



Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe

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Evidence-based co-authored and open-access report of most promising pioneering policies and practices

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Inclusive Kindergartens in District 8, Budapest [24]

Country	Hungary	
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Name of the policy / practice	Inclusive Kindergartens in District 8, Budapest [24]	
Short description and the main characteristics of the policy / practice	<p>This EU-funded, three-years-long project was seen through by the municipality of District 8, Budapest, and two NGOs, aiming to reduce the segregation and enhance the inclusion primarily of Roma and disadvantaged children in local municipal kindergartens between 2020 and 2023. Given the diversity of the district, the project also included elements of inclusion for children from a migration background. The tools applied were partly administrative (desegregation goal), such as closing the most segregated institution and merging it with another, and partly focusing on pedagogical innovations (inclusion goal), such as the English language program.</p>	
Target group of the policy / practice:	<p>The target group included all the children attending the municipal kindergartens in the district (approx. 1100), their parents, all the teachers working in these institutions (approx. 220), and even families that live in the district but choose private or more remote kindergartens for their children.</p>	
Educational stage or transition phase of the policy / practice	ECEC (ISCED 0), kindergarten, age 3 to 6 years	
Level of implementation	Meso: municipal	
MILC dimensions	<p><u>Multilevel</u>: applying complex interventions, the project aims to make change on all levels (for example, micro – attracting individual families; meso – innovating teaching practice; macro – modifying catchment areas)</p> <p>Intersectional: the project touches on multiple different axes of inequality (ethnicity, social status, place of residence, migration background, in some ways even special educational needs)</p> <p><u>Life-course</u>: ECEC-level, based on the extensive literature early intervention is key in equalizing later educational opportunities</p>	
Key dimensions of the identification procedure		
	<i>Comprehensive</i>	<p>On the municipal level, the project has involved multiple professionals and stakeholders and has attempted to tackle educational inequality on the</p> <p>high</p>

CONDITIONS: Foundational premise level		ECEC level from several different angles. It has also served as basis for an even more comprehensive reform in the municipality to shape local institutions and the district in a child-friendly way.	
	<i>Coherent</i>	The project has been developed in accordance with local/contextual characteristics. Its main objective is the reduction of educational inequality, but it attempts to serve the local community and institutional system as a whole.	high
	<i>Continuous</i>	While there have been efforts to shape the attitudes of local teachers and the practices of the leadership, since the project itself ends as the funding from the EC stops, there is a risk that the results might not fully be maintainable in the long run. Nevertheless, consortium members believe that goals of the project have been widely internalized by kindergarten staff.	medium
ELEMENTS: Structural level	<i>Contextual</i>	One part of the project was the development of mini-projects in kindergartens, which were fully initiated everywhere by the teachers, adapting to their and the children's needs. High contextuality was sometimes even a hindrance due to the complexity and diversity of the institutions involved, which led to less clarity in the project implementation and institutions sometimes working on their own project in parallel, rather than as a system.	high
	<i>Relational</i>	The enhancement of participation from teachers and stakeholders has been a major goal of the project leaders (representatives of the municipality and the two NGOs as well as professionals hired specifically for the project). Nevertheless, due to imperfect communication and the lack of a well-functioning intermediary, constant dialogue has been missed by those working in the field. Moreover, they had a sense that the project did not respond to their most pressing needs (primarily the shortage of staff and work overload).	medium
TOOLS: Action level	<i>Autonomous</i>	The project has been characterized by conflicting approaches – the NGOs participating put great emphasis on strengthening the autonomy and initiative of teachers. Although traditions of the education system and the	medium

		centralized leadership of the institutions did not always support independence and new ideas to realize, kindergarten staff are believed to have become committed to their own goals within the project.	
	<i>Reflexive</i>	Just like autonomy, reflexivity is a characteristics that is not encouraged by the education system from teacher training onwards. The lack of it has been a major hindrance during the realization of the project, because teachers often do not possess the tools that are necessary to perform reflexive attitudes and practices.	medium
Evidence backing the policy / practice:		<p>Evaluation about the implementation of the project was required by the funding European Union. In terms of desegregation, the goal of the municipality was that the proportion of low-SES children does not differ from the district mean by more than 5%. Data analysed by Budapest Institute (Greskovits and Váradi, 2022: 4) before the end of the project suggested that the goal had not been fully reached, but trends were positive on both ends of the segregation scale (above and below average proportion). On the other hand, data from 2023 (shared by the municipality) still indicate that some kindergartens are highly segregated with up to a 38% ratio of low-SES children. Qualitative research conducted by TÁRKI and the conference organized by one of the NGOs (Partners Hungary, 23 May 2023) provide some insight into the qualitative results of the project (connected to the inclusion goal), however, there is no evidence yet on the long-term effects and whether results get incorporated in the daily practice of local kindergartens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greskovits, B. and Váradi, B. (2022) Józsefvárosi óvodákba járó gyerekek szociális státuszát mutató indikátorok [Indicators on the social status of children attending kindergartens in Józsefváros]. Research report. 11 October 2022. Budapest Institute. http://www.budapestinstitute.eu/uploads/jozsefv%C3%A1rosi_%C3%B3vod%C3%A1k_indik%C3%A1torok_2022szeptember_(1).pdf • Kovács, I.J. (2023) Young magicians in kindergarten: Skill development through performing magic tricks. <i>Theory Into Practice</i>. DOI: 10.1080/00405841.2023.2202130 	
Brief concluding analysis of policy / practice in the context:		Inclusive Kindergartens was a highly complex project, requiring the cooperation of multiple stakeholders and local institutions, which had to coordinate their communication and goals. It had a multidimensional nature, leaning on administrative measures and pedagogical innovation. As of results, the project has reached some of its desegregative and innovative goals, and promises further inclusion in a diverse	

	district, dealing with high levels of residential segregation. The project may be considered pioneering due to its novel implementation level (ISCED 0), diverse target groups, and transferability.
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