



Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe

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Quality in Multicultural Schools (QUIMS) [19]

Country	Switzerland
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Name of the policy / practice	Quality in Multicultural Schools (QUIMS) [19]
Short description and the main characteristics of the policy / practice	QUIMS is a programme supporting schools with a predominantly disadvantaged student intake in the canton of Zurich. Schools are eligible for QUIMS if they cater for 40 per cent or more students whose primary language is not the language of instruction and/or who are of foreign nationality (with the exception of other German-speaking countries). Public schools that are eligible for QUIMS receive additional professional and financial support from the school authority. Professional support is mainly based on promoting knowledge transfer by facilitating professional exchange between teachers and pedagogical specialists or providing guidance and guidelines for school development. On average, schools in the QUIMS programme receive approximately 40'000 CHF in additional funding each year to be invested in school development – for instance, by financing teacher training, mentoring programmes, consulting services or additional learning materials. While participating schools are subject to quality assurance by the school authority and need to allocate funding to officially defined areas of action, they are relatively free to employ strategies to promote school development based on the specific circumstances in the school.
Target group of the policy / practice:	QUIMS targets schools with a predominantly disadvantaged student intake. Eligibility is determined via an index; schools with 40 per cent or more students whose primary language is not the language of instruction and/or who are of foreign nationality are eligible. It is understood that the index based on children with an immigrant background serves as a proxy for socioeconomic disadvantage. In the school year 2022/2023, 160 schools in the canton of Zurich participate in the QUIMS programme. This corresponds to one third of all schools in the canton.
Educational stage or transition phase of the policy / practice	QUIMS supports schools at the level of preschool, primary education and lower secondary education. A central focus of QUIMS lies in supporting students in successfully navigating between these stages and into upper secondary education, for instance by encouraging students to set ambitious goals or by closely involving parents during transitions.
Type of inequality the policy / practice tackles	Providing schools serving a predominantly disadvantaged student intake with additional resources for school development primarily aims at reducing inequalities in educational outcomes. With QUIMS' focus of supporting students extensively before educational transitions, the programme furthermore aims to

		mitigate inequalities in access, particularly regarding track placement in lower secondary education and entry into academic upper secondary education.	
Level of implementation		QUIMS is implemented at both the regional and institutional levels. QUIMS developed from a pilot project conducted in 1999. Since 2006, the programme has been part of the Elementary School Act of the canton of Zurich. Schools that receive additional support from the QUIMS programme retain autonomy in implementing specific measures that strengthen school development in light of their specific needs and challenges.	
MILC dimensions		<p><i>Multilevel:</i> QUIMS inherently comprehends educational inequality as a multilevel issue and acknowledges the role of learning in informal settings essential. In particular, QUIMS addresses the consequences of school segregation and seeks for close involvement of parents.</p> <p><i>Intersectionalities:</i> Although the allocation of additional resources in the QUIMS programme is determined by the share of foreign language of foreign nationality students, the programme more generally targets schools with a disadvantaged student composition, which particularly includes socioeconomic background.</p> <p><i>Life course perspective:</i> QUIMS acknowledges that a disadvantaged school composition may hamper learning gains – a process that likely accumulates over time. QUIMS covers the entirety of compulsory schooling and aims to facilitate successful transitions between educational stages.</p>	
Key dimensions of the identification procedure			
CONDITIONS: Foundational premise level	<i>Comprehensive</i>	The programme explicitly problematises educational inequality and considers systemic factors such as (residential) segregation that underlie the disparities in student composition between schools.	Medium
	<i>Coherent</i>	QUIMS is a coherent policy as it covers the entirety of compulsory education, ranging from preschool into lower secondary education.	High
	<i>Continuous</i>	QUIMS developed from a pilot project that has been implemented for several for several years now in the entire public school sector. In addition, there is a high commitment among policymakers to continue and further develop QUIMS.	High
ELEMENTS: Structural level	<i>Contextual</i>	Per design, QUIMS is sensitive to the role of school composition for students learning. Furthermore, the programme allows participating schools to implement practices they perceive as appropriate for satisfying their specific needs.	High

	<i>Relational</i>	QUIMS promotes knowledge transfer and exchange between schools, teachers, pedagogical experts and universities of teacher education. This includes workshops, handbooks and an online repository for schools in the QUIMS programme.	Medium
TOOLS: Action level	<i>Autonomous</i>	While QUIMS currently sets three overarching themes that schools need to invest 30% of their additional funding, participating schools can adopt measures that best meet the specific needs of their students.	Medium
	<i>Reflexive</i>	QUIMS promotes knowledge transfer between different actors, and schools participating in the programme retain autonomy to implement specific measures they believe as effective in improving the learning development of their students.	High
Evidence backing the policy / practice:		One evaluation states that QUIMS proves effective in strengthening school development. How QUIMS was implemented in schools varied, with schools having more experience in school development achieving more effective results. While QUIMS improved the social integration of students in multicultural settings, students' learning gains in QUIMS schools are not different from learning gains students achieve in non-QUIMS schools (Maag Merki et al. 2012). Another evaluation finds some indications that QUIMS increases students' learning gains and facilitates successful transitions into post-compulsory education. However, many schools participating in QUIMS still realise systematically lower learning gains and educational opportunities than schools with fewer disadvantaged students (Roos 2017).	
Brief concluding analysis of policy / practice in the context:		The programme provides additional professional and financial support for public schools that serve disadvantaged student populations, particularly (low-SES) migrants. While the programme defines overarching goals, participating schools implement measures to meet the specific needs of their school context. The programme addresses the potential negative impacts of school segregation by strengthening school development.	

References:

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