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Author(s)	UCM: Carlos Alonso-Carmona, Albert García Arnau, Alejandro Montes Ruiz and Susana Vázquez-Cupeiro UIB: Joakim Jensen and Jan Skrobanek
Advisor(s)	Sabine Bollig (UT) and Solvejg Jobst (HVL)
Contributors ³	Merike Darmody, Emer Smyth (ESRI); Solvejg Jobst, Daniel Strand, Lamin Andre Kvaale-Conateh, Alicja Renata Sadownik, Liv Torunn Grindheim, Grethe Nina Hestholm (HVL); Radvilė Bankauskaitė, Katya Dunajeva, Juste Vezikauskaite (PPMI); Borbála Lőrincz (TARKI); Anja Winkler, Angela Aegerter, Robin Benz, Simon Seiler, Andrea B. Erzinger (UBERN); Auli Toom, Katri Kleemola, Heidi Hyytinen, Tarja Tuononen (UH); Juliette Torabian, Susanne Backes, Andreas Hadjar, Fredrick de Moll (UL); Irem Karacay, Irena Kogan, Alyssa Grecu, Katharina Koch (UMA); Anna-Lena Bindges, Sabine Bollig, Magdalena Joos (UT).
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Country [Abbreviation]	Project partner(s)
Finland [FI]	Helsingin Yliopisto (UH)
Germany [DE]	Universität Mannheim (UMA) Universität Trier (UT)
Hungary [HU]	TÁRKI Társadalomkutatási Intézet Zrt. (TARKI)
Ireland [IE]	The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)
Lithuania [LT]	Viešosios politikos ir vadybos institutas / Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI)
Luxembourg [LU]	Université du Luxembourg (UL) Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER)
Norway [NO]	Høgskulen på Vestlandet (HVL) Universitetet i Bergen (UiB)
Spain [ES]	Universidad Complutense Madrid (UCM)
Switzerland [CH]	Universität Bern (UBERN)

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a first account of stakeholders'⁴ knowledge and experiences of current practices that aim to tackle educational inequality in each PIONEERED project country. To do so, information was gathered on understandings of inequality, problem definitions, dilemmas and existing pioneering approaches or strategies for tackling educational inequalities regarding local, regional or national contexts. The focus was on covering understandings of educational inequality – how stakeholders think educational inequalities come about, what is at the core of inequalities and how these inequalities can be reduced regarding country-specific linked ecologies (Abbott 2016: 33) – as well as practical experiences about and with pioneering practices. Here, the interest was in what types of pioneering practices stakeholder knew of, the explicit and implicit objectives of these practices (e.g., target groups/institutions, aim/s, pedagogical devices) and the extent to which they are considered to go beyond existing or taken-for-granted approaches.

Between March and mid-April 2022, each project partner carried out the data collection - based on interviews, focus groups (FGs) and workshops with stakeholders -, and drafted a country specific report according to the analysis templates provided by UCM/UIB⁵. The task leaders, UCM and UIB, coordinated this process in close cooperation with the WP5 leader HVL and compiled – in consultation with project partners – the country specific findings into *country vignettes*, which summarise and highlight central country-specific findings. The vignette design was seen as a useful methodological first step for transforming the findings of the country-specific reports into neat and dense data which can directly inform deliverable 5.2. in a comparative perspective. To be clear, the aim of this report is to present and discuss the information provided by partners with their reports being transformed into vignettes which intend to reduce complexity and provide neat and to-the-point information for the task 5.2 in WP 5. Thus, here it is not intended to do any comparison between the countries, country vignettes and main findings of the analysis.

In the following, we will first report on the method used for collecting relevant data and how we extracted the core content from the country reports provided by every PIONEERED partner and fed the information into country vignettes. In the next step, a country vignette for every partner country is discussed. We conclude with a general reflection on the main impressions and findings from our vignette analysis.

2 Methodology and conceptual assumptions

For exploring stakeholders' knowledge three strategies were used: individual interviews, focus group interviews (FGs) and workshops, where central results of the stakeholder interviews (SHs) and FGs were discussed among stakeholders and researcher(s) in every partner country.⁶ We decided to use a multimethod-multiperspective-approach combining different qualitative accounts for the best possible exploration and identification of pioneering practices (Fielding and Fielding 2008).

⁴ The term stakeholders entail national, regional and local government officers responsible for educational equality and inclusion, policy makers, teacher union experts, educational practitioners, teacher educators, representatives of community-led neighbourhood groups, parental organisation representatives, representatives of transnational networks tackling educational inequalities (PIONEERED, 2020: 28).

⁵ Universidad Complutense Madrid (UCM) and Universitetet i Bergen (UiB)

⁶ The relevant data was gathered via soundings with relevant stakeholders through six expert interviews, two focus groups and one workshop per country – i.e. national, regional and local government officers responsible for educational equality and inclusion, policy makers, teacher union experts, educational practitioners, teacher educators, representatives of community-led neighbourhood groups, parental organisation representatives, representatives of transnational networks tackling educational inequalities that have knowledge and experience of policy and practice areas related to educational inequality and practices aimed at tackling it.

