# Needs Analysis Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes No.</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Package No.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package Title</td>
<td>Research and Needs Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Leader</td>
<td>Provincia di Parma (IT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Gaetana Ariu (Provincia di Parma) with the contribution of the following Partners: George Milis, EuroCY, CY Helen Walker, GHI, UK Maria Saridaki, UoA, EL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status (F: final; D: draft; RD: revised draft)</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File Name:</td>
<td>D4-NeedAnalysis_Report_v0.3-new.docx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Version History Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version no.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Dates and comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>30/04/2014</td>
<td>Initial draft circulated by Provincia di Parma, asking for contributions by all involved partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>20/06/2014</td>
<td>Contributions by partners incorporated in master document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>30/06/2014</td>
<td>Final Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

This report deals with the major characteristics of ESL (Early School Leaving) and disengagement from education at European level as well as separately in each country involved in Code RED.

It details the main results achieved through the implementation of the methodological options pre-defined by the consortium through the Methodological Plan and then adopted to carry out the initial needs analysis and community network building phases within Code RED project WP2.

Having ascertained that a structured needs analysis based on a robust methodological framework is essential to get the achievements of a research and innovation project such as Code RED, the results that came out of each National Report can be assessed and prioritized.

It is then fundamental in the case of Code RED, whose main characteristic is the development of an original method of cooptation and engagement of i-VET and school students and other key Stakeholders into the definition of four educational products, starting from the main educational needs they envisage.

Comprehensive statistical data collection has been carried by each partner and a European scenario has been depicted sourced from official datasets and repositories.

Additional qualitative information collected through an in-depth methodological approach from the major local Stakeholders has allowed the project to specify and upgrade local context, but also to identify possible emerging trends and more effective ways to put the Code RED outputs into practice.

The four countries involved in Code RED share a common basic education structure, that imply passing formal evaluation from the lower to the upper level of secondary school.

Any transition is a crucial milestone in the individual education path and is associated with a relatively high risk of disengagement and, then, possible abandonment.

Movements from one school to another or from school and a different system (VET, special schools, second chance, etc.) carry the same high risks, especially if guidance is not available to students and to their families.

Gender (male students are generally more at risk of ESL and dropping out), nationality (migrants born abroad are at higher risk of ESL), socio-economic conditions (the higher the levels of social/economic deprivation, the higher the risk of ESL) associated with new key factors emerging recently, as a result of the economic crisis and the austerity policies of several Governments (education systems cut-off, shortage of teachers, limitations or cancellations of financial aids to the families etc) are key elements to take into consideration when providing new tools for students’ re-engagement.

If these instruments have a chance to reconcile youngsters with education, a key question is about how schools can include such successful experiences. ICT (2014 the European Year of digital skills) and relationship (soft) skills are highly taken into account by potential employers, both large and SMEs.
Sir Ken Robinson and Professor Sugata Mitra\(^1\) in their inspiring and powerful studies testify some best practices:

1. children can learn from each other, if an initial provision is given (hardware and adequate setting);
2. schools are too often a limit to children’s expression instead of encouraging and enhancing their capabilities;
3. adults can play a major role of mentors providing confidence and proactive context.

\(^1\) Cfr. TED Talks [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)
# Table of Contents

## Needs Analysis Report

- Version History Table ................................................................. 2
- Executive Summary ........................................................................ 3
- Table of contents ............................................................................ 5

1. Introduction and Objectives of the Needs Analysis .................................. 7
   - Structure of the document .......................................................... 8

2. The European context ....................................................................... 10
   - Improving skills and VET for youth employment .......................... 16
   - Reforms to prevent early school leaving .................................... 17
   - Intervention measures to avert early school leaving ................. 18
   - European trends for ESL ............................................................. 19
   - Understanding ‘Motivation’ ......................................................... 19
   - Re-engagement – what works? ..................................................... 20
   - Key Lessons from Second Chance Education ............................. 20
   - Assessment and Progression ....................................................... 21

3. Cyprus ............................................................................................ 22
   - The School and i-VET National system ...................................... 22
   - Focusing on VET and Adult education ....................................... 22
   - Vocational Training Programmes ............................................. 24
   - Assessment and Certification ..................................................... 25
   - Quality Assurance in Adult Education and Training .................. 25
   - The dropping out phenomenon. Levels and characteristics ........ 26
   - Project and programmes undertaken to overcome ESL and i-VET leaving ...................................................... 31
   - Final remarks ............................................................................ 32

4. Greece ................................................................................................ 36
   - The School and i-VET National system ...................................... 36
   - The dropping out phenomenon. Levels and characteristics ........ 37
   - National differences in ESL ....................................................... 39
   - Project and programmes undertaken to overcome ESL and i-VET leaving ...................................................... 40
   - Final remarks ............................................................................ 41

5. Italy .................................................................................................. 43
   - The School and i-VET National system ...................................... 43
5.2 The dropping out phenomenon. Levels and characteristics ........................................ 44
5.3 Key aspects regarding ESL: Regional and local differences, gender, age, nationality 47
5.4 Final remarks ............................................................................................................. 51
6 United Kingdom............................................................................................................. 54
   6.1 The School and i-VET National system ................................................................ 54
   6.2 The dropping out phenomenon. Levels and characteristics .............................. 58
   6.3 Regional strategies and initiatives ....................................................................... 67
   6.4 Final remarks ........................................................................................................ 71
7 Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 73
References ....................................................................................................................... 74
1 Introduction and Objectives of the Needs Analysis

The purpose of this report is to document the needs addressed by the Code RED project, as they emerge through the development of the general methodology and the specific methods and practical instruments and tools for the analysis of the user group needs, in line with the steps and the specific actions described within the Code RED application:

1. **Establish user and stakeholder groups** of employers, trainers, support organisations and policy influencers (P1, P2, P3, 4), (Aims 1&5)

2. **Carry out a methodical investigation into causes of drop out**, as perceived by user groups and stakeholder groups, relating to the target group **in each partner country** in order to (P1, P2, P3, and P4), (Aims 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8):
   - identify gaps in key competences (communication and digital)
   - identify employability skills gaps that cause barriers to the transition to employment for students dropping out or failing at i-VET
   - identify communication and cultural differences, causing difficulties in group or team working
   - identify better ways of approaching and supporting transition from education to employment for the target group (aims 2, 5, 7)
   - identify alternative pedagogical approaches to i-VET that are engaging, accessible and effective (Aims 2, 5, 7)
   - produce empirical research reports in each partner Country that report on beneficiary, stakeholder and employer experience of perceived skills issues that create barriers to employment via User Group and Stakeholder group consultation (P0, P1, P2, P3 and P4), (Aim 8). These reports shall inform the design of the co-design workshops, the curriculum, learning content and learning materials.

The results have been reached by each partner under the coordination of the Provincia di Parma, who have provided the necessary tools and instruments to collect data and qualitative information that underpin the needs analysis assessment.

The gaps and needs highlighted through the analysis conducted in all partners countries will be assessed through the acceptance of a common assessment methodology. The aim of the document is two-fold:

1. to document the existing situation as far as ESL and dropping out throughout the four partner countries and in the EU;
2. to sustain with robust documentation any further assessment and decisions regarding serious games contents, curriculum development and e-learning platform tools.

It concludes Code RED WP2 and is an input of WP4 Transfer/Adaptation of Curriculum.

The overall objectives of WP2 were:
1. To engage active involvement from our end user groups and stakeholders in identifying the causes of drop out from i-VET experienced by the target group, their needs and key issues in approaching the transition to employment and in trying to enter the labour market and to gain a greater understanding of the current national situation relating to gaps in key competencies, especially relating to the general employability of the target group, as perceived by employers and as self-assessed, in each partner country;

2. To scope out what approaches and support strategies are currently available in seeking to prevent drop-out and failure in i-VET in each partner Country and to undertake a comparative analysis to form a pedagogical approach that will suit all partners;

3. To establish the current levels of use of ICT and games-based learning by the target groups and their trainers by contextual analysis;

4. To carry out user context analysis via user group trialling of existing GOET/PAUSE simulations, games for employability and Authoring Tools/Editors, together with the GOET curriculum, to identify design requirements for the desktop and mobile games to tackle the skills barriers to transition that vulnerable groups of young people face on leaving education. These design requirements will be based on accessibility, usability, cultural appropriateness, language, and learning effectiveness factors;

5. To work with stakeholders (employers and trainers) to identify the strategic issues, from their perspective, relating to NEETs;

6. To identify gaps in digital competencies within the target group in each partner Country to inform the design of digital skills set and the project enhanced curriculum;

7. To identify general employability issues, as perceived by employers, that create barriers to employment for the target group in each partner Country;

8. To incorporate the results of this needs analysis into national reports that will inform the design document for the project curriculum and learning materials;

9. To use methods that are inclusive, user sensitive and non-tokenistic.

The above general objectives have been considered as specific objectives of the Needs Analysis Methodology and into specific tools and instruments.

1.1 Structure of the document

This Report has the double aim to:

1. Describe the National background of Code RED partner countries and
2. Outline the major needs that have emerged from the Needs Analysis process.

It has been designed in the Need Analysis Methodology document, which provided a guided path to collect and organise a structured analysis, through a set of tools and instruments useful to collect data and qualitative information regarding ESL and i-VET abandon, in order to inform further project choices.

Countries’ scenarios and comparable data allow partners to highlight general and specific conditions, to focus on main problems and foreseen trends and will so avoid the exclusion of key issues.
The mix of statistical and qualitative in-depth analysis allows partners to describe the features and characteristics of the phenomena and signals the emerging of new issues that require specific consideration.

The following chapters contain:

- *Chapter 4* presents the more general European context, as it emerges from EU funded researches and official studies and recalls the Code RED need for a detailed consideration of national context, as the basis where Code RED deliverables and outcomes will be efficiently carried out.
- From *Chapter 5* to *Chapter 8* a description of each partner country’s situation relating to the national education system and ESL / dropping out / exclusion phenomena.
- The *Conclusion* contains the proposals for a common assessment of the needs (or gaps) highlighted during the Needs Analysis conducted in each partner country. Finally, the *Annexes* and *References* sections gathers Tables, Figures and a comprehensive list of cited documents.
2 The European context

ESL and i-VET leaving are two major failures in EU education systems, addressed by Europe 2020 targets.

The Europe 2020 Headline Targets for Education and Training identifies two targets for education and training to be reached by the EU by 2020:

1. To reduce the share of early school leavers to less than 10%;
2. To increase the share of the population aged 30–34 having completed tertiary education to at least 40%.

EU member states have translated these two EU wide-targets into specific national targets.

Code RED project deals with the first Europe 2020 main target.

The Education and Training in Europe 2020. Responses from the EU Member States, Eurydice Report (2013) deals extensively with this issue, especially in Chapter 1:

“...The Europe 2020 strategy highlights the completion of upper secondary education as the minimum level of educational attainment for young people in today’s society. Indeed, one of the two education targets for the EU by 2020 is to reduce the rates of young people leaving education and training with no more than lower secondary education to below 10 %. Early school leavers are more likely to have their life chances limited in today’s society as they lack the crucial qualifications needed for successful integration into the labour market and they are at greater risk of social exclusion and poverty. Early leavers from education and training are also more likely to find it difficult participating in civic and democratic life. For these reasons, early school leaving may represent significant social and economic costs for society.

The Council has recommended that Member States should ensure that evidence-based comprehensive strategies to reduce early school leaving are in place by 2012. The recommended framework defines three areas of policy: prevention, intervention and compensation. Prevention policies include system-based and other reforms to remove obstacles to achievement and thus prevent early school leaving. Intervention policies are intended to avert problems for individuals already showing signs that they may not complete their schooling; and compensation policies include the provision of ‘compensatory’ education – special programmes or customized support – for those returning to education after leaving early (second-chance programmes). It should also be noted that these three categories overlap to some extent with some measures performing more than one function, for example, a measure categorized as preventative may also serve to intervene in helping to


The EURYPEDIA, the European Encyclopedia on National Education Systems provides up-to-date and comprehensive information by country and level of education. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurypedia
Significant disparities exist between countries’ early school leaving rates (see Figure 1.1). In 2012, the EU-28 average for the population aged 18-24 with lower secondary education at most and not currently in further education or training was 12.7%. However, five countries showed a proportion of early leavers from education and training well above the EU average. In Italy and Romania, the rates of early school leavers were around 17.5% in 2012; whereas in Spain, Malta and Portugal, they ranged between 20 and 25%. In the remaining countries, the proportions of early school leavers were close to the EU-27 average or below, with the lowest rates observed in Croatia (4.2%), Slovenia (4.4%), Slovakia (5.3%), the Czech Republic (5.5%) and Poland (5.7%).

Taking into account the twin Europe 2020 headline targets on education, Member States have set national targets that reflect their country’s starting position and national circumstances (see Figure 1.1). Nine Member States have already met or exceeded their 2020 national target for this indicator (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia and Sweden).

Figure 1.1: Early school leavers rate 2012, Europe 2020 target and national targets (%)

Early school leavers rate 2012 (%)

The percentage of ESL in the 4 Countries Partners is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-28</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The panorama of National Education systems of the countries involved in Code RED project is as depicted in the following tables and pictures.
Students’ age-groups and duration of compulsory education, 2013/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Full-time Starting age</th>
<th>Full-time Ending age</th>
<th>Part-time Ending Age</th>
<th>Duration of full-time (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>4 years + 8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>10 years + 4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK-ENG</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK-WLS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK-NIR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK-SCT</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compulsory Education in Europe, Eurydice

Compulsory education: organizational models (The Structure of the European Education Systems 2013/14)

The diagrams reveal three main models of organization within compulsory education throughout European countries:

1. **Single structure education.** Education is provided in a continuous way from the beginning to the end of compulsory schooling, with no transition between primary and lower secondary education, and with general education provided in common for all pupils.

2. **Common core curriculum provision.** After successful completion of primary education (ISCED 1), all students progress to the lower secondary level (ISCED 2) where they follow the same general common core curriculum.

3. **Differentiated lower secondary education.** After successful completion of primary education, either at the beginning or during lower secondary education, students are required to follow distinct educational pathways or specific types of schooling.

The Code RED Partner Countries share the same **common core curriculum provision** organizational model (see picture below).
A further representation of national education systems is offered by the following bar-diagrams:

**Cyprus**

Age of students
Greece

Age of students

Italy

Age of students

United Kingdom – Scotland

Age of students

United Kingdom – Northern Ireland

Age of students
United Kingdom – Wales

Age of students

United Kingdom – England

Age of students

NB: The law 4186/2013 'Restructuring Secondary Education and other provisions' has introduced changes in the provision of educational programmes in the Epaggelmatiko Lykeio (EPAL), the Epaggelmatiki Scholi (EPAS) and the Institouto Epaggelmatikis Katartisis (IEK). In EPAL and IEK the duration of studies has been extended. In EPAS, the first grade is no longer provided, while students can still enroll in the second grade for the 2013/14 school year.

The Eurydice Report *Tackling early school leaving* provides a wide and comprehensive picture of national approaches to the problem.

EU countries report reforms to tackle early school leaving that span across several education levels.

Initiatives have been undertaken by countries with rates both above and below the EU headline target on early school leaving. Even countries with the lowest proportions of early leavers report measures that should impact positively on early school leaving rates (CZ, PL, SI and SK). Several countries (DK, ES, IT, LV, HU, MT and RO) have taken measures in line with the 2012 and 2013 CSRs in this area.

Overall, most of the reported national reforms related to early school leaving are focused on prevention measures. Among these measures, more than two-thirds of European
countries (BE fr and BE nl, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, HR, LV, LT, HU, MT, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE and UK) report recent or forthcoming initiatives to facilitate access to early childhood education and care (ECEC) and improve its quality. Recent reforms include, for example, expanding provision and supporting children’s attendance by statutory means and/or by providing financial assistance.

