school directors and teachers are trained to create safe and inclusive schools and classrooms for learners from diverse backgrounds. The program aspires to contribute to enhancement of social cohesion and reduction of economic and social disparities. The 'Local Development and Poverty Reduction' programme in Greece, financed by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, was awarded a total budget of 6,5 million euros as part of the EEA Grants 2014–2021.
- **The Omama program**⁴⁵ is a Slovak initiative run by the NGO Way Out which aims to support children from marginalised socio-economic backgrounds to develop their educational potential in early childhood (age 0-6). Through educational activities, games and counselling carried out directly in the families' homes and in parents' clubs, the organisation works to foster the appropriate stimuli to promote healthy child development, while building parenting skills and improving the overall family environment. Activities are carried out in cooperation with local social workers, early intervention professionals and other stakeholders who are in direct contact with the poverty-afflicted communities, and local residents are trained to directly support the initiatives. Counselling is also provided to pregnant mothers.
- **Digital Academy for Parents**⁴⁶ (*Academia Digital para Pais*) is a digital literacy project that gives parents and guardians the opportunity to attend training that promotes digital skills. Training sessions take place in the

⁴¹ https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/54954/1/e-book_REDESCOLA_2022.pdf

⁴² <https://illplatform.eu/what-we-do/eu-projects/inscool-ii/>

⁴³ <https://www.desenvolupamentrural.cat/projectes/larca/erasmus-eu-rural-virtual-classroom>

⁴⁴ <https://theewc.org/projects/integration-of-refugee-children-in-greek-schools/>

⁴⁵ <https://cestavon.sk/en/omama-project/what-we-do>

⁴⁶ <https://www.e-redes.pt/en/news/2021/10/14/2nd-edition-digital-academy-parents>

children's schools on an after-work basis. Developed with the aim of supporting families in the context of distance classes imposed by the pandemic, the programme, in its 1st edition (school year 2020/2021), benefited around 1,000 families and included 1,048 hours of training, involving 53 school groups, with 344 trainers and focused on schools in Educational Priority Intervention Territories (TEIP). The project is coordinated by the Portuguese Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and E-REDES.

Further relevant and inspiring practices were also shared from several participating countries and organisations. For example:

- Austria presented the '100 Schools – 1000 Chances' project (2021-2023)⁴⁷ and the training course for the development of gender competence among teachers and other key stakeholders in the education system.
- Belgium-Flanders presented the new 'softer' procedures introduced to try to foster social diversity in school enrolment, including a priority system/quota (up to 20%) and organising tours of certain schools.
- Croatia shared the work done to support education via the National Island Development Programme and also the initiatives to promote higher education for all.
- The Czech Republic presented the measures designed to reduce inequalities in access to quality education included in the Strategy of Education Policy of Czech Republic up to 2030.⁴⁸ These include support measures for children from a different cultural or environmental background (including Roma children) including personnel support, modification of content, methods, evaluation of education, individual education plan, teaching Czech as a second language, and aids.
- EASNIE presented the SRSP project on 'Addressing regional disparities in Czech education system'⁴⁹ and the TSI project on 'Combating disparities in access to inclusive education in Italy, Portugal and Spain'.⁵⁰
- The ETUCE presented some the main projects which aim to tackle inequalities in education: Migration and education⁵¹, Embracing diversity in education⁵² and Attractiveness of the teaching profession⁵³.
- Greece presented a range of inclusive actions implemented to eliminate inequalities and ensure equal opportunities in education for all students, including a new upgraded full-day Primary School and Kindergarten programme, a 'Supportive Teaching' programme, and a specific strategy for the educational integration of all refugee minors.⁵⁴
- Lithuania presented the 'Millenium Schools'⁵⁵ project which aims to create integral, optimal, and high standard conditions for learning and elimination of achievement gaps in every municipality.
- The OECD presented some key findings from the 'Strength from Diversity: Education for Inclusive Societies'⁵⁶ project which aims to identify how

⁴⁷ <https://100schulen.univie.ac.at/>

⁴⁸ https://www.msmt.cz/uploads/brozura_S2030_en_fin_online.pdf

⁴⁹ [https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/TSI-SRSP%20files/SRSP%20Czech%20Republic%20-%20Deliverable%207%20\(Final\).pdf](https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/TSI-SRSP%20files/SRSP%20Czech%20Republic%20-%20Deliverable%207%20(Final).pdf)