Stakeholder semi-structured interviews⁷ (Brinkmann 2020) were deemed best to explore, not only the *specific individual perspectives* on educational inequality, problem definition and problem framing, individual knowledge and practice experiences in the field but also pioneering strategies and approaches to tackle educational inequality. Using the semi-structured interview technique, we engaged stakeholders who have knowledge and experience of policy and practice areas related to educational inequality and practices counter to it, providing an opportunity to direct the discussion depending on their interests and experience. Furthermore, this enabled us to gather information that was valuable for identifying and understanding pioneering practices that tackle educational inequality. The FG technique⁸ (Abrams and Gaiser 2017, Morgan 1997) was used for accounting for *collective perspectives, understandings and problem definitions* regarding educational inequalities and pioneering ways of tackling them. Based on peer discussion about the main concepts and notions concerning inequality in education and pioneering practices implemented for tackling it, FGs offer participants space to give their opinion in a more nuanced and discursive way, building together a group process that allows for further exploration and reflection about educational practices able to make a difference and, hence, change the status quo. Finally, the main aim of the workshop technique was a reflection on the preliminary results with researchers and stakeholders - *contrasting individual and collective perspectives* on educational inequalities and pioneering ways of tackling them, discussing findings, dilemmas, and paradoxes in the context of practically tackling educational inequalities and devising possible solutions regarding linked ecologies.

The interview guides were designed by the University of Bergen (UIB) in collaboration with the Universidad Complutense Madrid (UCM) considering feedback from the partner countries. After having received the feedback on the template drafts from partners, the interview guides were finalised collaboratively between UIB and UCM. All partners were encouraged to translate the interview guides into the language of the partner country and to do a pre-test of the stakeholder interview guide. All this happened in a timeframe from February to April 2022. The impressions and results from the stakeholder interviews directly fed into the FGs discussions and both – results from stakeholder interviews and FGs – lay the basis for the workshop.

For the FGs and the workshops we used semi-structured interview and discussion guides, which both had a common set of questions which provided comparable information across countries (the templates are included as Appendix 2 in this report). The interview guides were designed to enable identification and understanding of current or already implemented pioneering practices that aim to tackle educational inequality. Here, it was important to identify and select those interviewees who could best provide information about situationally and contextually related programs that have been launched at the country, regional, local or institutional level to tackle educational inequality in pre-school and primary and secondary school within the specific country contexts. Mindful of the complexity of the field, we chose to have the focus specifically on the local and select stakeholders with local, regional or national knowledge/expertise. To understand partner specific selection strategies, partners were expected to provide the UCM/UIB team with some bullet points detailing why they had chosen certain stakeholders and not others. It should be noted that, considering practicability, flexibility and the COVID-19 context, we left it to the PIONEERED partners to decide to use online, or face-to-face interviewing. We recommended to avoid the use of telephone interviews, as these are too impersonal for the involvement required for a fruitful in-depth interview. However, in case of COVID19-related constraints, we regarded online interviews to be the preferred option (Abrams and Gaiser 2017, Poynter 2010).

To frame the analysis of data and guarantee a coherent analysis thereof among partners, information and a template – containing a set of general questions and five main codes – were provided for the

⁷ At least six interviews per country should be realised.

⁸ At least two FGs should be realised.

how to of the analysis of the stakeholder interviews, FG interviews and workshop data. The main codes were 1) general conceptions about educational inequality; 2) reducing educational inequalities; 3) pioneering practices; 4) MILC dimensions⁹; and 5) main dilemmas. Partners were expected to structure the report along the following headlines: findings, contextualisation and summary referring to the common codes of the analysis, pointing out and highlighting the main findings, and offering conclusions of the analysis.

To support as best as possible the work of 5.2 of WP5 and feed into the upcoming report of 5.2, we decided to write a short descriptive and analytical sketch – hence a *country vignette* – based on every partner country report. These vignettes, we agreed, provide a very good starting point for the international comparison of the findings on stakeholder knowledge regarding practices to overcome educational inequalities in each country since they summarise in a concise manner main country-specific findings on existing programme- and non-programme-related pioneering practices aimed at educational inequalities. The country-specific vignettes, presented and discussed below, provide condensed but substantial information for comparing commonalities and differences of meanings and existing pioneering practices in a cross-national focus.

3 Country vignettes

3.1 Finland

3.1.1 Understanding educational inequality

According to stakeholders, all children should have **equal opportunities** regarding education, irrespective of wealth, place of living, or parents’ educational level. There is a focus on **equality of access/opportunities** but also **equal treatment**. **(In)equality of outcome** is briefly mentioned also, especially related to educational outcomes with regards to future possibilities in one’s personal life. However, there is a predominant focus on **accessibility to education**. Individuals are assumed not to have equal opportunities to reach their goals based on **individual skills** and capabilities, and/or because of **societal structures**. Thus, educational inequality is seen as situations where individuals cannot utilise their potential, and a result of restrictions often not even identified as such by actors themselves. Inequality is seen from the viewpoint of **gender, country of origin, language capabilities, Sámi and Swedish speaking Finnish minorities, place of living**, as well as possibilities for **utilising digital tools/applications**. **Boys, pupils with multicultural background and/or language challenges, and learning disabilities** are described as disadvantaged/vulnerable groups. Additionally, **regional segregation** is perceived as an important aspect which especially influences the early years of the educational trajectories of young people.