A second large group of countries (BE, BG, CZ, DK, ES, FR, LV, HU, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI and UK-ENG/WLS) is currently developing preventive measures in the form of policies to support disadvantaged pupils, who are often from a migrant or Roma background, and who are also often amongst those with learning difficulties and poor achievement levels. Measures in this area focus on language training for migrant children, strategies for better integration of Roma children, additional resources to schools with high share of disadvantaged pupils and strengthening remedial measures for students with learning difficulties.

Almost half of the countries report that some reforms to prevent early school leaving are related to improving the VET sector (BE de, DK, EL, ES, FR, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, FI, SE and UK-ENG). Recent measures focus on making VET programmes more appealing through improving guidance, diversifying the range of qualifications by modularizing courses, or facilitating the transfer to the higher education sector. These measures represent important ways of making sure that educational pathways do not lead to dead-ends with no possibility for further progression. Moreover, several countries have also strengthened links with the labor market through work-based learning or updated curricula. Two of the countries with the highest proportions of early school leavers (ES and PT) have taken steps to bring forward the opportunity to join a VET programme already at lower secondary level.

Of the intervention policies designed to avert early school leaving, career guidance is usually the focus of most recent reforms. Initiatives to strengthen networking with parents and develop cross-sector cooperation have been reported in three (BG, DE and SI) and four countries (BE fr, FR, LU and MT) respectively.

Compensatory measures to assist early school leavers are reported much less often. Only six countries (EE, FR, LU, HU, MT and RO) refer to recent initiatives for establishing or reinforcing second-chance education programmes, in particular in the field of VET. Targeted individual support has been developed in five countries (ES, FR, AT, SE and UK) as part of recent measures to get early leavers back into education and training.

Finally, collecting and analyzing data on early school leaving and developing evidence-based policies is crucial to tackle the problem effectively; recent developments in this area have taken place or are underway in around one third of the countries (BE nl, BG, FR, IT, LV, LT, HU, MT, NL, PL, SE and UK-WLS).

2.1 Improving skills and VET for youth employment

The ET 2020 benchmark on graduate employability and an increasing number of 2012 and 2013 CSRs (BG, DK, DE, EE, ES, FR, IT, CY, LV, LT, LU, MT, HU, AT, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK, FI and UK) focus on the contribution of education and training in tackling youth unemployment and, in particular, in overcoming the challenges related to school-to-work transitions. In particular, twelve countries (BG, ES, FR, IT, LV, LT, HU, PL, RO, SE, SK and UK) received 2013 CSRs that directly refer to the implementation of a Youth Guarantee scheme.

Although national situations differ, enhancing young people’s skills and reforming VET to improve youth employment has been a focus of all countries’ policy initiatives since 2011. As recommended at European level, Youth Guarantee schemes which entail the offer of a job, good-quality apprenticeship or a traineeship, or continued education are under preparation in the EU Member States. Some countries (EL, ES, IT, LV, LT, HU, MT, PT, SK, SE and UK) report comprehensive policy initiatives to tackle youth unemployment. These
initiatives integrate a range of measures similar to those implemented under the Youth Guarantee scheme. Two-thirds of countries (BE, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FR, EL, IT, CY, LV, HU, MT, AT, PL, PT, SE, SK and UK) report policy measures to improve school-to-work transition by further developing work experience opportunities, either in VET or in general education, from secondary to tertiary level. Most countries (except BG, CZ and CY) emphasize measures linked to work experience in the VET sector. The majority of these measures focus on implementing a dual system model and introducing more work-based learning and apprenticeships and many initiatives are in line with the CSRs issued in 2012 and 2013. To address skills mismatches, a few countries (IE, LV, PL and PT) report recent initiatives to develop skills forecasting and monitoring systems. Measures to strengthen the links between education and training and the labor market, notably by involving companies and social partners in curricula development in VET, have been mentioned by a number of countries (BE fr and BE nl, IE, EE, LT and LV) as an important instrument to ensure that provision keeps pace with the changing needs of the economy. Almost two-thirds of countries report initiatives to provide more opportunities to upgrade young people’s skills; in particular, in relation to sectors with labor market potential or shortages (BE fr, IE, ES, FR, EL, MT, SI, FI and UK-ENG) and entrepreneurship skills (BG, ES, EE, LT, HU, PT, RO, SI and UK-WLS) respectively. These initiatives largely refer to short-term training courses and target mostly those who are unemployed and early leavers from education and training. Among the countries with the lowest employability levels, Spain, Portugal and Slovakia each report initiatives at least in four action fields such as work experience opportunities, entrepreneurial skills training. In contrast, Bulgaria and Croatia have low levels of graduate employability but have only reported a limited number of initiatives.

2.2 Reforms to prevent early school leaving

Early school leaving is acknowledged to be the result of factors which belong to two main categories which interact with each other: school-based factors and factors related to social, family or individual background (Thibert, 2013).

The policies and measures reported below have been undertaken throughout EU countries to address the risks of ESL or to limit the phenomenon.

- Increasing participation in early childhood education and care and improving its quality. It is well documented that exposure to high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) favors success in a child’s future school career (Mullis et al., 2012; OECD, 2011). ECEC is defined as preschool education and childcare services for children between birth and compulsory school age. It may, furthermore, potentially decrease the negative effects of coming from a disadvantaged background. ECEC is a major element in preventing early school leaving and low educational performance (European Commission 2012b, p. 29).

- Supporting children at risk. Although the combination of factors which leads to early school leaving is highly specific to each individual, they are strongly associated with economic and social disadvantages. Children from low socio-economic, migrant or disadvantaged minority backgrounds, or from ethnic minorities, are more likely to leave education and training before completing upper secondary education (European Commission, 2011a). European countries have developed a set of equity-driven education policies, such as positive discrimination measures or systematic language support (European Commission, op. cit.), which
target groups of children acknowledged as being at greater risk of leaving school early. Recent measures to improve education provision for pupils from a migrant background usually focus on an increase in the provision of language classes or developing specific in-service training programmes for teachers.

- **Reforming vocational education and training.** The European framework for reducing the number of early leavers from education and training emphasizes the role played by vocational education and training (VET) sectors in that process. Further developing high quality VET pathways can indeed motivate some young people to remain longer in education and training, by providing them with alternatives to general education which may better suit their interests and needs. In order to make VET pathways more attractive and strengthen their role as alternatives to general education, easily accessible and high-quality information, guidance and counseling services are crucial. Several countries have undertaken steps to improve their educational and career guidance across primary and secondary education (see Section 1.2). In addition, some countries report that one of their current priorities is the development of a more comprehensive national approach to support guidance activities in schools, VET centers, employment services and companies.

### 2.3 Intervention measures to avert early school leaving

Intervention measures to avert early school leaving seek to develop appropriate solutions and support for children who have shown first signs that they may not complete their schooling, such as absenteeism or disengagement. Intervention measures not only include policies and actions implemented at school level, but rely also heavily on parents as well as on a vast range of public institutions and professionals from outside the school with expertise in various fields. It is worth mentioning that the types of initiatives described below (such as cross-sector cooperation or educational and career guidance), although categorized as intervention measures, may also be applied as preventive or compensatory measures (European Commission, 2011a).

- **Equipping teachers to address early warning signs.** It is essential that teachers receive appropriate education and training to deal with diversity in the classroom and work effectively with pupils at risk, in order to be able to react to the first signs that a young person may be in danger of leaving school prematurely. Recent measures for teachers’ continuing professional development (CPD) focus on this.

- **Networking with parents.** As stated above, increased cooperation with parents can contribute to young people’s success at school, especially for students at risk of leaving school early. Parent participation at school is widely promoted across European countries, including through counseling services for parents who need support, training courses organized by government authorities and civil society organizations (EACEA/Eurydice, 2012a). Recent initiatives in this area continue to be carried out across Europe.

- **Cross-sector cooperation.** Given the complexity of the processes leading to early school leaving, education systems need to cooperate with external bodies from various professional fields, such as youth, health, justice, or employment. Initiatives to develop cross-sector cooperation in order to reduce early school leaving occur at different levels. They not only relate to multi-professional work at school level but also to creating synergies between services or ministries at higher political level, affecting whole regions or the entire country.

- **Educational and career guidance.** The provision of educational and career guidance can help keep learners in education and training systems for a longer period. These
services support young people's awareness of different options in terms of learning pathways and may help them avoid making the wrong choice of study which may ultimately cause them to become demotivated and leave school early. Recent measures or projects aimed at developing and improving educational and career guidance focus on improving staff qualifications and training and providing them with the right tools, extending the role of schools in this area, or enhancing cooperation with parents and local services.

2.4 European trends for ESL

Eurostat data shows that there has been a downwards overall trend for ESL rates across Europe for almost all Member States since 2000, but that levels have started to rise again in recent years in some Member States, with 2011-12 increases experienced for Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden. Just under half of Member States (n=12) are currently on track to achieve the Europe 2020 targets. Variations in ESL rates also exist within individual Member States, and some Federal States (Spain in particular) have substantial regional variations. The structural factors affecting ESL are relatively complex, and include:

- the prevailing cultural and social conditions,
- industrial profile,
- economic and fiscal policies,
- and different national education systems.

Local labor markets can serve as both a ‘push’ and ‘pull’ for learners, according to the availability of unskilled employment.

With regard to socio-demographic criteria; gender emerges as being a significant factor for ESL. Young men across Europe are consistently more likely to leave school early than young women. This picture is part of a wider historical trend of girls’ increasing success at school in higher education in recent decades, even in countries such as Portugal where in previous generations girls had little access to school, and higher levels of illiteracy. Many ethnic minorities are also at particularly high risk of ESL, including Roma and Traveler groups, for example in Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Lithuania. However, it is apparent that ethnicity interacts with other factors such as poverty, unemployment, housing, school catchment areas, host country language skills, and degree of social cohesion between communities. Member States achieving greater progress with the inclusion of migrant children have focused on avoiding school segregation, improving quality in schools with dispersal policies, and developing pathways to higher level learning opportunities.

2.5 Understanding ‘Motivation’

There are various theoretical interpretations of ‘motivation’ within the research literature, but these understandings have rarely been applied in a systematic way to mainstream teaching practice. A seminal OECD review of lifelong learning distinguishes between ‘intrinsic’ motivation – self-directed to fulfill personal interests, and ‘extrinsic’ motivation – driven by external sanctions or rewards. These forms of motivation are closely-interrelated in the context of ESL, wherein fear of failure can be a way of protecting self-esteem rather than necessarily a disinterest in education.

---

It is evident that measures to prevent or compensate for ESL must tackle the loss of intrinsic motivation, stemming from feelings of inadequacy, failure and low self-esteem. Successful measures must therefore have a value to the potential participants, and give learners a sense of empowerment and control over their learning. The challenge lies in realizing these objectives within mainstream initial education, where attendance is obligatory, and school leavers are often ‘left behind’ by the system. The motivations of young adults aged 18-24 can differ from those of school age learners in that their motivation to re-engage is influenced by the personal development that has taken place since leaving school, and the impact of having experienced the negative consequences of leaving early, for example through reduced employment prospects.

2.6 Re-engagement – what works?

Second chance schemes have typically achieved the most success where they emphasize their distinctiveness from mainstream schools. Schemes have generally been careful to avoid negative associations with initial education, whilst at the same time ensuring that the learning opportunities are presented as a credible pathway (which might include gaining a formal qualification). Examples of positive features include: promoting a ‘student-centred’ approach, emphasizing the respect shown by teachers and other educationalists towards the students, and having strong associations with the adult world. In this respect, second chance schemes have sometimes managed to create a ‘university’ feel. This has proven to be a potentially very effective way of counteracting negative stereotypes of alternative education amongst the general public.

A key aspect of re-engaging learners is to first identify and track those who have left the system. Second chance schemes have found that having roots in the local community and being able to raise awareness and communicate via social networks is important in this context. Engagement is often the most effective where it involves a range of professionals who come into contact with those who have disengaged from learning, including social and healthcare workers and guidance practitioners, who often have more routine opportunities to engage with young people outside of the education system. Practitioners from second chance schemes consulted from the study described the need for a ‘softly’ approach at first, which could then be escalated through telephone calls and contact with family members. Persistence and building trust were valued as two essential qualities. Many schemes have also used a ‘rights-based’ approach to support re-engagement, with an emphasis on entitlements to learn. In a minority of countries, such as Denmark, this is further reinforced with reference to legal duties imposed on local authorities to ensure that young adults are engaged in education or training.

2.7 Key Lessons from Second Chance Education

- a significant degree of experimentalism from teachers and other educationalists with a commitment to develop an alternative offer for young people (or young adults), but all had found ways to engage with more formal institutional frameworks to ensure their survival.

- more prominent role for multi-professional working than can be found within most mainstream schools. They routinely bring together expertise from different sectors such as health, employment, housing, legal aid and social support, with the school providing a hub for the delivery of this support to learners – many of whom have complex needs.

- the importance of positive relationships between teachers and students. having an ‘open doors’ policy for students to approach staff, and ensuring that students are able to participate in decision-making, and dialogue with teachers in relation to school polices (such as for discipline or tackling bullying).
• **social and emotional support** was usually afforded a higher profile within second chance schemes than within initial education settings – both therapeutic and non-therapeutic.

• the **flexible organization** of the week so that learners can catch-up with classes; modularization of courses, and the use of distance learning to provide access outside of the working day and school environment.

• **Learning outside of the classroom**, and particularly place-based programmes with an emphasis on local history and culture were also regularly encountered within second chance schemes.

• The approaches to **curriculum development and delivery** were found to vary significantly between the visited schemes. The schemes can largely be distinguished between those that provide initial education certificates and teach according to the mainstream curriculum, and those that offer an alternative pathway, focusing on vocational learning, work experience, life skills, and basic skills.

2.8 Assessment and Progression

*Individual learner assessment* emerged as being a **central aspect of second chance education**, was often found to have added real value in supporting learners who might have previous negative educational experiences, by focusing on strengths and to **supporting learners to set and review their own goals**. Most of the visited schemes included some kind of participatory assessment of this kind. Some common characteristics of this type of approach included that: **assessment is sued as a tool to build self-esteem** (through the use of motivational interviewing, for example), and **it provides a wider review of non-educational needs and circumstances**, including out-of-school needs (family and community related). Conversely, inappropriate or unrealistic assessment and goal-setting is well documented within the literature as a risk factor for ESL.

The **validation of learner progress and outcomes** was found to be an **often challenging aspect** of second chance education; particularly when seeking to provide alternative curricula that might not have the same kudos with students, parents or teachers. This issue has been tackled in a number of ways, with some schools such as the Micro Lycées in France seeking to ensure that students graduate with the equivalent qualifications to their initial education counterparts, and others seeking to deliver alternative forms of accreditation. In Denmark, the portfolio-based accreditation for Studio Schools took many years to achieve mainstream recognition, but the expansion of the programme and it's adaptation elsewhere – including in Germany and Austria have helped to reinforce the credibility of the programme as a viable pathway for students. Other second chance schools have encountered greater difficulties with achieving similar recognition. This has particular been an issue in relation to the low profile afforded to vocational education and training in some Member States.
3 Cyprus

3.1 The School and i-VET National system

The analysis of the Cyprus School and i-VET system is based on information provided in the Eurypedia by the Eurydice Network Network. According to that, the whole of the education system in Cyprus is managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC).

The formal education is provided through public and private institutions of: pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education, as well as public post-secondary non-tertiary institutions. The education in these institutions is compulsory and is offered for free for the ages from four years and eight months to fifteen years.