⁵⁰ <https://www.european-agency.org/news/tsi-italy-portugal-spain>

⁵¹ <https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/projects/migration-education/3453-introduction>

⁵² <https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/news/etuice/3597-embracing-diversity-in-education-new-etuice-project-inspires-trade-unions-across-europe-to-take-action-for-inclusive-education>

⁵³ <https://www.csee-etuice.org/en/projects/attractiveness-of-the-teaching-profession/4762-introduction>

⁵⁴ <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/TSI-SRSP%20files/SRSP%20EL%20Deliverable%207%20Conceptual%20paper.pdf>

⁵⁵ <https://tukstantmeciomyklos.lt/en/home-en/>

⁵⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/education/strength-through-diversity/>

education systems can be equitable and inclusive by supporting the learning and well-being outcomes of diverse populations and ensuring that all individuals are able to engage with others in increasingly diverse and complex societies.

- Romania presented the 'Educated Romania'⁵⁷ project, the measures being taken for Roma inclusion in education, and a range of national programmes and projects aimed at reducing social and territorial inequalities, including the Romania for schools, Hot meal, Professional fellowship and School transport programmes.
- Turkey presented the project on Strengthening Democratic Culture in Basic Education.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ <https://www.presidency.ro/en/commitments/educated-romania>

⁵⁸ https://ab.gov.tr/strengthening-democratic-culture-in-basic-education_52222_en.html

ANNEX: PLA AGENDA

The Working Group on Equality and Values in Education and Training

Peer Learning Activity event:
'Addressing social and territorial inequalities in and through education'
12-13 December 2022, Paris, France

Programme

Monday 12 December 2022	
09:00 – 09:30	Registration
09:30 – 09:45	Welcome address <i>Europa Experience, EP Ministry of National Education and Youth European Commission</i>
09:45 – 10:00	<i>Tour de table</i>
Thematic session 1: Territorial inequalities in education	
10:00 – 10:20	Keynote speech on impediments to education arising from rural location/remoteness from educational resources
10:20 -10:35	Coffee break
10:35 - 11:20	Setting the scene The Rural Educational Territories programme in France. Local Education Authority of Meuse Local Education Authority of Manche
11:20 – 11:30	Q&A

11:30 – 12:45	<p>Other countries examples of educational policies bridging rural-urban educational divide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MS presentations <p>Group discussions (examples of practices from participants)</p>
12:45 – 13:00	Plenary: Report from group discussions

13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
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14:00 – 18:00	<p>Study visit: addressing the impact of social and economic inequalities on educational outcomes</p> <p>2 parallel study visits in Cergy-Pontoise (by bus; departure at 14:00, visit from 15:00 to 17:00):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Cité éducative' of Cergy (an alliance of educational actors in urban policy priority neighbourhoods: parents, national and local authorities, associations, citizens) - 'Internat d'excellence' de Cergy (the 'Boarding Schools of excellence' offer a unique environment for pupils to succeed academically, fully develop as part of a group and prepare for their future)
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19:30	Dinner
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Tuesday 13 December 2022

9:00 – 10:00	Plenary: Discussions on the study visits
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Thematic Session 2: Strengthening the social diversity within the schools	
10:00 – 11:00	<p>Setting the scene</p> <p>The network « Mixity at School », National Council for the Evaluation of the School System (Cnesco). An assessment of the experiments conducted in Toulouse at middle school and high school level. Presentation of the national study on experiments in favor of social diversity.</p>
11 :00- 11 :15	Q&A

11:15 – 11 :30	Coffee break
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11:30 – 12:45	Other countries examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MS presentations Group discussions (examples of practices from participants)
12:45– 13:00	Plenary: Report from group discussions

13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
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14:00 – 14:30	Presentations from stakeholders' work and projects done in the field <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECASS – European Cities Against School Segregation, - Inschool project, LLLP
14:30 – 14:45	Q&A
14:45– 15:45	Small group session (intro + 35 min small groups + 20 min reporting back) <i>The main takeaways from the PLA</i>

15:45 – 16:00	Closing remarks
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