3.1.2 What to conclude for tackling educational inequality

Approaches towards reducing educational inequality must regard a **‘wholeness’** where **societal and individual-level structures, financial factors, social policies tackling inequality** as well as **practices influence each other**. **Different approaches** are necessary in **different circumstances**. A main principle of the Finnish educational system is **inclusivity**, where variable support is available for pupils throughout their educational trajectories.¹⁰ **Educational equality is a shared general principle** in policy, but it is noted in the interviews that this is missing from school-level discussions. Stakeholders

⁹ The MILC dimensions are multi-level analysis, intersectionality and a life-course perspective. See D2.2 and D2.3 for further elaboration on the MILC model.

¹⁰ In this regard, **equality and equity** in the educational system is **founded upon the Finnish Basic Education act (§2)**, which is regarded by stakeholders as a powerful tool combating inequalities.

believe that **informal** and **non-formal education** should be developed to support children and for reducing educational inequalities. Organising various free time clubs, liberal adult education, and providing possibilities for continuous learning and development were perceived as necessary. A shared understanding of **teachers' professional capabilities** needs to be formulated and developed jointly. **Comprehensive school reform** in Finland is perceived as a successful strategy to replace the parallel school system, which was regarded as unequal by stakeholders.

3.1.3 Pioneering practices for tackling educational inequalities

The following pioneering practices were named by stakeholders: **Three-tier support in providing education tailored to additional needs** (where there are no longer groupings of students into different special education tracks). **Extending compulsory education** was perceived as important for students from lower SES families. **An educational system without dead ends**, where students who complete vocational education can still proceed to university was also discussed. **Academic teacher education** was mentioned as unique and pioneering in the Finnish context and regarded as innovative in an international context. **Teaching and learning generic skills** were perceived as an important factor for successful educational trajectories. Other important practices mentioned were **high-quality early childhood education and care**, a **general comprehensive school**, as well as **positive discrimination**. **The Finnish education system itself** was regarded as a **foundational pioneering practice in Finland**. (See Appendix 1 for more information).

3.1.4 MILC and beyond

Educational inequalities and factors were **related to various systemic levels** (multilevel perspective) in society and the educational system. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of understanding the 'wholeness' of the system, how various levels interact, and how the levels contribute to each other. The **intersectional disadvantages** of individuals were related to educational inequalities and explicated in terms how they precisely they are perceived to be intersectional in practice. For example, multicultural background combined with economic disadvantages was mentioned by stakeholders. Boys, Sámi children and youth, various language groups, and children with multicultural backgrounds were regarded as disadvantaged/vulnerable, but in these cases, there was not an explicit emphasis on the intersectional perspective. **A life course perspective** was especially named in terms of challenges individuals may face in transitions from early childhood and care to primary education, from primary education to upper secondary education or vocational education, and from upper secondary education to higher education, as well as briefly concerning the transition from higher education to work life. Stakeholders referred to the different phases and stages in the Finnish education system with a focus on various age cohorts and what happens to them in the different phases of the educational path in the education system.

3.1.5 Common narrative and main dilemmas

There is a **strong ethos of educational equality and equity** in the Finnish education system but, according to the stakeholders, **resources and finances are not sufficient**. Favouring **work-related immigration** has been perceived as important to develop society further and guarantee a large enough workforce but there are challenges in the education system regarding its **ability to educate diverse pupils and students equally**. The **principle of access to neighbourhood schools** is an ambitious practice but general legislation is interpreted differently in various municipalities and has led to "school shopping". **Three-tier support in providing additional needs education** is also ambitious but in **practice the teachers' capabilities and schools' practices and resources are insufficient**. The stakeholders perceived that the **current strategies, actions, and practices** in maintaining educational equality and equity in Finland **slow the pace of inequalities** but do not stop **school segregation**. Change of terms of government was perceived as producing **discontinuity to the reforms**, although the

political parties in Finland agree about the importance of education. Every government wants to leave their own mark, which challenges the continuity of processual educational reforms. Additionally, **teachers' salaries** do not correspond to the current characteristics of their work.

3.1.6 Characteristics of current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities

The stakeholders discussed numerous understandings of **educational inequalities** where these were perceived as a **complex multifaceted phenomenon**. (In)equality of opportunity, treatment, and (briefly) **outcome** alike were mentioned. The approach to combat educational inequality was to perceive it as a **'wholeness'** where **both societal and individual-level structures**, factors and practices influence to each other. A main feature of the Finnish education system is **the principle of inclusivity**. Another main principle identified by the stakeholders is that of educational **equality and equity** as an explicitly stated aim of the Finnish education system. In this regard, pioneering practices reducing educational inequalities identified by the stakeholders were relatively established practices from the Finnish context. Most of these were also **official system-level and macro-level** national principles and strategies, which have a basis in legislation or in regulations. Additionally, the stakeholders identified some **micro-level strategies** especially related to teachers.