The public early childhood education is taken care of the pre-primary system and involves kindergartens, which are open to children aged between three years to five years and eight months. Then the primary education comprises a six-year course of general education beginning at the age of five years and eight months, followed by the secondary education that is offered in two different types: secondary general education and secondary technical and vocational education. Secondary general education consists of two cycles of studies of three years duration each cycle, the first one being the Gymnasium and the second one the Lyceum. Secondary technical and vocational education comprises the second cycle of secondary education only and it is open to pupils who have successfully graduated from the Gymnasium.

Post-secondary non-tertiary education is offered to graduates of secondary education at the Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training. These are public institutes, which started operating in September 2012. Higher education is provided both at university and non-university level. Universities are academically autonomous bodies.

Finally, adult education is offered in the form of formal education by special programmes organised by government bodies like Personnel Development Authority (PDAUTH) and Productivity Centre of Cyprus (KEPA) as well as many local municipalities, but also in the form of non-formal education and vocational training that are provided by private institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Focusing on VET and Adult education

Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education

The first post-secondary non-tertiary education institutions started operating as of September 2012, on a three-year pilot basis, in Cyprus. These institutes of Vocational Education and Training (Metalykeia Instituta Epaggelmatikis Ekpaidefsis kai Katartisis - MIEEK) operate as public schools open to graduates of secondary education, with admission being based on certain criteria. The MIEEK offer flexible programmes to satisfy the needs of secondary education graduates for further vocational education and training. All programmes provide for technological and laboratory lessons as well as for...
practical experience in industry or enterprises. These studies have a duration of two academic years.

**Adult Education**

Adult education is offered at public, semi-government and private institutions which, according to the type of education or training they offer, may be grouped in three categories, namely: institutions offering formal adult education; institutions offering non-formal adult education; and, institutions offering vocational training. Some courses are offered free of charge, but most of the courses involve paying fees.

Adult education aims at satisfying different needs for continuous and lifelong learning. More specifically, the objective of formal adult education is to give working people the opportunity to gain a qualification that will improve their career prospects and enable them to reach their full potential. On the other hand, non-formal continuing education aims at improving the quality of life of the individuals involved by offering them opportunities for self-development. Also, vocational training aims at upgrading the skills of individuals working in technical fields, and train unskilled or semi-skilled workers in vocational trades.

The main providers of adult education and training are the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance and the Ministry of Finance, as well as private organizations. Each provider is responsible for the operation of a number of institutions offering adult education or training programmes, as follows:

- The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the Adult Education Centers; the State Institutes of Further Education; the Evening Technical School; the afternoon and evening classes at the Technical schools; the Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training; and, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute.
- The Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance is responsible for the Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC); the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA); and, the Mediterranean Institute of Management (MIM).
- The Ministry of Education and Culture jointly with the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance are responsible for the Apprenticeship Scheme.
- The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration.
- Private companies run training programmes for their personnel, aiming to satisfy their short- or long-term needs. Private training centres also provide continuing education courses often subsidized by the HRDA.

**Non-Formal Education Programmes**

In the non-formal continuing education sector, learning is structured by discipline. Admission requirements, assessment procedures and certification vary according to the various programmes and the institutions which offer them.

**The Adult Education Centers Programmes**

They offer a variety of interdisciplinary courses to adult learners and pupils over the age of fifteen, which aim at developing further their social, personal or professional skills. The courses offered focus mainly on the teaching of foreign languages, culture, arts and crafts, health, sports and subjects of general interest. Within these fields a broad
spectrum of subjects is covered including Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Byzantine Icon Painting, Aesthetics, Literacy, Astronomy, Braille, Graphic Arts, Physical Education, Electronics, Theatre, Pottery, Gardening, Culinary Arts, Auto Mechanics, Sign Language, First Aid, Wood Engraving, Plumbing, Mosaics, Cypriot and Greek Dances.

Vocational Training Programmes
Vocational training programmes are mainly offered by the Cyprus Productivity Centre, the Apprenticeship Scheme, evening classes at the technical schools and in-company courses funded by the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA).

The Cyprus Productivity Centre Programmes
The Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC) offers short modular programmes that focus on technical occupations and management functions. The basic aim of these programmes is to offer those already working the opportunity to upgrade their skills and knowledge so as to improve their employability and increase their prospects of advancement and career development. Admission qualifications and final certification depend on the type of programme the participants follow. CPC also participates in the Scheme for the Education of the Unemployed, which is a joint subsidy scheme, coordinated by the HRDA, offering training programmes to people who become unemployed because of the recent economic crisis.

The Apprenticeship Scheme Programmes
The Apprenticeship Scheme, in its present form, is mainly directed towards students who do not wish to continue their studies in the formal education system after completing the 3-year lower secondary cycle of studies (gymnasium). The Scheme lasts for two years and provides alternate practical and theoretical training. Apprentices are trained to become builders, furniture makers, woodworkers, electricians (of domestic appliances or electrical installations), car mechanics, car electricians, sheet metal workers/welders, aluminum manufacturers, machine workers/fitters, plumbers, silversmiths/goldsmiths, dressmakers, cooks and waiters, depending on the needs of the labor market.

Afternoon and Evening Classes at the Technical Schools
The afternoon and evening classes at the technical schools are organized in a flexible manner in order to accommodate working individuals who may wish to attend either short modular courses leading to a certificate or longer programmes which lead to the acquisition of a qualification equivalent to the school leaving certificate (απολυτήριο) of the technical schools.

In-company courses
The HRDA approves and subsidizes continuing training programmes provided by enterprises.

Adult Education legislation framework
There is no comprehensive legislative framework for Adult Education and Training. Instead, there are a number of legislative provisions related to the different authorities
involved in. The major pieces of legislation governing all sectors of adult education and training to this day are as follows:

- A special agreement between the Government of Cyprus and the International Labor Office (ILO) in 1963 regarding the establishment of the Cyprus Productivity Centre, the aim of which was the provision of initial and continuing technical and vocational training to adults.
- Laws 21/1974, 6/1975, 17/1980 and 94/1988, which provided for the establishment of the Industrial Training Authority, a semi-government organization whose remit was to plan and approve programmes aimed at the technical and professional training and continuing education of adults; and, Law 125(I)/1999 which provided for the evolution of the Industrial Training Authority into the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA).
- Decision number 35.582 (22/05/91) of the Council of Ministers, by which the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA) was established.
- Law 234(I)/2002 providing for the establishment and operation of the Open University of Cyprus.
- Regulations Κ.Δ.Π. 214/2000 to Κ.Δ.Π. 295/2001 (Pre-Service Programme for Prospective Teachers of Secondary Education).
- Special provisions issued by the Department of Primary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture concerning the operation of the Adult Education Centers.
- Special provisions issued by the Department of Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture concerning the operation of the State Institutes of Further Education.

Assessment and Certification

For MIEEK students, assessment is provided for written and practical examinations (internally set by the institutions) at the end of each semester. Success in all examinations lead to the award of the qualification of ‘Higher Technician’.

Assessment at the Adult Education Centers is mainly informal with no final examinations or practice tests required for certification purposes. At the end of each course the participants receive a certificate of attendance.

Participants in the CPC programmes are issued a certificate upon completing a training programme.

Quality Assurance in Adult Education and Training

The responsible bodies for quality assurance in Adult Education and Training vary according to the type of institution and the authorities responsible for its establishment, operation and control.

- The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for quality assurance in the Evening Schools, the Adult Education Centres and the State Institutes for Further Education.
- The Ministry of Education and Culture jointly with the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance are responsible for quality assurance in the Apprenticeship Scheme, the former supervising the work done at the Technical Schools and the latter the training in industry.
The Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) subsidizes continuing training programmes provided by public and private institutions and enterprises. In this way, the HRDA plays a key role in quality assurance in Adult Education and Training. Recently, the HRDA has undertaken a number of initiatives related to the evaluation of existing schemes, the trainers’ assessment and the standards of vocational qualifications.

The Open University, as an academically autonomous body, is responsible for the quality of its programmes of study.

The Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) has initiated the following developments in the area of quality assurance in Adult Education and Training:

- Development of a System of Vocational Qualifications: The Board of Governors of the HRDA, with the approval of the Council of Ministers, has established a System of Vocational Qualifications. In the period 2006-2009, five Standards of Vocational Qualifications, for the occupations of waiter, cook, receptionist, construction mason and sales person (retail trade), were developed. In the period 2009-2013, the development of around 72 new standards in priority occupations at various levels is envisaged. This phase is co-financed by the European Social Fund and is expected to provide opportunities for access to 6,000 candidates (employees, self-employed, unemployed and inactive persons).

- Assessment and Certification of Training Providers: In September 2005, the Board of Governors of the HRDA approved the development and introduction of the system for the assessment and certification of training providers. The implementation of the project started in October 2006.

Ex-post Evaluation of the Existing Schemes: In December 2006, independent, external consultants completed a study entitled Ex-post Evaluation of the Existing Schemes of the HRDA, for the HRDA’s schemes operated during the period 1998-2004. The main objective of this study, which included field and desk research, was to identify the effectiveness of each scheme and its impact on the human resources and enterprises of Cyprus. Taking into consideration the findings of the study, the HRDA has upgraded almost all the existing training schemes. Additionally, a new study is being conducted by external consultants for the design of a comprehensive system evaluating the impact of HRDA on the economy of Cyprus.

3.2 The dropping out phenomenon. Levels and characteristics

The ESL target group identified in Cyprus are people with disabilities, migrants, people from “lower” socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as students who whilst still in the education system, are at high risk of being excluded due to a lack of pro-active engagement measures. People with disabilities, as well as the economic immigrants and refugees, especially those from third-world countries are considered among the groups most at risk of early school leaving (ESL). The phenomenon of ESL, as well as migration, significantly concern the Government and relevant NGOs, however there is not so much concern by employers or by the media. Specifically for people with disabilities, there is less concern even on the part of the Government.

EuroCy has already undertaken early (desk-based) research about the current situation in Cyprus concerning Early School Leaving, by collecting all relevant statistics from the National Statistical Service, at http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat (latest 2011 results). According to the statistical reports, the total population of Cyprus amounts to 862,000, of which almost 50% are women and 50% are men. Of the total, around 106,000 people
are EU citizens from other EU countries (again 50-50% in terms of gender) and around 65,000 of people come from third countries (66% women). Therefore, non-Cypriots amount to around 25% of the total population. It is also found that the non-EU population mainly come from Georgia, Russia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Ukraine, of which around 200,000 do not speak Greek (which is the main language in education system in Cyprus) and around 200,000 have only reached the mid secondary education level (though this statistic improves in younger generations). Other statistics show that Cyprus has the highest rate of population growth among the 27 EU countries, which is explained by its particularly significant positive net migration balance.

The above figures give a broader idea of the Cyprus population and also comprise useful inputs in identifying some possible sources of early drop-outs. It is known that the rate of early drop out in the native Cypriot population is lower, but numbers increase greatly when the whole of the population is considered.

Since the Code RED project addresses specifically the education and employability of people, some figures are given in the following:

The enrolments per education level in Cyprus are: Pre-primary 25,582, Primary 54,083, Secondary 63,640, Tertiary 32,118 and Special education 306. The respective total expenditure by the Republic of Cyprus (for 2010) was: €1,390,900 EUR, per student, in public schools: Pre-primary €5,565, Primary €6,015, Secondary €9,519 and Tertiary €14,441.

Also, the un-employment records in 2013 (2nd quarter) show: 68,306 persons or 15.5% of the total labour force 40% for ages 15-24. This is expected to increase even more due to the current socio-economic crisis in Cyprus. Even more importantly, the figures include also 11.3% for early abandoning of education and vocational training.
Table 1. Cypriot pupils by community/religious group and foreign pupils 2010/2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community/Religious group/Foreigners</th>
<th>Community/Religious group/Foreigners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ΚΥΠΡΙΟΙ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ΣΕΝΟΙ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Κοινότητα/Θρησκευτική Ομάδα/Ξένοι</th>
<th>Προσχολική και Προδημοτική Pre-school and Pre-primary</th>
<th>Δημοτική Primary</th>
<th>Δημοτική Secondary</th>
<th>Γενικό Σύνολο Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ελληνοκύπριοι</td>
<td>24.824</td>
<td>45.601</td>
<td>57.035</td>
<td>127.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δημόσια</td>
<td>9.572</td>
<td>43.398</td>
<td>47.978</td>
<td>100.948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ιδιωτικά</td>
<td>15.252</td>
<td>2.203</td>
<td>9.057</td>
<td>26.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Τουρκοκύπριοι</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δημόσια</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ιδιωτικά</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ευρωπαϊκοί πολίτες (ΕΕ27)</td>
<td>3.493</td>
<td>7.935</td>
<td>5.914</td>
<td>17.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ευρωπαϊκοί πολίτες (ΕΕ27)</td>
<td>1.512</td>
<td>6.205</td>
<td>4.159</td>
<td>11.876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ιδιωτικά</td>
<td>1.981</td>
<td>1.730</td>
<td>1.755</td>
<td>5.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Μη-Ευρωπαϊκοί πολίτες</td>
<td>2.199</td>
<td>4.581</td>
<td>3.715</td>
<td>10.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Μη-Ευρωπαϊκοί πολίτες</td>
<td>1.296</td>
<td>3.354</td>
<td>2.199</td>
<td>6.849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΣΥΝΟΛΟ</td>
<td>28.582</td>
<td>54.083</td>
<td>63.764</td>
<td>146.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δημόσια</td>
<td>11.152</td>
<td>49.880</td>
<td>52.416</td>
<td>113.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ιδιωτικά</td>
<td>17.430</td>
<td>4.203</td>
<td>11.348</td>
<td>32.981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Number of foreign pupils by country of Nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of nationality</th>
<th>No. of foreign pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece of former</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Community</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,382</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of nationality</th>
<th>No. of foreign pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of foreign pupils</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>412</td>
<td>2,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,382</td>
<td>2,564</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Number of enrolments, drop-outs, failures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of school and grade</th>
<th>PUBLIC</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>PRIVATE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade I</td>
<td>Grade II</td>
<td>Grade III</td>
<td>Grade IV</td>
<td>Grade V</td>
<td>Grade VI</td>
<td>Grade VII</td>
<td>Grade I</td>
<td>Grade II</td>
<td>Grade III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>4.188</td>
<td>3.842</td>
<td>3.842</td>
<td>4.023</td>
<td>4.133</td>
<td>4.346</td>
<td>4.417</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.948</td>
<td>8.030</td>
<td>8.312</td>
<td>8.663</td>
<td>8.760</td>
<td>9.031</td>
<td>50.744</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.948</td>
<td>8.030</td>
<td>8.312</td>
<td>8.663</td>
<td>8.760</td>
<td>9.031</td>
<td>50.744</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.948</td>
<td>8.030</td>
<td>8.312</td>
<td>8.663</td>
<td>8.760</td>
<td>9.031</td>
<td>50.744</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.948</td>
<td>8.030</td>
<td>8.312</td>
<td>8.663</td>
<td>8.760</td>
<td>9.031</td>
<td>50.744</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.948</td>
<td>8.030</td>
<td>8.312</td>
<td>8.663</td>
<td>8.760</td>
<td>9.031</td>
<td>50.744</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.948</td>
<td>8.030</td>
<td>8.312</td>
<td>8.663</td>
<td>8.760</td>
<td>9.031</td>
<td>50.744</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.948</td>
<td>8.030</td>
<td>8.312</td>
<td>8.663</td>
<td>8.760</td>
<td>9.031</td>
<td>50.744</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.3 Project and programmes undertaken to overcome ESL and i-VET leaving

Further to the programs already mentioned in Chapter 1, it is emphasized here that the main policy enforcement organization is the Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA), which aims at helping young graduates achieve a smooth and successful integration in the labor market through the acquisition of work experience and specialized knowledge and skills. Training programs by HRDA are implemented for a period of 6 or 12 months.