3.2 Germany

3.2.1 Understanding educational inequality

Inequality is understood as **uneven distribution of opportunities** among students which **hinders the unfolding of their full potential** for reasons beyond their control. Stakeholders referred to educational inequality as being **effective at both the individual level and the level of organisations**, as some schools/services are more burdened than others, for instance: schools in deprived neighbourhoods, which additionally have to deal with more fluctuation of personal and so on. It is underlined that **increasingly precarious living conditions and the impoverishment of entire neighbourhoods** is a central precondition for educational inequality. Furthermore, educational inequality also relates to **broader collectives**, in the sense that some cities or districts have fewer educational resources and thus achieve lower educational outcomes at the student level but also that the diverse states in Germany are unequal among themselves, emerging, among other things, from different political regulations and initial positions. Inequality is also understood as a **universal yet dynamic component of education** (past, present and future). Also **families** are seen as a precondition for educational inequality; **not having the appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience prevents** them from meeting school-related requirements and sufficiently preparing, orienting and supporting their children in the particular complex German middle class-driven school system. The **stratification of the German education system** puts particular strain on **low-SES families**, as there is an interplay between institutional discrimination – their children are less likely to receive recommendations from teachers for the higher school tracks – and class-based preferences of parents in their 'choice-making'.¹¹ Within the school the **monolingual habitus** of the German education system plays a major role in 'subliminal' forms of discrimination via being treated as 'not fitting in'. In this context, the **discussion points towards unequal recognition of cultural and economic capital and unequal treatment of young** – in the sense of discrimination – and insufficient individualised support. In addition, educational inequality is not only to be understood in terms of **unequal opportunities** but also **unequal outcomes**, basically regarding grades and school leaving certificates. **Persistent institutional discrimination** also means that some disadvantaged parents already assume that the selective and stratified German school

¹¹ Since the German education system is stratified into different school tracks, especially at children's young ages, parents are strongly involved in taking decision for them regarding their further journeys through the education system. Especially one decision/question seems of central importance here: should the child enter the secondary or the higher secondary school track.

system will put obstacles in their way and that they decide (in a self-exclusionary manner) based on this framing for low prestige school tracks. Thus, also **self-selection** and/or **self-exclusion** processes seem to be at work regarding educational inequalities.

3.2.2 What to conclude for tackling educational inequality

A threefold approach is needed for tackling educational inequalities focusing on the individual, organisational, and governmental level. Additionally, there is an explicit need for the **inclusion of family support and parent education in a non-stigmatising way in ECEC and school**, as these measures are most helpful in mitigating inequalities. Most importantly, at this individual level all stakeholders claimed the **early identification and prevention of (possible) problems** at the student and parental level are crucial. Furthermore, **professionals should become better prepared and educated** for diagnosing and supporting learning problems, but most importantly for being aware of social problems in children's everyday lives and related disadvantages in learning. Therefore, implementing **educational inequality-sensitive pedagogy** in study programs and further education is seen as crucial here. Moreover, the structures within the education system are an important reason for educational inequality since they foster the **illusion of meritocratic selection** into school tracks while actually selecting by SES and recognition/non-recognition of cultural capital.

3.2.3 Pioneering practices for tackling educational inequalities

Generally, a number of measures to reduce educational inequality at the level of political governance were mentioned. These range from an **inequality-sensitive distribution of resources** (social indices) to a stronger **impact orientation in institutions and municipalities** to the promotion of cooperation and **coherently interlinked systems** of local educational landscapes. On a more concrete level it nevertheless tended to be very **difficult for the stakeholders to name explicit** pioneering practices, especially for the ECEC-sector. Thus, not so many were identified, other than those the stakeholder and their institution represented. This does not seem due to the fact that stakeholders are not aware of any innovative practice models but rather this indicates a **certain resignation** regarding the **repeatedly emphasised lack of targeted investment in general structures** (funding, qualification, etc.) of the German system, which prevents these practices from being described as pioneering in a structural sense beyond their role as lighthouse projects. Furthermore, the **practices or programmes that are described as pioneering in the German context are partly adopted from other countries** (e.g. Early Excellence Centres from the UK/Pen Green Centre) and/or **seem somewhat outdated in international comparison**, such as the introduction of all-day schools (which nevertheless have been counted as pioneering in the German context). Germany is often seen as rather **lagging behind** in comparison to other countries. Pioneering practices named as such, have been: Learning vacations, Social Index 'Education Houses', 'Education Communes', 'Family Classes', 'Family Centres', 'Mentoring Programs', and Social Work in ECEC (see Appendix 1 for more information).

3.2.4 MILC and beyond

The data shows an emphasis on the **interplay of formal, non-formal and informal education, as well as a life course orientation**, which is expressed primarily through the discussion of preventive measures and special attention to transitions. In this respect **'holistic' approaches** were stressed that transcend a supportive structure beyond the institutional boundaries of formal education in its temporal sequence (ECEC, primary, secondary school, transition to work, vocational training/tertiary education). **Intersectionalities** have been mentioned as very important for understanding and tackling educational inequalities, but mostly regarding the **interplay of migration and poverty**. In addition, stakeholders also named other intersectional structures of disadvantage, like **disabilities interlacing with poverty and migration/ethnic background**. However, the intersectional perspective was invoked more while naming reasons for inequality than while identifying pioneering practices.

3.2.5 Common narrative and main dilemmas

Interviewees drew a more or less explicit **distinction between education in the narrower sense**, which refers primarily to issues of formal qualification, and **education in a more 'holistic sense'** which is oriented toward a more multifaceted and humanistic understanding of education. Conceptualisations of educational inequalities are shaped by both: the **discrepancy between students' societal needs for education and the actual education system** which predominantly focuses on qualifying the young to a curricular standard for becoming future employees and conforming parts of society. The interviews emphasise that there is a **great need to conceptually open up professional action in formal educational institutions to informal processes and to effectively support education as a multifaceted process**. Here dilemmas come about when analysing the data material. Identifying vulnerable groups in professional practice means **labelling** them and often implies reifying structural **power relations**. The multifaceted intersectional character of inequality raises high expectations about the professional but also fears of **an of overload** of professionals. **Standardised inequality-related** quality development furthermore hinders **flexible and customised solutions** at the local level. Additionally, there seems to be a conflict between **politically induced individualisation** of social problems vs. **socio-cultural, socioeconomic and structural inequalities** as drivers of educational inequality. Lastly, issues of **networking and interconnecting** of services ('caring siege' and 'normalising grip') vs. **anonymisation and confidentiality** are pointed out as dilemmas in tackling educational inequality.

3.2.6 Characteristics of current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities

Pioneering practices aim to provide **measures for children who experience learning issues so as to overcome a strong division of socio-pedagogical (non-formal) approaches** to education and those of schools (formal education). In doing so, practices aspire to **tackle the negative impact of the 'sectorised' or even 'segregated' education system** in Germany, providing learning opportunities beyond the 'normal classroom'. Family support and **closing the gap between families and schools** seem of central importance in the context of reducing educational inequalities. Also, **community** seems in focus as a central characteristic of existing or planned practices for tackling educational inequality challenges. Thus, the idea of **'holistic' approaches or measures** (however strongly family focused) seems at the core of pioneering practices (key words: Family Centres, Mentoring Programs, and Social Work in ECEC). This includes **inequality-sensitive distribution of resources** as well as approaches trying to better **interlink systems** of local and regional educational landscapes (formal as well as non-formal/informal) and communities and families. However, as emerges clearly from the data, the **German system hinders** pioneering practice mostly through **institutional inertia** and **lack of financing**.

3.3 Hungary

3.3.1 Understanding educational inequality

The stakeholders' discourses focus on three main aspects: vulnerable groups, mechanisms of inequality, and the relationship between school inequality and social inequality in a broader sense.

Regarding **vulnerable groups**, the following are mainly mentioned: students from families with **low SES**, **Roma** students, students with **special educational needs**, and students residing in **remote areas** and small populations. As for the **mechanisms**, the stakeholders place special emphasis on the internal characteristics of the Hungarian education system whose functioning is described as structurally inequitable. First, **teaching conditions are poor** (lack of resources and low salaries). Second, **teacher preparation has major deficits**: outdated pedagogical methods and middle class-centric curricula are prevalent and particularly disadvantageous for the most vulnerable students. Nor is there specific teacher training to recognise and deal with educational inequalities. Third, **school selection policies** are configured in a way that generates enormous segregation. Regarding the interconnection between

educational inequality and social inequality, several stakeholders point out that **educational inequalities are part of general social inequality** and cannot be tackled without comprehensive, equalising social policy.

3.3.2 What to conclude for tackling educational inequality

There is a clear coincidence between the diagnosis of inequality and the proposed areas for action. The fundamental argument (especially in the interviews) regarding tackling educational inequalities is the **need for systemic reforms**. This implies an **acting on the structural characteristics** of the educational system, as opposed to **auxiliary or peripheral reforms** that serve only as patches. It is necessary, then, to intervene on the working conditions of teachers, to **radically reform the training process of these teachers**, to change pedagogical methods, etc., that is: **act on the context in which schooling takes place**, trying to go beyond purely educational reforms. Many of the inequalities found in schools reflect **inequalities and discrimination that exist outside the school**. Economic reforms and improved infrastructure in disadvantaged areas are necessary to move towards greater educational equity. Concerning this point, in one of the focus groups (composed of educators) there was a certain **pessimism** about the possibility of schools to reverse these inequalities if **inequality as a whole** is not addressed. However, this position is contested by other stakeholders: certain pedagogical practices can act against inequality, in their view. Some stakeholders pointed out that, apart from structural reforms, **there is also room for concrete practices to alleviate the most flagrant inequalities**, for example through better **interconnection between the education system and social services**. The lack of political will to undertake reforms was identified as a problem.

3.3.3 Pioneering practices for tackling educational inequalities

The stakeholders pointed out a relevant point: in the Hungarian context, the **lack of adequate financing of education and lack of political will imply a shortage of institutional reforms** for the reduction of inequalities (programmes, public measures, policies). Therefore, in the interviews and in the focus groups, when the topic is introduced, it is rather about **everyday pedagogical practices** that may be applied by educators in formal and non-formal contexts. Stakeholders emphasised that these practices should be disseminated in formal education for the sake of large-scale change. Until they remain simple **compensatory measures** for the shortcomings of the system, they cannot make a widescale difference. (See Appendix 1 for more information on interventions.)