In addition, the Ministry of Education and Culture is implementing the “Programme against Early School Leaving, School Failure and Delinquency in Zones of Educational Priority”. This supports mainly “Educational Priority Zones” (EPZs), co-financed (85% from the European Social Fund and 15% from National Funds): clusters of schools in disadvantaged areas with a student population belonging to families with a low socioeconomic and educational background.

Also, there is a formal policy on Intercultural Education to address special needs of foreign speaking children, by the Ministry of Education and Culture. According to this, workshops for teachers are organized in order to teach Greek as a second or as a foreign language, a
guide is being published in order to embrace foreign speaking students available in 8 foreign languages (English, Turkish, Georgian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Arabic). This guide provides key information for students and their parents about the educational system in Cyprus. Also emphasis is given on intercultural issues in the new curricula and textbooks.

In terms of reintegration measures to tackle early school leaving, one can mention the Apprenticeship Scheme, in operation since 1963, which is a two-year initial vocational education and training programme, which addresses drop-outs from the formal education system between the ages of 14 and 17.

Finally, the Evening high schools that are Evening Technical and Vocational Schools operate as a “second chance school”.

3.4 Final remarks

As shown in the analysis performed in previous chapters, Cyprus has a quite comprehensive educational system, with many opportunities for adult education and vocational training as well. It is also evident that the country faces the ESL phenomenon mainly due to the migration population and the lower economic levels in some areas. However, the recent economic crisis has considerably increased the low income population which is expected to also negatively affect engagement in the education system. Despite the main education being offered for free, there is still a lot of money being spent by students at all levels, for side expenses.

In terms of measures, Cyprus already takes many measures to address the ESL phenomenon and to achieve lifelong learning for all and offer opportunities for vocational and adult training. However, a big issue is that many of these measures are not actually measured. There is a lack of knowledge about the impact of the actions taken and this leads to also poor refinement of the actions and subsequently to gradual reduction of the effectiveness.

In discussions with local stakeholders, it was emphasized that Cyprus needs to pay particular attention in enforcing measures not simply for the (theoretical) measures but for achieving measurable results.

During the needs’ collection and analysis phase of the project, EuroCy conducted several face to face meetings with local stakeholders (identified through the Stakeholders Mapping exercise, “Tool 0: Code RED Stakeholders’ mapping”) and also two short focus group meetings. During the discussions in the meetings, our researchers utilised the rest of the tools created in WP2, more specifically the “Code RED Tool 3: One to one interview”, as well as the “Code RED Tool 4 – Focus Group Guidelines”, to adopt a more formal approach in guiding the discussions, thus turning the collected feedback as complete as possible and as comparable as possible to the situation in other partner countries.

Although Cyprus is a rather small country, where the Early School Leaving (ESL) and i-VET drop out phenomena do not present any significant geographical heterogeneity, it has been witnessed that each stakeholders’ group presents their own view of the phenomena and the related trends, which do not always coincide. We therefore decide to present in the following the consolidated data first per stakeholders’ group and then summarise it at the end.
a) Trainees (in public and private schools, special needs’ schools, migrants, pre-VET and VET Centres, Universities)

Although this is a key target group of the project, it appeared very hard to reach them and this was only achieved through at least one type of the other groups below (e.g. their school teachers or VET trainers).

Young adults in private schools in general do not face any ESL or drop out phenomena, since they are usually encouraged by their families (that are wealthy enough to afford private education) to complete compulsory education and also continue for College and/or University studies (not always beneficial). On the other hand, public schools have a different image. There, two different groups of students are identified which are in high risk of dropping out and are abandoning school. One group comprises persons of problematic social background (divorced parents, financially poor parents, health problems with relatives, parents passed away, etc.) who do not have any encouragement from home and gradually lose their interest in education and also lose their motivation and self-esteem. The second group comprises persons that irrespective of the financial capacity of the family, they simply do not get positive support by their family and this leads them in following wrong trends.

In discussing with few of the above persons, we were very careful on how to ask the questions, as to avoid labelling them. So, we only tried to talk with them and understand why they feel the way they feel about the education they get from their schools. The answers from the first of the above group was clear, assuming that they have bigger problems to deal with and they do not see any reason to care about education. However, the answer from the second group was not so straight, with some blaming the educational system and others not realising the situation. This is unlikely to change in the next few years, unless considerable changes happen in the educational system and the way these people are addressed in schools. The challenge is expected to become bigger if the multi-culture environment that is now evolving (members of migrant families are attending local schools) is considered.

Things are different in the special needs’ schools, where students are very much aware of why they face difficulties in the formal educational system. Evidently, in local practice (combining also with social acceptance) it is not easy for a person with disabilities to attend a “normal” school. The result is that these people do stay behind with regards to education, even if many of them attend public and private special schools. In any case, there is a feeling from this group of students that things will be improved in the near future, since they hear of many promises from Governmental bodies about accessibility becoming a core policy in education.

Concerning pre-vocational and vocational training, as detailed also in the previous sections of the report, there are not so many options around. However, it appears that there is a trend towards this type of education which is expected to increase. This might be due to the impact of the economic crisis, which created the need for acquiring more professional skills for immediate use. People here tent to believe that the ESL phenomenon is due to the wrong way of teaching, which is boring and not at all supportive. They are people that prefer practical sessions. Also, they believe that phenomena of dropping out from VET Centres in Cyprus are mainly due to people realising that that was not what they wanted and/or people finding a job that would not allow them to continue.
Students in Universities in general do not face a drop-out phenomenon, although they are aware of the possibilities to become unemployed as soon as they complete their studies. Especially the recent situation in Cyprus is that there are many unemployed people with at least Bachelor.

Finally, we were not lucky to receive much information from migrants, however, we are in contact with the President of the Association of (Legal) Refugees and we plan to discuss these issues with them in the next months, most likely to revise Code RED activities accordingly, if such a need arises.

b) Teachers (public and private schools, individual trainers, special needs’ schools, pre-VET and VET Centres, Universities)

The descriptions above hold also here and they give a very good understanding of the situation faced by the teachers/trainers. We managed to receive more clear answers from this type of stakeholders, also because it was easier to ask the proper questions.

Enough of the teachers admit that the ESL and drop-out phenomena are partially due to the mistakes in the educational system. Not necessarily because the students at risk are not addressed correctly, but mostly because the adopted “no-hard-punishment” policy helps such phenomena to evolve. An interesting observation is that ALL teachers, at all levels, believe they are doing fine when dealing problematic situations in the class. Most likely this is not a reality and it gives an indication of a need to train the teachers on how to realise the phenomena, admit they exist and then find new ways of dealing with them.

So majority of the teachers in public schools believe the phenomena are mainly due to low interest on behalf of families. They also do not believe that things will change any time soon, on the contrary, there are big chances to be worse given the economic crisis in Cyprus.

Situation is different in special needs’ schools, where the drop-out phenomena are understood by the teachers to be due to unavailability of the means of attending education, either by the person or by the family. So not so much the unwillingness of the person himself/herself. Again, the situation is not expected to change any time soon (note here the difference between the understanding of students from this category, who believe situation will become better. This might be due to the age factor and how Government and environment stimuli affect people at different ages.)

Teachers in Universities approach the subject more from an academic point of view, suggesting ways to improve the educational system and fight with these phenomena on the long run. They do also appreciate the use of technology (as well as educational games) in a blended education environment. Although it is not clear whether every one of them has same understanding of these concepts and needs. A more positive attitude towards the future is witnessed in this group, although it is mentioned that all interviewed people were young enough.

c) Employment Centres

Employment Centres in Cyprus are mainly operating to satisfy the needs of local families in personnel from third countries that are working as cleaning staff and also carers of older people and family members with health issues. Therefore, out researchers recorded a lack of
understanding of the phenomena and also lack of knowledge and willingness to address the issues.

d) **NGOs and other third-party (social) projects**

This group of stakeholders was the one that showed maximum interest in the project objectives and expected results. We understand that this is mainly due to the self-motivation that usually people working in NGOs and social projects have.

In fact, these people are undertaking a number of diverse activities that directly or indirectly try to address the ESL and drop-out phenomena. They do realise that the appearance of these phenomena is due to a combination of factors, including the old educational system which does not adapt quickly enough to the new needs of the society, the lack of appropriate training of the teachers themselves to deal with the new society challenges (e.g. wide spread of ICT for non-educational uses), the social problems created as a result of the economic ones, etc. It is also important to note that although these people appear optimistic that their efforts will achieve some good results, at the same time they realise that their efforts are not well-coordinated and will not have the magnitude of impact they could have had if they were coordinated.

e) **Government bodies and policy makers in general**

The communication with this group of stakeholders was more formal and questions/answers were always filtered as not to create professional discomfort to the public servants. We had the chance to discuss with people from several departments and different dimensions of policy making, e.g. in education, in employment. There is no clear evidence of understanding the phenomena, however, there are many different and (still here) un-coordinated efforts from several governmental organisations tackling the ESL and drop-out phenomena. It was clear that people were not ready to admit a serious issue and remained focused in presenting what activities are in place that will eventually solve the problems. However, we found no signs of a central strategy on the issues.

f) **ICT Sector**

The discussions with this group were mainly around the use of digital games in education and their willingness to invest in such projects or even collaborate with us in workshops. The educational games market is almost non-existent in Cyprus ICT Business sector. There are some efforts undertaken by University research groups and also by startups and young innovation-focused companies. However, the fact that the Government has no specific strategy on how to incorporate technology in the educational system, the ICT sector is not following-up.

Summarising the above, it becomes obvious that the Code RED project outcomes will be rather innovative for Cyprus and this creates a good exploitation opportunity for us as local partners. At the same time, it turns it very difficult to build the appropriate communication channels and manage to talk key persons into using the Code RED methods and material in addressing the drop-out phenomena. This becomes worse if we consider also the fact that many stakeholders, including teachers and government representatives, do not really realise the challenges and they also do not show an immediate interest in changing their way of working.
4 Greece

4.1 The School and i-VET National system

According to Eurydice Network’s Eurepedia⁴, the Greek education system is governed by national laws and legislative acts (decrees, ministerial decisions), while the general responsibility for education lies with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The Greek education system was until recently predominantly centralised, however, within the framework of the country's adaptation to international standards, actions are being undertaken in order to shift towards decentralisation. Curricula and weekly timetables, for all types of primary and secondary education schools, are centrally specified and their application is compulsory for all schools in the country. The administration of primary and secondary education is conducted at central, regional and local level respectively by: the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs; the Regional Education Directorates; the Directorates of Education (Prefecture); and the School Units.

Early Childhood Education and Care: Pre-primary education in Greece begins at the age of 4 when children are allowed to enroll in Nipiagogeia (pre-primary schools). Attendance in them is compulsory for all 5 year old children. The operation of Nipiagogeia falls under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. In what regards early childhood care, Child and Infant Centers operate under the auspices of the Municipal Authorities.

Primary Education: The next stage comprises the compulsory attendance of Dimotiko Scholeio (Primary School) which belongs to primary education and lasts for 6 years.

Secondary Education: The 3 year attendance of Gymnasio (lower secondary education) constitutes the last period of compulsory education and is a prerequisite for enrolling and attending general or vocational upper secondary schools. In parallel with day Gymnasio, Esperino Gymnasio (Evening Lower Secondary Education School) operates, in which attendance starts at the age of 14. The second tier of secondary education lasts also for 3 years, constitutes the non-compulsory upper secondary education and comprises general secondary education (including Geniko Lykeio/General Lyceum) and vocational secondary education (including Epaggelmatiko Lykeio/Vocational Lyceum). Epaggelmatiko Lykeio offers two cycles of studies, which belong to the formal educational system: a. the secondary cycle and b. the (optional) post-secondary cycle of studies, the so-called "apprenticeship class". In General and Vocational Lyceum pupils enroll at the age of 15. Parallel to day schools, Esperina Genika Lykeia (Evening General Lyceums) and Esperina Epaggelmatika Lykeia (Evening Vocational Lyceums) also operate, while the minimum age for enrollment in Evening Vocational Lyceum is 16 years of age.

Higher Education: Higher education constitutes the last level of education system and comprises the University and Technological sectors. The University sector includes Universities, Technical Universities, and the School of Fine Arts. The Technological sector includes the Technological Education Institutions (TEIs), and the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE). Higher education institutions are fully self-administered

⁴ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fp7is/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Greece-Overview
legal entities of public law. Collective bodies that are established and act in compliance with special legislation administer each institution.

4.2 The dropping out phenomenon. Levels and characteristics

According to EKKE – Eurostat and Greek Press, in 2012 ESL decreased to 11.4% from 13.1% in 2011, Greek ESL rate target is 9.7%. Moreover, in 2009 eight countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom) had higher ESL rates than the European average (14.4 %)\(^5\).

In a study requested by the European Parliament’s Committee on Education and Culture in 2011\(^6\), in Greece, interviewees believed that economic growth and increasing family income in the period 2000-2009 are the main explanatory factors for the decline in ESL rates. This is because young people from low income families felt less pressured to leave school and take a job to contribute to the family income. Unfortunately, it is feared that the economic crisis that has been unfolding in Greece since 2009 will now lead to an increase in ESL in the country. This was a view shared by all interviewees in Greece according to the study.

According to the President of the Greek Teacher Union of Secondary School Teachers, OLME, “While the budget for education was cut by 33 per cent, teachers were either dismissed or forced to hand in their leave. In comparison with the situation before the crisis, Greece had dismissed about one third of its teachers. The difficult economic situation together with the pressure put on the education system will most likely lead to more students dropping out of school”\(^7\).

In Greece, an EKKE study back in 2011\(^8\) found that the factors with the greatest influence on the risk of children dropping out of compulsory education were low income of parents, low socio-economic background of the head of the household and low educational level of the parents.

A key problem in Greece is the high rate of ESL during the first few months of the first grade of upper secondary vocational education. Stakeholders believe that this happens because students start on a vocational route but are quickly disillusioned, because the curriculum does not meet their expectations, being too theoretical and not practical enough or because students realize that their qualification will not increase their employment opportunities since it will not meet labor market needs. High rates of ESL are noted in specific types of schools, such as those located in disadvantaged areas, vocational schools, larger schools with an over-representation of students from disadvantaged and/or migrant backgrounds.


\(^6\) Preventing Early School Leaving through the Use of ICT in Education Report of the ETUCE Workshop, Athens, Greece, 20 September 2013

\(^7\) Preventing Early School Leaving through the Use of ICT in Education Report of the ETUCE Workshop, Athens, Greece, 20 September 2013

In Greece, some of the key reasons for more male students dropping out of education include a lower level of motivation to continue their studies a need or a wish to get involved in a family business or another family-related matters living in highly touristic areas.

According to qualitative data drawn from our findings and more precisely 8 interviews with educators, school directors and administrative staff in private and public secondary education schools in Athens, the main educational problems/issues that affect the early dropping out of School and/or VET are family and teachers indifference towards the student, lack of specialized staff and experts in the school premises, old and demotivational educational systems based on exams as well as the highly stressful workload for the students. It was highlighted almost by the majority of our interviewees, that one of the main issues is the inadequacy of the educational system to successfully integrate and motivate students with emotional, psychological and behavioral difficulties, learning difficulties and disabilities into the educational process.

According to two different focus groups with teachers and specialists from a secondary school and a special school located in Attica, parental indifference towards the student, financial issues and lack of social care are the main reasons behind early school and VET drop-outs.

In a focus group conducted with 5 students, it was also stated that the stress is too high and students feel that they do not have support and “lose all their time studying hard for the exams in order to get to universities, while they might never get a job anyway”. Students also stated that school is not motivating enough and only some educators are able to make them enjoy studying and working hard. Students feel they cannot easily relate to what they are taught.