3.3.4 MILC and beyond

Two aspects of the MILC approach emerge particularly from the stakeholders' discussion. First it is pointed out that inequality is produced by an **accumulation of characteristics** that **act at different levels**, institutional or school (with references to segregation and teaching methods) and family level (hence the emphasis on the need for good practices to improve communication between teachers and families). Second, multiple references are made to the fact that the **characteristics** that cause vulnerability tend to **intersect**. The most obvious of these are ethnicity (Roma) and low socioeconomic status. It is relevant that special educational needs are also understood from an intersectional point of view: although they may appear in middle-class students, as labels these have more pronounced negative effects on students from disadvantaged groups or selected areas, where they are also more frequently diagnosed (so that these labels can function as an instrument of stigmatisation) and have limited access to services they are entitled to. The life course perspective, however, is not pointed out.

3.3.5 Common narrative and main dilemmas

There are several dilemmas that appear in the stakeholders' discussion and in the comparison between stakeholders' discourses. For example, there is a conflicted relationship between **formal educational institutions and non-formal initiatives**. Furthermore, there is a dilemma between **acting directly in the educational sphere or on inequality in a broad sense**. This dilemma appears closely linked to the fight against segregation as it is difficult to desegregate schools where there is significant residential/spatial segregation. Another challenge is the moral dilemma of **acting through stakeholder training** (promoting egalitarian practices and attitudes) or directly **through political pressure** and bureaucratic (coercive) procedures. This dilemma resonates with the structure vs. values debate. Lastly, stakeholders describe a **dilemma of 'building an alternative universe'**. This dilemma is especially present among stakeholders belonging to the field of non-formal education. They perceive that their work may end up being purely compensatory and is not capable of modifying the root problems of the formal system.

3.3.6 Characteristics of current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities

Among Hungarian stakeholders, we can highlight the emphasis on **national education policy as a promoter of inequality**. Their discourses, thus, combine explanation of the situation and very explicit criticism of the functioning of the country's education system. The **lack of resources and political commitment** pushes many initiatives to develop on the margins of the system, with little real capacity for transformation. The situation of the **Roma minority** is pointed out as particularly worrying. The practices and solutions stakeholders describe as potentially effective in reducing inequality share some common characteristics. First, they **involve personalising education**, adapting it to the individual needs of each student. Second, they **seek a positive impact** on students' psychological well-being and attitudes towards school **beyond the purely academic**. Furthermore, they **seek to connect the school with its environment**, especially with the students' families. Lastly, they **avoid segregation** and, along the same lines, seek not to be 'subsidiary', 'auxiliary' or 'compensatory' practices, but rather to be integrated into the structural functioning of the formal system.

3.4 Ireland

3.4.1 Understanding educational inequality

Interviews with various stakeholders in education highlighted the **multi-dimensional nature of educational inequality** and disadvantage. As previously discussed in the sociological literature, the concept was associated with **different forms of capital** owned by children and families. However, educational disadvantage is seen not just as linked to socio-economic deprivation but potentially also as reflecting poor socio-emotional wellbeing that can lead to early school leaving. Educational inequality can further manifest itself in the **school curriculum** as not all schools offer the same range of subjects. A focus group interview revealed that **many factors that may impact on education are outside the control of the Department of Education**, one of these being housing policy. Stakeholders noted that there is **not always a recognition of the cumulative impact of inequalities in the system**. How inequalities are present in the system can create a hierarchy of inequalities, whereby some areas such as mental health do not always get sufficient recognition and a lot of health issues are not seen as educational issues; therefore, a holistic approach to children is missing in schools. It is necessary to **change the public perception that schools are places that only provide learning, expanding the perception to 'spaces' that among other things support learning**. It is argued that this must also be linked to a more holistic approach at policy level: inter-governmental, inter-departmental level to address inequality.

3.4.2 What to conclude for tackling educational inequality

The discussion of ways to reduce educational inequalities and disadvantages was **mainly focused on programmes and initiatives within the formal education sector** (operating within primary and secondary schools). In general, pioneering practices were discussed in the context of **addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups in education**, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, but also ethnic minority groups. The programmes considered ‘pioneering’ or ‘innovative’ tend to operate in **schools serving disadvantaged communities**. However, as the initiatives tend to be area-based rather than family-based, children who attend non-disadvantaged schools may not be able to avail of such support. In this sense, some of the workshop stakeholders **were critical of the short-term nature of certain pilot projects** and, at times, the lack of follow-on from pilot projects seen as working well in supporting students’ learning and personal development.

3.4.3 Pioneering practices for tackling educational inequalities

Stakeholders identify a number of pioneering practices: the DEIS programme (Department of Education) for primary and secondary school students attending schools in disadvantaged areas, The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), Aspire2 and The Business in the Community Programme (See Appendix 1 for more information on interventions.)

3.4.4 MILC and beyond

Very **few stakeholders discussed educational inequalities in a specific framework of intersectionality and life course perspectives**. The discussions centred on factors that contribute to disadvantage and inequality in education, such as lower socioeconomic background, special educational needs, gender, and ethnicity. The interviews show that in most cases **discussions about inequality in education focus on separate social categories** (socioeconomic background, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion) that are seen to contribute to inequality, rather than on the interconnected nature of these inequalities.