Especially regarding learning difficulties educators and administrators stated that educators are not enough, students are not supported psychologically by specialized staff especially now that depression is on the rise because of serious financial issues in the family environment. Austerity and financial crisis was also to blame for the lack in educators and specialized psychologists, characterized as a "vicious circle" of non-support and demotivation towards students and educators. Both in focus groups, interviews and questionnaires it was highlighted that students with educational difficulties or cognitive disabilities are not easily or promptly assessed and diagnosed, leading most of them away from the educational and vocational training process, while adding extra psychological pressure and lack of self-esteem. Students with intellectual and learning difficulties stated that they sometimes feel they would like to abandon school because of bullying and feelings of inadequacy.

Even though the statistics don’t yet reveal a high rise of drop outs because of financial issues, in almost all our communication with teachers and students, financial crisis and abandonment of school because of financial reasons was mentioned continuously.
Teachers reported that even in private schools you can now find students who are completely unsupported financially and they have to abandon their studies in order to work.

4.3 National differences in ESL

Young people with a migration background are at greater risk of ESL from school. According to EUROPE 2020 TARGET: EARLY LEAVERS FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING\textsuperscript{10} report, the risk of early school leaving is closely linked to the lower socioeconomic status of migrants, language barriers and their limited access to sufficient learning support. Examples from Portugal and the UK show that they can achieve higher attainment than natives if properly supported. In 2012 Greece, Austria and Cyprus show very high gaps with ESL rates of young people born abroad being at least three times higher than those for natives.

In a number of Member States the proportion of pupils dropping out early or even not attending school at all is especially high among ethnic minority groups, such as Roma. In 2011 more than 10\% of Roma children were not attending compulsory education in Romania, Bulgaria, France and Italy. This figure reached 35\% in Greece\textsuperscript{11}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009 Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Native Born</th>
<th>Eu 27</th>
<th>Non Eu 27</th>
<th>Sub-total</th>
<th>2020 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>(24.7)</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annex1: ESL rates in Greece 2009\textsuperscript{12}

However during our focus groups and interviews it was stated that apart from specific situations when students are unsupported from their families due to serious financial reasons, non-native students are highly motivated to succeed if they are successfully integrated in the educational environment. Otherwise, lack of social and psychological support can have a negative impact.

\textsuperscript{11} European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, UNDP, The Situation on Roma in 11 EU Member States, 2012 (p. 14)
4.4 Project and programmes undertaken to overcome ESL and i-VET leaving

- The fundamental rationale is the creation of equality of opportunity in both access to education and educational outcomes for the children and young people concerned.

- Supplementary Teaching Support is a standalone support scheme providing additional tutoring in the main academic subjects at upper secondary level. The initiative is primarily aimed at those students who are experiencing difficulties in specific classes (both those who are falling behind their peers and those who wish to improve their skills) but all students are able to access support regardless of their academic performance. The schemes are particularly common in schools located in areas with a high concentration of low income families.

- Students are able to attend additional support classes for a variety of school subjects throughout the school year for up to 12 teaching periods and can also choose to attend summer courses when available. These schemes commence with the normal school year and end just before the end of the academic year or leaving certificate examinations. Each subject is taught for up to four hours per week and the teaching period lasts for 45 minutes. Each pupil can attend up to 14 hours per week. A full-time teacher is appointed to act as a scheme planner and evaluator and is responsible for the coordination, organisation and management of the scheme within their individual school unit. The subjects can be taught by full-time teachers specifically allocated to the scheme, ‘stand-in’ teachers from the school or other neighbouring schools, or even externally sourced teachers paid by the hour.

- The aim is to improve the overall quality of education offered to students and to facilitate their entry into higher education or the labour market. Furthermore, tailored support has been introduced in areas with a high proportion of early school leavers. Since the introduction of the scheme in 1997/98, more than 230 000 students have benefited.

- However, the scheme is now being revised and due to funding problems, the future of the supplementary teaching support measure is uncertain. Already many such courses are being suppressed, only those in the most disadvantaged areas remain active at the moment.

- The introduction of new teaching methods is also a way of ensuring that students are engaged in their learning. In Greece for example, steps have been taken to
overcome the fact that outdated teaching methods (‘talk and chalk’) were not felt to reflect the development of society outside of the classroom and young people’s use of new technologies.

- **Guidance and counselling are particularly important for young people at risk of ESL** for a number of reasons such as support and motivation, in Greece career guidance has been strengthened in recent years, largely thanks to EU co-funding and pilot programmes that have been tested under the Operational Programmes.

- **Career offices have been introduced in secondary schools offering guidance and counselling to students and aiming to assist at-risk groups.**

- According to **Support for language learning** can also come in the form of materials as well as actual lessons. In Greece, in order to provide additional tutoring in the Greek language as well as in other subjects to Roma students, 32 books (six of them designed for instructors) have been published as teaching support material, which take into account the particular cultural background of the Roma. The first project results showed that the percentage of students who leave primary school has been reduced from 75% (in 1997) to 24% (in 2001) and the number of Roma students entering secondary schools has increased.

- **Separate ‘preparatory’ or ‘integration’ classes are offered in some countries to children and young people from minority groups, to help them to settle in to their new school and home.** In Greece, there are special integration classes for repatriated Greeks and foreign students. In 2002, 400 reception classes and 500 support classes were in operation with the aim of teaching Greek as a second/foreign language in order to promote the effective (re)integration of repatriated and foreign students into the Greek educational system. Preparatory classes are also offered to Roma children in Greece, to ensure their smooth integration into the school environment and to provide them with extra support.

- **Second chance schools (ΣΔΕ/SDE) were established by law in 1997 as a way of tackling social exclusion in Greece.** They are aimed at young people over the age of 18 who have not completed compulsory education (which lasts for nine years). Participants are able to study for the lower secondary education leaving certificate (Apolytirio Gymnasiou) and the curriculum is flexible to allow young people to choose what best suit their needs and interests. Particular emphasis is placed on the acquisition of basic qualifications and the development of personal skills, in order to provide young people with the competences and qualifications needed to enter the labour force. The programme lasts for 18-24 months.

- **There are also targeted sub-programmes for specific groups** (e.g. Roma, children from the Muslim minority of Thrace) as well as for specific disadvantaged areas that are selected due to their low educational indicators as ‘zones of educational priority’. It is extremely interesting to point out that **there is no policy framework regarding students with disabilities.**

### 4.5 Final remarks

There is no single policy framework on ESL. Instead, the ESL agenda is being taken forward within the ESF Operational Programme ‘Education and Life-long Learning’ 2007-2013, where three axes are devoted to ‘upgrading the quality of education and promotion of social inclusion’ in each Greek region. The programme encourages access to and participation in the educational system for all individuals and aims to combat ESL.
Moreover, according to an older study conducted by School of Pedagogical and Technological Education ASPETE back in 2008\textsuperscript{13}, “According to information given to us by officials of the secondary school education, [...] it primarily appears that there is no provision stipulating that any pupil running the risk of dropping out from school because of absences during the school year should be reported to the secondary school directorate, which, in its turn, should direct the action to be taken in order to reverse the specific situation. In the case where a pupil ends up in giving up his schooling, either due to absences or for any other reason, it does not seem, from our research work, that there is immediate briefing of the secondary school directorate so that some contact, may be maintained with the pupil who dropped out from school. Each school has details available, but the lists with the names and addresses of the pupils are not updated. This was found out from the start of our research, when, in our effort to find the whereabouts of such pupils from the data given to us by the schools, it proved difficult to spot them. Thus, an initial issue emerges which is the timely listing and updating on the pupils at risk to drop out from school or on those who have already dropped out so that contact between school and such a pupil may not be lost.”

\textsuperscript{13} ALIMISIS D., GAVRILIADI G., PAPADOPOLLOU P., PROVATA A. (2008) PREVENTION OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING REPORT ON THE NATIONAL SITUATION, School of Pedagogical and Technological Education ASPETE
5 Italy

5.1 The School and i-VET National system

According to Eurypedia, the education system in Italy is organized according to the principles of subsidiary and of autonomy of schools. The State has exclusive legislative competence on general issues on education, on minimum standards to be guaranteed throughout the country and on the fundamental principles that Regions should comply with within their competences. Regions share their legislative competences with the State on all education issues except for vocational education and training on which they have exclusive legislative competence. Schools are autonomous as for didactic, organization and research and development activities.

ECEC for children aged less than 3 years is organized at local level and it is not part of the education system. **ECEC for children aged from 3 to 6 years is part of the education system and it is not compulsory.**

Compulsory education lasts for 10 years (from 6 to 16 years of age). It covers 5 years of primary school, 3 years of lower secondary school and the first two years of upper secondary school. Compulsory education can be accomplished also by attending three and four-year courses offered within the regional vocational education and training system (VET). The upper secondary level of education has a duration of 5 years and it is offered in both general and vocational pathways.

Higher education is offered by both universities and the High level arts and music education system. This level of education is organized, according to the Bologna Process, in a three-year first cycle followed by a two-year second cycle.

Ongoing Reforms and Policy Developments

This section describes reforms and national policies in relation to the priorities and objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and of the ‘ET2020’ strategic framework. Moreover, the section on national reforms describes the reforms that are going to be applied and issues that are under debate at national level.

On-going national policies in relation to European strategies are described in the National Reform Programmes (NRP). According to the NRP 2013, and with reference to the education sector, Italy is at present committed with many of the issues indicated in the headline targets (ESL and increase of higher education graduates) and in the key areas of the EU2020 strategy.

In particular, in March 2013 the Regulation on the National System of Evaluation of the education and training system has been approved; in September 2013, the Decree no.104 has foreseen the allocation of economic resources to support measures on ESL, on students’ welfare, on school buildings; in 2013 the adult education centers have been reorganized and the Decree no.13 on the national system of certification of competences has been published.
5.2 The dropping out phenomenon. Levels and characteristics

The specific national targets for Italy have been set at 16% for the early school leavers and 26-27% for the share of population having completed higher education.

The phenomenon of school drop-outs requires an analysis of two different aspects:

Firstly, the ‘risk of drop-out’ refers to the number of students who leave school during the school year not providing any official communication to the school. In these cases, data are obtained through the comparison of the initial number of the enrolled students and the number of the students who underwent final assessment at the end of the school year.

Secondly, drop-outs refer to the European indicator ‘early school leavers’, built on the ‘labor force survey’ of the National Institute of statistics (ISTAT). Such indicator refers to young people aged 18-24 holding a lower secondary qualification who are out of the education and training system.

From 2007 to 2010, various interventions on the education and training system were aimed at limiting early school leaving and drop-outs. All these interventions come into force; among them, there are the extension of compulsory education to 16 years of age, the reform of the second cycle of education and the strengthening of school autonomy. At the same time, taking into account the strategic role of guidance in preventing school drop-outs, the National Operative Programme (Programma Operativo Nazionale – PON) has been developed and published in 2011, whose strategy had already been revealed through the Guidelines on lifelong guidance of 2009.

Consistently with this frame, in the occasion of the issue of the ‘Guidelines for guidance’ Regional School Offices have been committed with the definition of a system of actions necessary to create a local network of actors involved in guidance and to develop consistent, shared and unitary actions, as well as to promote a new culture of guidance among school staff consistent with national policies.

Regional Teams have been set up at each Regional School Office. They are made up of representatives of other local institutions which are committed with the identification of needs and interventions addressed to teaching and managing staff in schools, in particular to those involved in guidance activities for students.

The purpose of this network is to accompany the teachers’ professional development, to spread the idea of lifelong education guidance and, at the same time, to create a systematic dialogue between local institutions, enterprises, the labor market and vocational training.

Following this intense training and promotional activity, each Regional School Office has drawn up its own Regional guidance plan which is based on the needs and the resources that have been identified.

The National guidance plan promotes the shift from a practice of guidance meant as an informative service limited at specific transition/decision moments, to an educational approach, where guidance is part of the development of individuals, and allows them to plan their life and their formative and professional future. For this purpose, specific training processes have started, in particular for those who are
responsible, at regional and provincial level, for guidance activities at the Regional School Offices and for secondary teachers.

Recently, following the political elections of February 2013, the composition of the Italian Government changed, with the Ministry of education, university and research gaining a new minister. This new minister committed herself to working to guarantee the continuity of the previous government (National Research Programme – PNR 2013); among these actions, the fighting of school drop-outs, also mentioned in the Country-specific recommendation of 2012 (CSR3), has priority importance. In fact, law decree no. 104, issued in September 2013, provides for a series of interventions and economic measures also aimed at fighting school drop-outs. The decree is immediately applicable; however, it needs to be converted into a law within 60 days from its publication, through parliamentary discussion and approval which can still lead to some amendments of the text.

Among its measures to fight drop-outs, the decree provides for the activation of a Programme for integrative teaching in the areas at higher risk of drop-outs in compulsory education (up to 16 years of age), starting from primary school, supposed to be introduced on experimental basis for school year 2013-2014. It foresees also an extension of the school timetable for student groups. The Ministry, through a decree and in accordance with the State-Regions Conference, will define the criteria for the selection of the schools that will test the Programme and will indicate the objectives – including the strengthening of basic skills –, the teaching methods, through innovative solutions and specific pathways for students at higher risk, as well as the monitoring procedures.

In order to strengthen teachers’ competences in areas at risk of social-educative disadvantage and in areas with a high percentage of immigrant students, teachers will receive specialist support through a person-centered and need-centered training path.

Furthermore, the decree foresees a series of interventions that can indirectly contribute to the prevention of drop-out, such as the allocation of funds to increase catering and transport services in order to facilitate access and attendance of deserving students of secondary schools who are in disadvantaged economic conditions.

In the end, in order to make the actions aimed at fighting school drop-out more efficacious, the integration of the National register of students with regional registers collecting data on the vocational education and training falling under the competence of Regions, to obtain one only national system of student register, has been further encouraged.

The integration of different information systems is important because it allows students to leave their school pathways and accomplish compulsory education (up to 16 years of age) in the regional vocational education and training system. Therefore, a Register that takes into account only school attendance doesn’t reveal the switches of students between the education system and the regional vocational training system; data on drop-outs and on the risk of early school leaving based on such Register wouldn’t correspond to the reality and would therefore hinder an early diagnosis of the risk.

At present, all schools record their data in the Register within specific deadlines (related to attendance in autumn and spring data, data related to final assessments and exams at the end of the school year) or whenever it is necessary to communicate changes in single students’ attendance; this procedure permits a real-time update of the Register. The Register records each student’s personal data, an identification code that follows the
student for his/her whole school path, the student’s intermediate and final assessments as well as switches within the education and training system. If a student has breaks in their school attendance, the Register records the relevant reasons. Cases of ‘drop-out risk’ are pointed out by the Register if the relevant reasons are not provided. This is useful above all to monitor and prevent early school leaving cases that can occur before 14 years of age, because, after that age, students can choose to accomplish compulsory education in the regional vocational education and training pathways, which, at the moment, are not integrated in the Register.

In the last year, the functioning of the National register has been highly refined, focusing on the cases of mobility, transfers, interruptions of attendance and relevant reasons that have occurred during the school year as well as requesting schools to record their data related to attendance interruptions form one year to the next. In this way it will be possible to develop an analysis that will enable to quantify data on drop-outs at the end of lower secondary school. (Source: Servizio Statistico, Miur, Focus ‘La dispersione scolastica’, June 2013).

Students with disabilities

In Italy, disabled pupils are integrated in mainstream education, according to the principle of integration that has inspired the legislation on this matter since the 1970s. The inclusion of disabled pupils in mainstream schools started first on an experimental basis and then was regularly implemented, in pre-primary schools and primary schools, and was progressively extended to the lower and upper secondary schools and universities.

At present, Law no. 104 of 1992 is the reference legislation on this matter. It has reorganized systematically and consistently all previous rules concerning the right of people with disabilities. The frame-law 104/92 defines the general objectives of the integration of the disabled at school as follows: The aim of the integration at school is the development of the potentials of the handicapped person in learning, communication, relationships and socialization. The right to education cannot be hindered by learning difficulties or other difficulties deriving from disabilities connected with the handicap.

Law no. 104 of 1992 also establishes that ‘handicapped children aged 0-3 are granted enrolment in day nurseries’ and that ‘the right to education is granted to handicapped children in the sections of pre-primary schools, in ordinary classes of every school types and levels and in the universities’. The principle of integration and the right of disabled pupils to receive specific support are also included in all the subsequent legislation that regulates general aspects of the education system, such as enrolment, class size and pupils’ assessment, as well as initial teacher training and, in particular, for future support teachers.

In 2009, the Ministry of education, university and research (Miur) issued specific Guidelines for integrating pupils with disabilities in school. These Guidelines collect provisions providing for solutions aimed at improving the processes of integration of pupils with disability, within the legislative framework into force.

Dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysorthography, dyscalculia, are officially recognised as Specific Learning Disabilities (Disturbi specifici dell’apprendimento, DSA) and pupils with these disabilities receive special organisational and didactic support measures.
Finally, the principle of inclusion also applies to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds for social and economic reasons and to immigrant pupils. In such circumstances, measures focus on didactic flexibility and, in the case of immigrants with low levels of Italian, linguistic support.

The brand new Italian Minister of Education, in her programmatic plan, announced the following measures:

"We need an open and high-quality school for everyone. That is why ... the assessment becomes crucial for the school of the new century. Open means first knowing how to combat early school leaving (now 16%) and open the doors of schools over the class schedule to develop programs and projects dedicated, also open to the disability, to the territory and with proposals for all citizens (literacy skills and professional skills), integrated with the Youth Guarantee just launched in Italy (May 5, 2014), with particular attention to the development of vocational and apprenticeship of the trial."

5.3 Key aspects regarding ESL: Regional and local differences, gender, age, nationality

As far as Emilia-Romagna Region is concerned, (http://scuola.regione.emilia-romagna.it/) significant differences with respect to the Italian framework can be highlighted.

![Picture 2 – ESL rate at regionale level]

Fonte: Indagine sulle Forze di lavoro - Istat
Over the period 2006 – 2012 all the Italian Regions (with the exception of Tuscany Region) have decreased the rate of ESL. Emilia-Romagna Region decreased it from 17.7% to 15.3%, matching the 2013 IT target of 17.9%.

The most recent data, the number of youngsters from 18 to 24 y. o. who leave School or VET programme early has decreased to 758,000 (29,000 fewer than 2011); 59% of them were male. Youngsters with a lower secondary degree licence not in education are 17.8% compared to an EU average of 12.8%.

Early school leavers in Italy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
<th>2013 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To monitor dropping-out and ESL, a National Register has been set up. It lists data and socio-demographic information for each student and assigns a unique identifier that will be associated to the students throughout his/her education path and registers all targets, experiences, gaps in attendance, movements across education providers, as well as intermediate and final targets.

**Regional and Gender differences in ESL.**

From a geographical point of view, ESL is more frequent in Southern Italy associated to social and economic concerns.

Graf.6 Students at risk of abandon (% of all students) by region. - 2011/12

---

Scuola secondaria di I grado

- Piemonte, 0.4%
- Lombardia, 0.3%
- Veneto, 0.3%
- Sicilia, 0.1%
- Calabria, 0.2%
- Basilicata, 0.1%
- Puglia, 0.1%
- Campania, 0.3%
- Molise, 0.2%
- Abruzzo, 0.5%
- Marche, 0.2%
- Umbria, 0.2%
- Toscana, 0.1%
- Emilia Romagna, 0.2%

Scuola secondaria di II grado

- Piemonte, 0.2%
- Lombardia, 0.1%
- Veneto, 0.1%
- Sicilia, 0.2%
- Calabria, 0.3%
- Basilicata, 0.1%
- Puglia, 0.2%
- Campania, 0.1%
- Molise, 0.1%
- Abruzzo, 0.1%
- Marche, 0.1%
- Umbria, 0.1%
- Toscana, 0.1%
- Emilia Romagna, 0.1%
The phenomenon of ESL impacts differently by gender. In the lower secondary school 0.24% of males are at risk of ESL, while 0.16% of females, in upper secondary school 1.47% of males against 1% of females.

**Students at risk of ESL by age**

The situation of ESL is different if examined by age.

In Lower Secondary School, 17.6% of students at risk of ESL are less than 14 y. o.; 43.7% are aged between 14 and 16 y. o., 34.3% between 16 and 18 y. o. and 4.4% are older than 18 y. o.
In Upper Secondary School just 0.1% of all students are younger than 14 y. o., 6.1% are between 14 and 16 y. o., 28.8% are aged between 16 and 18 and a significant 65% are adults.

Students at risk of ESL by age.

Students from abroad are a growing phenomenon in the Italian School system. At the moment they represent on average a 9.6% of Lower Secondary School and 6.6% of Upper Secondary School but their presence is significantly different by order of School, often these students form the majority in Professional Secondary Schools or in VET courses. They show a higher risk of drop-out rate: 0.49% against 0.17% registered by Italian students in Lower Secondary School and 2.42% against 1.16% in Upper Secondary School. The major risk is showed by students born abroad, respectively 84.5% and 92% of non-Italian students who are at risk of drop-out in Lower and Upper Secondary School. The 2009 OCSE-PISA data show a significant gap between Italian and Stranger students, especially for those of first generation in Italy, regarding literacy, mathematics and science skills. A priority issue is therefore the teaching of Italian language as study and work language, not only as a basic tool to live in the Country.
5.4 Final remarks

The needs analysis process conducted with the major Stakeholders (Professional Higher School Principal, Teachers and Trainers, those Responsible for Student dialogue and ICT development of local Minister of Education, Employment representatives, the Emilia-Romagna Region Responsible for School-VET joint policies devoted to ESL and drop-outs, the head of the major local NGO working in education sector in many schools, youth and social Centres, community-based projects) has led to the following further considerations, based on the experience of addressing ESL and dropping-out in the Provincia di Parma local area. The information were collected by using the devoted tools and instruments, with regard to the preferred and most effective ones for each Stakeholder.

1. Significant measures (4.5 million € per year) and specific projects have been adopted by the local Public Administration over the period 2011-2013 to tackle ESL and dropping-out. About 1,000 children (997) have taken part in devoted education programs (19 courses multi-year long in joint collaboration with VET systems) with a retention rate of 78%, a final qualification and job opportunities, as the courses were designed to match major labour market opportunities for youngsters. Education dispersion at local level is therefore at 1.1%. Further improvements are expected by Local Authorities, once the Regional experimental framework has become a baseline.

2. Nevertheless, despite the good results of local interventions, the effects of austerity measures over school policies, economic downturn that increased unemployment rate and uncertainty over job security, social malaise that impacts on families and youngsters, too, ensure that the need remains for a renewed investment on policies and instruments to tackle ESL, even if the phenomenon is not exactly measured.
3. **Representatives of Employers** state that there is room for success for those who disengage from education, as many businesses, especially small firms and craft firms, do not identify school success with work success. They think that the skills and qualities needed to be a good worker do not necessarily come from formal education.

4. Firms believe that youngsters possess ICT skills not as a consequence of devoted courses or curriculum, but just because “all youngsters can manage ICT and mobile devices”.

5. Firms pay a special interest to soft skills and social competences. The youngsters must gain the confidence of employers and colleagues as a precondition to practice ICT and other professional skills.

6. Social and organizational skills are key-competences on the workplace. These are the first skills an employer looks for in a job interview.

7. **Teachers and Schools** are adopting new tools, like EDMODO, a Facebook-like platform used to share discussions, solutions, and sources. Teachers are being trained in digital communication skills and tools with students.

8. Technical and ICT skills are very useful for the involvement of the more disadvantaged students. These can help to translate passions into job opportunities.

9. Other projects involving serious games are practiced (e.g. Food and nutritional safety, street safety, environment protection, …).

10. Code RED methodology could apply to a larger family of intervention on youth, like Municipal Youth Centres, populated by migrants and youngsters coming from the lowest socio-economic sectors.

11. In ESL students and drop-outs families are often absent or dangerous. The need for a further adult presence, other than teachers and trainers, is crucial to reinforce and empower children as future citizens and workers. With regard to this, the Hart’s Ladder Methodology adopted in Code RED workshops has been crucial to this aim.

12. ESLs and drop-outs are students that are sometimes unable to stand the stress involved in “normal” Upper Secondary School.

13. Training and workshops have been significantly cut down, from 18 hours per week to 4 hours per week. Students who especially feel comfortable with more practical activities are more likely to leave the school.

14. Even if school is not easy or not the best place to stay, often it is the only alternative to doing nothing or to becoming involved in dangerous contexts. Students are willing to go back or stay at school also in the afternoon, attending workshops or extra activities.

15. Ethnic communities are very strong and can influence attitude towards school life. Maghreb, Albanian, Indian, Chinese are all nationalities represented in many
classrooms. Adults often intervene to manage disputes that occur during school time.

16. Code RED should provide feedback to the students and classes not initially involved.

17. A major issue is the teaching of theoretical subjects like history or law.

18. The high turnover of teachers makes it difficult to build upon past experiences.

19. Since each transition is crucial to students at risk of ESL, an accompanying action is highly recommended.

20. In Emilia-Romagna region, 15% of students stay in the School system until 18 y. o. without achieving any qualifications. Simply attending school is not enough. The result, as far as the knowledge and skills acquired, is what is important.

21. Since problems often start in the early Lower Secondary School or even in Primary Schools, a longitudinal action of taking care and providing guidance should avoid dispersion and also help to capitalize on fragmented experiences.

22. ESL and drop-out is widespread also in native Southern Italian families living in Parma, not only in migrants. Families that do not invest in education for their children are the first obstacle to tackle.

23. These children then suffer from a non-inclusive context, where strict rules and curricula compliance are the main objectives. They view school as an oppositive institution.

24. Students at risk of exclusion can display both an active and a more passive disengagement. In both cases, the students have turned away from any desire or curiosity towards school. It is so crucial to switch on again this desire through alternative paths. Then the key issue is how to bring the new willingness to the school.

25. More recently, school tends to classify and statement any diversity: from disability to a simple illness. A BES, “Bisogno Educativo Speciale” (need for special education) allows access to additional resources to cope with it. It can also be a temporary classification. So doing, the school adopts extra-resources to deal with everyone is not perfectly in line with its own requirements (rules, compliance, curriculum, schedule, etc.).

26. What can help? Learning by doing and that effective learning could be positively recognized and possibly certified. That single experiences have a widespread diffusion, so that more and more teachers and trainers can appreciate and apply them.
6 United Kingdom

6.1 The School and i-VET National system

Central government has overall responsibility for the education system in England but responsibility for the education service is decentralized, lying with local authorities, voluntary providers, including churches, and the governing bodies of education institutions.

Overall responsibility for the education service in England lies with two departments of the UK Government: the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. DfE responsibilities include planning and monitoring the education service in schools and early years settings, ensuring the provision of integrated services for children, and bringing together policy relating to children and young people. BIS is responsible for science and innovation, skills, further, adult and higher education and enterprise. At central level there are also non-ministerial government departments and executive agencies which are responsible for specific functions.

The Education Funding Agency is responsible for funding of education and training in schools and colleges up to age 19. It directly funds academies (public-sector independent schools) and passes funding to local authorities for maintained schools. The Skills Funding Agency is responsible for funding and commissioning post-19 education and training. The Higher Education Funding Council for England is responsible for funding in higher education. The direct costs of specific research projects are funded by the UK Research Councils which have a remit across the UK.

Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, is responsible for the inspection and regulation of day care and children’s social care, and the inspection of children’s services, schools, colleges, initial teacher training, youth work, work-based learning and adult education. At higher education level, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education provides quality assurance services across the UK. It is independent of UK governments and is owned by the organizations that represent the heads of UK higher education institutions.

Local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in their area. The role of the local authority has been changing in recent years. The Government is encouraging stronger schools to work with weaker schools to raise standards, either in academy chains or looser collaborative arrangements, and some aspects of the local authority’s role as the ‘middle tier’ now sit with such organizations.

Education is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16 years. The great majority of young people continue with full-time education after the age of 16. The Government raised the participation age in England to 17 in 2013, which will rise again to 18 in 2015. Many post-compulsory secondary programmes are of two years’ duration, i.e. for students from 16- to 18-year-old. However the funding framework applies to 16- to 19-year-olds.

Publicly funded schools comprise maintained schools, funded through the local authority, and academies (including free schools – new schools set up by groups where there is local demand), which are legally independent schools but are funded directly from central government. All publicly funded schools enjoy a high level of autonomy and are responsible
for their own budgets and staffing decisions. All education institutions have a governing body, responsible for the general direction of the institution, which includes representatives from a range of stakeholders. Strategic and financial planning at school level is shared between the school governing body and head-teacher, whilst the day-to-day management of schools is the responsibility of the head-teacher.

Schools are responsible for planning the whole curriculum experienced by pupils, taking into account the school’s particular needs and circumstances. This must be a balanced and broadly based curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Maintained schools must by law include the National Curriculum and religious education in the school’s whole curriculum. A new National Curriculum will be introduced from September 2014. Although academies and free schools are not required by law to follow the National Curriculum, under the terms of their funding agreements they must teach English, mathematics and science and religious education and provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Teaching hours for particular subjects are not centrally prescribed. Grade repetition is not a feature of the school system. 14–16 secondary education leads to combinations of single subject qualifications – mainly the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), provided by external awarding organizations within a qualifications system with common features in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

16–19 secondary education is characterized by subject specialization and a range of providers: sixth forms in secondary schools which cater for the age range 11 to 18/19 and, sixth-form colleges (16 to 19) or further education colleges (16+) in the further education sector. The landscape of providers varies according to local arrangements but all areas provide young people with a wide choice of programmes leading to general/academic, pre-vocational or vocational qualifications. Qualifications are provided by centrally regulated awarding organizations, external to the school or college within a qualifications system with common features in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are diverse, ranging widely in size, mission and history. HEIs are private bodies which are independent of government. They receive their income from a number of sources, including from student fees, through research projects and by generating business. However, they also receive a portion of their income from public funds.

**IVET in the United Kingdom**

Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) is the term used to describe vocational education for 14 to 19 year olds. This may take place in the workplace or at a training institution.

In the UK, compulsory education finishes at age 16 (soon to be raised to 18.) Young people may continue to study, either in school or at a sixth-form college or further education college. Alternatively, they can enter employment with training such as an apprenticeship, or enter employment without apprenticeship.

---

14 The following information has been taken from The British Council website. Further information on this topic can be found at the following link: http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-skills-for-employability-uk-country-overview-vet-system.htm
Types of IVET

IVET can take place while young people are in school in the form of work-related learning. It might involve a short period of work experience or classroom-based lessons where pupils learn about work and careers. There are now vocational GCSEs in eight subjects, including applied science, applied IT and health and social care.

Another type of IVET is the Young Apprenticeship scheme, which combines the practical application of skills in the workplace with study in the classroom. It is designed for 14 to 16 year olds.

On leaving school, the young person can continue with IVET in the form of work-based training such as an apprenticeship or Further Education course which provides specific training for entry to an occupation. Colleges of further education offer academic, general and vocational courses and some also offer degree courses.

UK vocational education and training is flexible, responsive and relevant to the needs of industry as well as individuals. Business works with government, professional and trade associations, awarding bodies and training providers to ensure that the appropriate training is provided for today’s needs and for the future. Consistent standards and quality are built into the UK vocational education and training system.

The UK has a long tradition of vocational education and training, and has developed a reputation for high quality training and qualifications.

Although there are differences between the vocational education training system in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the training and qualifications are interchangeable and of the same standard.