3.4.5 Common narrative and main dilemmas

Several stakeholders commented on the **underfunding of education in Ireland**. It was felt by some stakeholders, that supports available in schools should be more universal and community based, without ‘labelling’ schools or students to avail of funding. Furthermore, the amount of state funding that goes to private schools was seen by some to be creating an **‘educational apartheid’**. Another system-related challenge that was highlighted by interviewees was the **strong focus in the education system on academic achievement and entry to third level education**, rather than taking a more holistic approach to education. The stakeholders noted that a drive for entry to third level education is **normalising shadow education**, whereby students who can afford it increasingly opt for out-of-school fee-based tuition. Furthermore, this drive was also seen as an impediment to introducing more innovative practices in schools. There was a consensus among the stakeholders that there is **‘room for improvement’ in addressing the needs of some groups of children and young people** who are seen as ‘less visible’ in the system. Some groups are not often mentioned while others are being extensively talked about in terms of educational needs. Some stakeholders noted that while many initiatives focus on student retention and academic outcomes, less focus is placed on areas such as **student mental health and well-being**. Levels of provision of career and guidance counselling services in schools were seen to fall short of supporting students from challenging home environments. Finally, many stakeholders discussed the **detrimental impact of COVID on the education** of some groups of children, whereby some became disengaged from education during the period of school closures, and some have not returned to schools when schools re-opened.

3.4.6 Characteristics of current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities

Pioneering practices were **understood as providing** children who need them **additional support opportunities** to maintain their engagement in education and prevent early school leaving, raise their expectations, improve their academic outcomes, and support their personal development. Such practices adopt a more **holistic approach** to supporting children with disadvantage, and target even more resources on students and schools with complex needs. Overall, the Irish stakeholders focus not only on socio-economic inequalities in academic achievement but adopt a broader perspective which looks at inequalities in engagement, wellbeing, and mental health. Nonetheless, there is a tendency to focus on specific groups in terms of disadvantage rather than taking an intersectional perspective.

3.5 Lithuania

3.5.1 Understanding educational inequality

Educational inequalities are linked to **unequal starting conditions**, which the **educational system reinforces**, although some stakeholders argue that this could be changed with adequate reforms. The groups most frequently identified as vulnerable are: students from **low SES** families, students from **rural areas**, **orphans**, students with **physical or mental disabilities**, students belonging to **ethnic and/or linguistic minorities**, as well as **migrant and refugee children**. **Inequalities in access** and in learning conditions, but to a lesser extent in outcomes, are mentioned. **Segregation** is pointed out as an important cause of inequality, both **between public and private schools**¹² and between more and less **prestigious schools**. Public and private schools operate under different rules, which creates unequal conditions in schools. Private schools often have more flexibility as they are regulated by less legislations, so they can easily adapt to their students and offer a more individualised educational approach according to their needs. More “prestigious” schools predominantly focus on academic performances of students, which means that the access to such schools depends on academic results of students. Private/more prestigious schools select their students through economic barriers or other strategies such as entrance tests, although there are also dynamics of **self-exclusion** on the part of the most vulnerable students, especially the Roma minority as well as linguistic minorities. As for the mechanisms of inequality, some have to do with financial resources to pay for services that enrich learning and with unequal treatment by teachers. The **lack of family support** in vulnerable environments, the scarce resources of the schools attended by these students, and language barriers in the case of minorities are also pointed out.

3.5.2 What to conclude for tackling educational inequality

There is talk of the **need for a general change** in the focus of the education system. Education should focus more on **meeting individual student needs**, beyond preparing students for the labour market or for standardised tests. In many cases, more **inclusive policies end up having no effect** in the day-to-day classroom, where academic knowledge continues to be privileged in traditional terms. In other cases, the **measures are limited to large cities**, but fail to modify the functioning of rural schools. It is necessary to recognise that vulnerable students face greater barriers, paying more attention to progress than to final results in the abstract. It is important to reduce the **gap between private/prestigious and public/stigmatised schools**. More **autonomy and flexibility** should be granted to public schools and segregation should be avoided by **rethinking the selection criteria that cause**

¹² Considering public and private schools, private schools are not necessarily better academically. The academic results of children from those schools usually are similar to the results of those in public schools. However, these schools are often perceived as better because they offer better conditions for children to develop individually. These differences, according to the stakeholders, stem from public and private schools having different regulations.

segregation (such as entrance tests) by, for example, relying on proximity-to-home criteria instead. Other important challenges are to **improve teacher training** in additional learning needs and to ensure greater connection between the school and its environment (families, NGOs, companies) in order to make better diagnoses and share information and resources.

3.5.3 Practices for tackling educational inequalities

Stakeholders talk about a range of initiatives or practices tackling educational inequalities: increase in the number of education support specialist in schools, compulsory access to ECEC for children from socio-economically disadvantaged families, initiatives to improve the skills and knowledge of school leaders (i.e.: Leaders' Time Programme); all-day schools open for the whole day, with children being included in different non-formal education activities, and expansion of the school bus network for students living in rural areas; Democratic School, which, while being private, has been singled out as an example of inclusive education due to its methodology and educational approach and the introduction of the figure of Inter-Institutional Collaboration Coordinators. An initiative called 'Millennial Schools' (*tūkstantmečio mokyklos*) is currently being developed to address the systemic problems in school education. (See Appendix 1 for more information on interventions.)