The types of vocational training and education offered depend on the needs of UK employers, rather than being determined by the training providers. In December 2006 a report commissioned by government was published (the Leitch Review - ‘Prosperity for all in the Global Economy: World Class Skills’) which increases the potential for employers to lead.

The key features of the UK i-VET system are:

- a network of Sector Skills Councils, where industry defines and steers the planning for the skills it needs
- occupational standards set by industry, which lead to qualifications based on the assessment of what individuals can do as well as what they know
- vocational education and training programs starting at school for 14 year olds and with links to university study options
- six levels of qualifications which span all the different education and training routes in a coherent national framework
- Over 500 autonomous colleges and many more private education and training providers that work closely with community organisations and local businesses to ensure their courses are responsive to local needs.

Key Bodies in IVET

Each of the four UK countries has a department within Government responsible for vocational education and training. In England, it is the Department for Business Innovation and Skills. Alongside the Government departments, there are many other key bodies with responsibility for IVET in the UK. These include the Institute for Learning - IfL is the
independent professional body, and the sector’s specialist in teaching, training and learning for individual teachers and trainers across further education (FE) and skills.

There are also many agencies involved in IVET, notably: British Educational and Communications Technology Agency (BECTA). BECTA leads on the effective use of technology in education.

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL). CEL works with sector partners to ensure world-class leadership within the learning and skills sector.

Quality Improvement Agency (QIA). QIA works to champion excellence and innovation across the learning and skills sector to improve performance.

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK). LLUK is the Sector Skills Council responsible for the professional development of all those working in:

- Community learning and development
- Further education
- Higher education
- Libraries, archives and information services
- Work-based learning

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). QCA is a public body which maintains and develops the national curriculum and associated assessments, tests and examinations as well as accrediting qualifications in colleges and at work. It also regulates awarding bodies and exams to ensure they are fit for purpose

Alliance of Sector Skills Councils. This is a collective body made up of all 25 Sector Skills Councils. It represents and co-ordinates the strategic work of Sector Skills Councils to stakeholders across the four home nations.

CEGNET. This is the careers education support programme of the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

IVET is further supported through employer involvement and engagement.

In the UK, employers are involved in the vocational education training system through their participation in Sector Skills Councils. The Sector Skills Councils (SSC) develop and own National Occupational Skills Standards.

Sector Skills Councils

The Sector Skills Councils are owned and run by employers, and draw on the expertise and active involvement of trade unions, professional bodies and other stakeholders in the sector.

Their goals are to:

- reduce skills gaps and shortages and anticipate future needs
- help employers and individuals to make informed choices
- improve productivity, business and public services performance
- increase opportunities to develop and improve individual productivity so that everyone can benefit
- Improve the learning supply, including the development of apprenticeships, higher education and national occupational standards.

Curriculum development

In the UK, Occupational Standards are used to determine the requirements of qualifications and their supporting curriculum. Four different bodies oversee this process in the four home countries.

England - The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

The QCA is the guardian of standards and quality across all qualifications in England and Wales. It advises the government about all qualifications, including the school curriculum and assessment.

6.2 The dropping out phenomenon. Levels and characteristics

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that Early School Leaving (ESL) and young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) continues to be an issue in the UK. The statistics taken from reports on the ONS website\textsuperscript{13} (www.ons.gov.uk) outline that there were \textbf{1.09 million young people (aged from 16 to 24) in the UK who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)}, virtually unchanged from January to March 2013 but down 104,000 from a year earlier.

- The percentage of all young people in the UK who were NEET was 15.1%, unchanged from January to March 2013 but down 1.3 percentage points from a year earlier.

- Just over half (53.6%) of all young people in the UK who were NEET were looking for work and available for work and therefore classified as unemployed. The remainders were either not looking for work and/or not available for work and therefore classified as economically inactive. For April to June 2013, there were 72,000 people aged from 16 to 17 who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), down 4,000 from January to March 2013 and down 19,000 from a year earlier. There were 1.02 million people aged from 18 to 24 who were NEET, up 4,000 from January to March 2013 but down 85,000 from a year earlier.

Unemployed Young People who were NEET.

Unemployment measures people without a job who have been actively seeking work within the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks. For April to June 2013, there were 586,000 unemployed young people (aged from 16 to 24) who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), up 6,000 from January to March 2013 but down 58,000 from a year earlier. For April to June 2013:

- There were 357,000 unemployed men aged from 16 to 24 who were NEET, and
- There were 229,000 unemployed women aged from 16 to 24 who were NEET.

Economically Inactive Young People who were NEET

Economic inactivity measures people not in employment who have not been seeking work

\textsuperscript{13}Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), August 2013

Date 22 August 2013 Geographical Area: UK Theme: Labour Market For April to June 2013
within the last four weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks. For April to June 2013, there were 507,000 economically inactive young people (aged from 16 to 24) who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), down 7,000 from January to March 2013 and down 46,000 from a year earlier. For April to June 2013:

• There were 151,000 economically inactive men aged from 16 to 24 who were NEET, and
• There were 355,000 economically inactive women aged from 16 to 24 who were NEET.

**NEET Statistics - Quarterly Brief – Quarter 2 2012**

This section details the available statistics on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and young people not in education or training (NET) from the following data sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: NEET rates for different age cohorts</th>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>% point change from Q2 2011 to Q2 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 16</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 17</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>+0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 18</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>+1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16-18</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 19-24</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16-24</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Statistical First Release (SFR)** - These are the authoritative national estimates of NEET and NET rates. They are published annually in the ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England’ SFR. These data are only of NEET and NET trends as well as estimates for other age groups, including 16-24, 18-24 and 19-24. The quarterly LFS estimates cannot be directly compared with the headline SFR series which is based on more detailed but less timely data.

2. **Local Authorities’ Client Caseload Information System (CCIS).** CCIS is the management information data that results from the duty for all Local Authorities to track the activity of young people aged 16-19 years old resident in their area. Data can be aggregated to provide estimates for regions.

---

16 The following information is taken from [http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/StRe/d001082/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/StRe/d001082/index.shtml)
Statistics relating to ESL/NEET by ethnicity.

According to The Poverty Site (www.poverty.org) the statistics relating to Young People who are NEET by ethnicity are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>16 year olds</th>
<th>17 year olds</th>
<th>18 year olds</th>
<th>16-17 year olds</th>
<th>16-18 year olds</th>
<th>16-24 year olds</th>
<th>18-24 year olds</th>
<th>19-24 year olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks &amp; Humber</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Client Caseload Information System  Period: Nov 2011 - Jan 2012 average*

The proportion of White 16-year-olds who do not continue in full time education is much higher than that for any ethnic minority, but many are undertaking some form of training.

Source: Careers Service Activity Survey, Connexions; the data is for 2009; England; updated Jul 2010
Data relating to school exclusion in the UK.

According to The Poverty Site, (http://www.poverty.org.uk/27/index.shtml?2) in the UK:

- Around 6,000 pupils were permanently excluded from school in 2009/10.
- Numbers have fallen in each of the last six years, from a peak of 10,500 in 2003/04.
- Four-fifths of permanent exclusions are boys.
- Despite reductions in recent years, Black Caribbean pupils are still four times as likely to be permanently excluded from school as White British pupils. By contrast, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi children are all less likely to be permanently excluded from school than White British pupils.
- The rate of permanent exclusion is much lower in Scotland than elsewhere in Great Britain: 1 per 10,000 pupils each year compared to 6-11 in most of the English regions and 5 in Wales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bangladeshi</th>
<th>Black African</th>
<th>Black Caribbean</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Pakistani</th>
<th>White British</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>10,000 pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and The Humber</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of permanent exclusions has fallen by two-fifths over the last six years.

Sources: DfE Statistical Bulletins, Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Government; Great Britain; updated Jul 2011

Despite reductions in recent years, Black Caribbean pupils are still four times as likely to be permanently excluded from school as pupils from any other ethnic group.

Source: Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools in England, DfE; England; updated Jul 2011
The rate of permanent exclusion is much lower in Scotland than elsewhere.

Sources: DfE Statistical Bulletins, Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Government; the data is for 2009/10; Great Britain; updated Jul 2011.
National Strategies for Overcoming ESL and Drop Out\textsuperscript{17}. Tackling the issues around early school leaving and drop out is a priority across EU member states.

Early school leaving is an urgent and serious problem, both for individuals and society as a whole. The EU Member States work together to reduce the number of pupils who drop out before the end of secondary education. There are many reasons – often highly individual – why some young people give up education and training prematurely: learning difficulties, social problems or a lack of motivation, guidance or support. Although the situation varies in different EU countries, the social phenomenon of early school leaving follows certain patterns. Early school leavers are more likely to have a lower socio-economic status or to belong to vulnerable social groups. On average, the rate of early school leaving in Europe is double for youth from migrant backgrounds compared to native youth. In addition, male students are more likely to drop out of school education. However, the impacts of individual and social conditions are also affected by the set-up of the educational system and the environment in individual schools. Since there is not a single reason for leaving education or vocational training, there are no easy answers.


In June 2010, the European Council agreed the Europe 2020 Strategy and identified five "headline targets" establishing EU-wide policy priorities to tackle "bottlenecks to growth" and to help Member States promote employment and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. One of the headline targets concerns education. It calls on Member States to aim to reduce school drop-out rates to less than 10\% and to increase the share of 30-34 year-olds having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40\% by 2020, but also recognises that the task of defining and implementing quantitative targets in the field of education remains a national competence.

The Europe 2020 Strategy is accompanied by seven "flagship initiatives", including one entitled "Youth on the Move", which proposes a range of actions at EU and national level to strengthen the performance of education systems across the EU, improve the quality of education and training, and equip young people with the skills needed to find jobs. It contemplates the adoption of a Council Recommendation to provide a framework for measures to reduce school dropout rates.

The EU has limited competence in the field of education and vocational training. Action at EU level is intended to "support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States" and the EU has no power to harmonise national laws. Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides for the European Union "to contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully

\textsuperscript{17} \url{http://eshacommunity.wikispaces.com/Early+school+leaving}
respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity." Article 166 TFEU makes similar provision in the field of vocational training. Both Articles contemplate action at EU level to develop the exchange of information and experience on issues common to the education and vocational training systems of the Member States.

**Document (a) — the Commission Communication on tackling early school leaving**

The Communication seeks to analyze the impact of early school leaving on individuals, society at large and the economy, to outline its causes, and to propose possible measures at EU level to reduce the rate of early school leaving. The Commission emphasizes that a reduction in school drop-out rates is also likely to improve the prospects for achieving other Europe 2020 headline targets, notably raising the employment rate of men and women aged 20-64 to 75%, promoting social inclusion and lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion.

The Commission says that, in 2009, more than six million young people (or 14.4% of all 18 to 24-year olds) left school without completing their secondary education or any further education or training. Early school leaving increases the risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion and reduces the pool of qualified labor available to drive economic growth. Although the average early school-leaving rate across the EU has declined by 3.2% since 2000, there are significant disparities between Member States. Some already meet the 10% target set by the European Council; others still have a long way to go. According to the Commission, the early school-leaving rate in the UK in 2009 was 15.7%.

The Commission identifies a range of factors that contribute to early school leaving, particularly amongst those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, and suggests that Member States should develop comprehensive strategies based on the principles of prevention, intervention and compensation. The Commission highlights the need for a sound evidence base to ensure that strategies are appropriately tailored to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, schools, localities or regions. The Commission says that preventive measures might include higher rates of participation in good quality early years education; systematic language support for children from an ethnic minority background; "active desegregation" to improve the social, ethnic and cultural mix in schools; and targeted support for disadvantaged schools. Intervention measures might include the development of early warning systems; student mentoring and tutoring; and educational allowances to encourage pupils to remain in education. Compensation measures might include specially tailored programmes or incentives to encourage young people to return to education or training.

The Communication recognizes that Member States are responsible for setting national targets to reduce early school leaving as part of the National Reform Programmes that they develop to implement the Europe 2020 Strategy. It also identifies a range of measures at EU level to support national policies and targets, including:

- a Council Recommendation establishing a common European framework for tackling early school leaving (document (b));
- a Commission Communication on early childhood education and care;
- a Commission Communication on a New European Agenda on Integration to support the educational attainment of children from a migrant background;
- specific action to reduce the number of young people dropping out of vocational education and training;
- developing a benchmark to measure the employability of young people (how well prepared they are to enter the labour market);
- conferences and high level official or Ministerial discussions to encourage the exchange of best practice; and
- using EU funds to support innovative approaches to reducing early school leaving.
Document (b) — the Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving

The proposed Recommendation is intended to establish a framework to help Member States develop comprehensive strategies to reduce early school leaving and to quicken progress towards attaining the headline target set by the European Council.

Recital (1) of the draft Recommendation states that "Member States have undertaken to establish national targets, taking account of their relative starting positions and national circumstances." Recital (2) refers to the Council Decision, adopted last October, establishing guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States. The Decision requires Member States to take the guidelines into account in developing their employment policies, and to report on them in their National Reform Programmes. Guideline 9 concerns education and training. It says:

"With a view to reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training, Member States shall take all necessary steps to prevent early school leaving.

"The EU headline target, on the basis of which Member States will set their national targets, taking into account their relative starting positions and national circumstances, will aim to reduce drop-out rates to less than 10%, and increase the share of 30-34 year-olds having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40%.""

The main body of the draft Recommendation is divided into two parts. The first part is addressed to Member States and invites them to:

- identify the main factors leading to early school leaving and monitor developments at national, regional and local level; and
- adopt, by the end of 2012, comprehensive cross-cutting policies to tackle early school leaving, in line with national Europe 2020 targets and based on the principles of prevention, intervention and compensation.

The second part invites the Commission to:

- monitor developments across all EU Member States, encourage the exchange of best practice, and support peer learning;
- support policies to reduce early school leaving in all EU activity concerning children and young adults;
- conduct comparative studies and research;
- ensure that EU funds may be used to support Member States' strategies; and
- produce regular reports on progress made towards achieving the European Council's headline target on reducing school drop-out rates.

The UK Government's view

The Minister of State for Schools (Mr Nick Gibb) notes that the draft Recommendation would establish a non-binding policy framework which seeks principally to support and facilitate the exchange of information between Member States. Whilst he considers that the proposal respects the boundaries placed on EU action by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, notably as regards Member States' responsibility for the content of teaching and the organization of their education systems, he believes that the Recommendation "should refer more strongly to Member States' competence in education" and says that the Government will press this point during negotiations.

"In general, the Government agrees that improving attainment rates and reducing early drop-out from education and training are key issues. Some of the Commission's analysis accords with our own — particularly the link between early school leaving, social disadvantage and poor labor market outcomes, and the proposition that tailored support at a local level is required. This fits closely with our priority of increasing the flexibility and freedom of schools to respond flexibly to students' needs."

The Minister broadly endorses the principles of prevention, intervention and compensation which underpin the policy framework proposed by the Commission, but suggests that an
alternative term should be found for "compensation", as "this could be taken to imply financial redress, which is not the focus of these measures. 'Re-engagement measures' could be an alternative."

The Minister indicates that the UK already collects and publishes data on the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training, and on qualification levels. The Minister expects the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council to agree the draft Recommendation at its meeting on 20 May.

6.3 Regional strategies and initiatives

So we can see how the UK Government has prioritized the phenomenon of ESL, and future consultations and policies are expected that will aim to reduce the levels of dropout further. Local communities, schools, colleges and authorities having recognised the necessity to deal with the numbers of young people becoming disengaged from education, have, for many years, been working towards ensuring that young people stay in education or engage with training or employment.

The West Midlands has the highest proportion of young people who are NEET – in 2009 1 in five were in this position (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8199269.stm)

Initiatives have been put in place and are ongoing in the West Midlands, for example, the Vine Education Trust in Walsall who:

“are an exemplar in an education system where young people outside traditional school can reach their full academic and vocational potential in and around our registered school. Through our subsidiary, The Vine Education Trust we aim to promote a learning culture via the development of a wide range of learning opportunities and training programmes, which will equip young people with confidence, aspirations, skills and the qualifications required to achieve their goals and to sustain employment.

http://www.thevinetrust.co.uk/education_trust.cfm

What is a Studio School?

Studio Schools are a new type of state school model that has been developed in partnership with local and national employers, leading education agencies and government. They have been designed to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to succeed in life and work.

Studio Schools are an important new option for young people of all abilities. They are a new approach to learning involving enterprise projects and paid work experience. The offer a real alternative to traditional learning and they are a making a real difference to the lives of young people up and down the country.

Useful Links
The Studio School Trust - www.studioschools.org

Department for Education - www.education.gov.uk

Local education authorities have dedicated departments to offer support, advice and information to students, and parents of students, at risk of dropping out.

http://www.connexionswalsall.co.uk/parents_carers/introduction/index.aspx
Alternative curricula are offered by organisations seeking to engage with young people who have been identified as being at risk of dropping out such as Groundwork West Midlands who on their website say, “When young people leave school with few aspirations and fewer qualifications it doesn’t just impact on their life chances. It’s a huge problem for the school, for local communities and society as a whole. Our alternative curriculum programmes work with pupils that are identified as being most at risk of leaving school with few qualifications and becoming NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training). By targeting young people before they drop out of the system we can raise their self-esteem and help to realise their potential. We use the environment to help re-engage pupils with education - both within the school grounds and outside of the usual educational system. Pupils participate in activities such as attaining an Asdan Award, City & Guilds Award or NCFE Award through engagement with local environmental regeneration projects; basic food hygiene; developing media skills (e.g. through a video project) and participating in drugs awareness and healthy lifestyles activities. Through Groundwork West Midlands alternative curriculum programmes, young people can change from a path of negativity and risk, to one of hope, respect and positive direction.”


Another article on the Government’s website discusses proposals to encourage businesses to help tackle the economic and social problems caused by young people being NEET.

Department for Education, Department for Work & Pensions and Deputy Prime Minister's Office
Published 20 July 2012

Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) stand to benefit from a new scheme, where funding worth up to £126 million is being made available to organizations across England, who will be paid by results to get 16- and 17-year-olds back into education or training.

The programme, part of the deputy prime minister’s youth contract, is the first to use payment by results to help get NEETs re-engaged. Organizations involved have had to compete for contracts by showing they are able to get young people back on track. In return for proving they are experts in the field, they will be given freedom to tailor and provide support for disadvantaged young people in the way they know best.

Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, said:
“Young people who have fallen through the net need tailored support to get back on track. We can’t treat them like round pegs being forced into square holes - if you’re young and have got to the point where you feel on the scrapheap, you need extra help to succeed in life.

Disengaged young people often have complex problems that act as a barrier to getting them learning again, which the government alone can’t deal with. But very often local charities and businesses know what’s going to help them.”

Minister for Employment, Chris Grayling, said:
“We think payment by results is the best way to ensure that we deliver the best possible support for young people.
It means the providers have to find the very best ways to help them if they’re to be financially successful, so it’s a win-win for everyone.”

Children’s Minister, Tim Loughton, said:
“Today’s announcement is a significant step in offering up to 55,000 struggling 16- and 17-year-olds real practical support to make the most of staying in education sustainably or getting into jobs and training.”

The youth contract programme is bringing together real experts with experience and a track record of supporting young people to move on to the next stage of their lives. Organisations will receive an initial payment for taking young people on, but will only receive subsequent payments when they show progress, such as getting young people to engage with training programmes or undertake apprenticeships. The contracts on offer are worth up to £2,200 for every young person helped, with the full amount payable only if a young person is still in full-time education, training or work with training six months after re-engaging.

Local authorities will work with successful providers to target those young people in their area who will benefit most, fitting this programme with other provision on offer locally. Providers are required to tailor their support to suit individuals’ needs.

The programme, to take place over the next 3 years, will focus on at least 55,000 16- to 17-year-old NEETs with no GCSEs at A* to C, who are at the highest risk of long-term disengagement. It is intended to improve their experience and qualifications, to give them a better chance of finding work and so reduce the proportion who become unemployed in adult life.

The funding applies to England only. Three areas - Liverpool, Leeds-Bradford-Wakefield and Newcastle-Gateshead - will be able to allocate their own pot of money as part of the government City Deal agenda, aimed at giving more autonomy to England’s core cities.

The cost of being NEET between the ages of 16 to 18 is estimated to be around £56,000 in public finance costs and £104,000 in resource costs (lost labour market potential), over the working lifetime of each person who has been NEET at this age.

The scheme is part of the youth contract, which will support 16- to 24-year-olds with £1 billion funding over the next three years. It aims to lift young people out of unemployment. It is being jointly delivered by the Departments for Education, Business Innovation and Skills, and Work and Pensions.

Key features include:

- Cash payments to encourage employers to recruit young people.
- An extra 250,000 work experience places over the next three years.
- At least 20,000 extra incentive payments worth £1,500 each for employers to take on young people as apprentices.
- Extra support through Jobcentre Plus in the form of weekly, rather than fortnightly, signing-on meetings, more time to talk to an adviser and a National Careers Service interview.

The providers will offer a wide range of services and provision, including:

**Pertemps People Development Group (North East)**

PPDG will offer a service called Nu Trax, to provide a ‘one stop shop’ for integrated youth services to address barriers to education, employment & training. Varying levels of support to suit the young person include:

- **Wake-up calls:** a PPDG trained coach to help young people develop a routine. This will include daily calls, flexible start times and a driver pick-up scheme.
- **Bite-sized units i.e.** English and maths courses to re-introduce learning and provide a stepping stone to full qualification.
- **Out of hours support:** ‘Something to do’ at weekends and evenings (i.e. salsa, football matches and DJ classes).
- **Pick & mix prevention workshops and one-to-one help** to address issues preventing engagement i.e. drugs and alcohol.
• Employment: links to 10,000+ employers in the north east will equip young people for local jobs.

_Prospect (West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber)_
Will support young people with a highly personalized programme of work to help them overcome practical and psychological barriers and build motivation, confidence and resilience. Support will include intensive mentoring and personal support from engagement through to six months sustainability in employment, education or training. Specific schemes include:
• Heroes to Inspire using ex-service personnel to deliver motivational sessions with groups of young people.
• Short sector specific work experience and training that young people really value. A network of specialist providers will offer work experience, tasters and short sector specific qualifications needed to enter employment.

_Groundwork (Manchester & Cheshire, E. Midlands, Merseyside, Lancashire & Cumbria)_
Will be working alongside other major voluntary organizations including Barnardo’s, Prince’s Trust, YMCA Training and the Children’s Society recruiting ‘youth mentors’ to help young people get involved in community projects and volunteering, offering trials and tasters with colleges and employers and using sport, art and music to help young people realize they have something positive to contribute.

_The Consultancy Home Counties Ltd (TCHC) (East of England)_
TCHC and their partners will provide an intensive mentoring support service that will engage with young people, conduct initial assessments of their needs and prepare an action plan indicating what tailored support they need to help re-engage them back into education, employment or training. It is likely that the young person will have major barriers to sustaining engagement, so will need the ongoing support provided by their mentor who will stay with them throughout the programme.
Additional support offered will include:
• advice on how to deal with practical barriers (e.g. debt, accommodation, benefits).
• counselling to overcome psycho-social barriers (e.g. physical and mental health, sexual health, addiction, family planning, care and family welfare).
• attitudinal and anger management support.
• sustainable career choices including work tasters and work experience.

_Prevista (London)_
Support for young people will include:
• Using state-of-the-art web-based tools that supply online training, CV building and job searchers, plus techniques to improve outlook, mindset, responsibility and character, helping young people to build strengths, self-motivation, self-control, and social skills.
• Fit For Sport: pioneering training and employment opportunities for young people through Fit for Sport - specialists in the sport and active leisure sector. Combining work experience and tasters, Fit for Sport will be creating excellent opportunities for young people to make a difference to both their local communities and their own career prospects.
• Urban Futures: Utilizing well-established partnerships with Heathrow and Stansted airports Urban Futures will combine a range of techniques from CV writing to social awareness skills in order to create opportunities for young people to access a range of jobs in the aviation sector.

_Skills Training UK (South East)_
Skills Training UK and its local partnership network in communities across the south east regions will re-engage 16- to 17-year-olds who have left school without qualifications and not gone into any further education or employment. Each young person will have a personal
mentor who will support them throughout their journey, helping develop and prepare them to re-enter training, education or employment with an Apprenticeship and supporting them with any personal issues or concerns they might face. Helping the young person to sustain their new beginning will be key and the personal mentor will stay involved throughout.

Prospects Training Services (Gloucester) Ltd (South west)
- Prospect Training Services (Gloucester) Limited will be delivering innovative engagement strategies such as providing opportunities for fun, physical activity which fosters team building, attitudinal change and skills development ultimately leading to further education and employment opportunities.
- Ex-premiership players will support their ‘Street Games’ activities acting as role models and motivators to the young people.
- Community engagement programmes will be rolled out to strengthen relationships with the young people and their communities, building trust, establishing boundaries and developing mutual respect.
- We will also utilize one of the UK’s leading teenage parenting programmes - Parent with Prospects - to provide support and guidance together with a nationally accredited qualification to those young parents and parents to be.

© Crown Copyright

6.4 Final remarks
We can see how the UK, like many other EU countries, has a major problem with early school leaving and drop-out. In recognising the seriousness of this, the UK Government has prioritized the phenomenon of ESL, and future consultations and policies are expected that will aim to reduce the levels of dropout further. Local communities, schools, colleges and authorities having recognised the necessity to deal with the numbers of young people becoming disengaged from education, have, for many years, been working towards ensuring that young people stay in education or engage with training or employment.

Evidence shows that unemployment early in life can leave a permanent scar on earning potential, with the effects on careers still evident decades later. By the age of 42, someone who had frequent periods of unemployment in their teens is likely to earn 12 to 15% less than their peers. Initiatives such as alternative curricula within schools, community learning and learning environments outside of mainstream education are all tackling the ESL phenomena to ensure that this vulnerable societal group of young people don’t miss out on the benefits that education can bring, both economically, socially and personally.

In addition to desk and statistical research, an empirical research was conducted with young people (beneficiaries) students who have either been excluded from mainstream education or have disengaged from it and we also conducted interviews with relevant stakeholders (teachers and tutors and other strategic Stakeholders). A development officer working within a community trust organisation that provides employability workshops and advice for NEETS confirmed that: lack of confidence, financial reasons, lack of work experience, language issues, communication/social skills, disability, lack of motivation, historic/generational (parents dropped out) cultural expectations, teenage pregnancy, drugs and gangs are all reasons why young people become disengaged from education.

We also interviewed one of the members of staff at St. Paul’s who has many years of experience of working with the NEET group. He has anecdotal evidence of the problems faced by young people. He reported that due to the transient nature of some of the NEET
group, there are many challenges for the organisation thus resulting in some limitations to what can be done and for how long for many young people.

Below are some of the difficulties / barriers he identified that greatly affect his students:

- Peer pressure
- Educational experiences
- Living circumstances – some students in supported living accommodation then moving on
- Pressure from family to get work, earn money
- No interest

Once again, their answers and experience regarding the reasons for ESL and drop-out were in line with national findings.

We also held an interview with a Creative Producer for a media company that works on various art projects to engage NEETS. The team work within the local community with the NEET group, specifically with 16-19 year-old who are interested in film making. She described some of the difficulties encountered.

- Lack of interest / motivation by students
- Lack of interest from tutors
- Students lack of financial support
- Low self esteem
- Low confidence – not wanting to join in
- Organisational limitations – not looking at the wider picture – everything has to be geared to employment and not seeing the benefits gained by working on an innovative project.
- Funding cuts - Arts Council reduced budgets
- Short term projects – takes a while to recruit students then run out of time to develop and deliver outcomes

Through our empirical research and interviews held with the young people themselves and those who attempt to re-engage them with educational opportunities, it is clear that a lack of motivation, dissatisfaction with traditional schooling, bullying and peer pressure, stress, lack of parental support for education, low expectations of employment, etc., are all major issues that face these students.

Alternative curricula and innovative initiatives offered by different providers are all considered to be beneficial by both the young people and the stakeholders we talked to, with high levels of positivity being displayed towards the Code-RED project and its aims.
7 Conclusions

At the end of the Needs Analysis, a needs assessment can provide inputs and suggestions for:

- completion of workshop WP3,
- providing students with some form of certification and positive feedback,
- developing serious or street games,
- providing education institutions (schools, VET centres, special education bodies, ...) with relevant and engaging resources and know-how to apply and possibly continue improving Code RED tools,
- suggesting a curriculum integration to effectively pursue the re-engagement of students at risk of ESL,
- Upgrading e-learning platform with new courses and learning objects.

Different methodologies can be employed and the following are suggested, in order to maximise the circulation of experiences and collect effectively results from Partners. Any Partner responsible for the specific deliverables will profit from an original and upgraded evaluation.

- **Completion of workshop WP3**
  In addition to the initial format provided by NTU and UoA, as Partners enter and carry out Workshops, they will provide the Consortium with solutions, considerations, choices and alternatives, support needed, ... . This has already started both through Skype Meetings and through one-to-one relationships.

- **Providing students with some form of certification and positive feedback**
  At the end of Workshops, it is quite natural to award participants with some form of recognition of their attainment, especially as they are all students that experience disaffection towards education system. As mentioned above, examples of solutions and formats will be shared among Partners to provide a unique format to all Code RED participants throughout Europe. (e.g. first proposal from PoP)

- **Developing PC or Street Games**
  Collecting needs that have emerged through interviews, focus groups and any informal consultation with students and youngsters will help in identifying effective and improving key elements to be included into the final 4 games. Strengthening the link with the group of students who co-create the lo-fi game, asking them to improve their own work, and also asking the “public” invited to the internal presentation at the end of the workshops to comment and provide useful feedback.

- **Providing education institutions (schools, VET centres, special education bodies, ...) with instruments and know-how to apply and possibly continue improving Code RED tools**
- **Suggesting a curriculum integration to tackle with the possible re-engagement of students at risk of abandon**
- **Upgrading e-learning platform with new courses and learning objects**

As a result of consultation and relationship building with Schools, VET Centres, Education Institutions, Employers, NGOs active in social inclusion projects, a list of key skills and attitudes will be provided, together with specific characteristics to be associated to each skill or knowledge (e.g. how to effectively represent adults).
References


[6] [www.britishcouncil.org/learning-skills-for-employability-uk-country-overview-vet-system.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-skills-for-employability-uk-country-overview-vet-system.htm)

[7] [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)


[10] [www.eshacommunity.wikispaces.com/Early+school+leaving](http://www.eshacommunity.wikispaces.com/Early+school+leaving)


[12] [www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8199269.stm](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8199269.stm)

[13] [www.thevinetrust.co.uk/education_trust.cfm](http://www.thevinetrust.co.uk/education_trust.cfm)

[14] [www.studioschools.org](http://www.studioschools.org)

[15] [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

[16] [https://www.gov.uk/search?q=NEET&tab=government-results](https://www.gov.uk/search?q=NEET&tab=government-results)

[17] [www.connexionswalsall.co.uk/parents_carers/introduction/index.aspx](http://www.connexionswalsall.co.uk/parents_carers/introduction/index.aspx)

[18] [www.westmidlands.groundwork.org.uk/our-services/schools/alternative-curriculum.aspx](http://www.westmidlands.groundwork.org.uk/our-services/schools/alternative-curriculum.aspx)