3.5.4 MILC and beyond

Regarding the multilevel approach, various stakeholders make **frequent reference to the role of non-formal education** (and its interrelation with formal education) in educational inequalities. This is pointed out as especially relevant for students in rural areas, and the lack of attention given to the issue by the policies and policymakers is criticised. Regarding the intersectional approach, we did not find specific references. However, in the specific case of the **Roma community**, it is recognised that their **vulnerability is the result of several factors that work cumulatively**: ethnic prejudice, low economic status, low level of parental education, etc. Likewise, the **life course approach is not given special attention**. Inequalities are analysed for each educational level in isolation, leaving aside their processual nature. The exception to this reasoning is found in the value given to the ECEC as an equalizer of starting positions and a tool against inequalities in the long term.

3.5.5 Common narratives and main dilemmas

The discourses highlight **four main dilemmas** or contradictions on measures to fight against educational inequality. Macro **policies reflect a commitment to educational inclusion**, but this is **not reflected in the regulations** governing daily work in teaching (curriculum, national examination programs, criteria for performance assessment of school leaders, teachers and students). There is also a gap between the declared policy and its implementation on the ground. General education policies strive for inclusivity, but do not provide clear guidance for schools and teachers. Additionally, they do not foresee sufficient support for them from the national level (considering support in both financial and human resources). The **goal of including students with disabilities** in the mainstream school network by 2024 raises tensions. Although it is an inclusive strategy, some stakeholders **consider it naïve** that this inclusion will happen in practice (as long as prejudices towards disability still exist, not only in schools but in society as a whole). A clear action plan on how inclusivity should be achieved is also missing or at least not communicated clearly to the relevant stakeholders. The **involvement of families in education** is pointed out as an important tool to improve the education of vulnerable groups, although this involvement is **not available to all**, and may end up reinforcing rather than mitigating the educational gap. Many of the most **inclusive and effective educational practices occur in private education**, in part because they are less tied to government regulations. But, at the same time, these private schools act by increasing segregation and, thus, inequality. The dilemma of how to create similar conditions in public schools or grant more access to private schools for the children who would benefit from their approaches the most remains.

3.5.6 Characteristics of current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities

Among the characteristics identified as desirable for egalitarian (and pioneering) practices are: a) **foster empathy**, b) **foresee time for reflection**, c) **encourage learning to learn**, d) be available to **transfer** the results achieved and/or **knowledge generated to parties that did not participate**. The consulted stakeholders noted that practices having these characteristics are already taking place in some schools but these are usually implemented on the initiative of schools themselves and are small-scale, limited to one school or even a single classroom. In contrast, other measures are criticized on the basis of criteria such as: only **acting in larger urban schools**, but not in small and/or isolated ones, **not having data-based evidence** on their effectiveness, or **not taking into account the possible perverse effects on inequality**, even in measures whose objectives are egalitarian.

3.6 Luxembourg

3.6.1 Understanding educational inequality

According to stakeholders, **educational inequalities** should be understood **in relation to wider societal, cultural, educational, and economic settings**. For example, **low SES** is associated with disadvantages in the education system. **Parental education background** is also regarded as a contributing factor. **Students with special needs** are discussed as disadvantaged (both children with disabilities and gifted children that need special support as well as those with mental health challenges). **Children of single parents, children in alternative care, teenage parents** and **students with a refugee background** are regarded as vulnerable. However, stakeholders have a perception of educational inequalities that is based on **linguistic background rather than migration background**. Furthermore, **early inequalities** and the consequent lack of basic competencies are among factors generating negative experiences in school. The **impacts of social factors** such as **family and neighbourhood contexts** are highlighted. **Migrant background** was specified especially with regard to **students with Portuguese migrant backgrounds** deemed disadvantaged from early childhood. **Social segregation** was thought to play an important role, leading families with Portuguese backgrounds to be hesitant to enrol their children in ECEC. Lastly, it was explicitly **denied by one stakeholder that gender inequalities** are a major **driver of educational inequality**.

3.6.2 What to conclude for tackling educational inequality

Stakeholders emphasise the necessity of **structural changes** in the education system to reduce educational inequalities. Additionally, **more financial resources and equipment** are needed to better respond to students' needs. **Lack of qualified teachers** is regarded as a cause for limited individual support contributing to performance failures, or early leaving ('dropout') of students. **Teachers have an important role** and are seen as major agents inside classrooms but need clearer guidelines to enact differentiated support (**unequal treatment** is needed). **More flexibility** is regarded as crucial for individual teachers' practices. In this regard, **regulations when hiring entry-level teachers** should also be **simplified**. **Linguistic requirements should be minimised** by attaching more **importance to knowledge of classroom pedagogies**. Stakeholders also mention '**school readiness**' which means that there should be **more support at early stages of education** (ECEC and primary level). Thus, **compensating for unequal starting conditions** should be prioritised over good results in national/international assessments. Democratized **participatory approaches** in education planning are also highlighted. Moreover, more **collaboration among actors** such as teachers, parents, students, as well as key actors in non-formal education, is needed. For example, there should be more **multidisciplinary teams** in schools (including schoolteachers, social workers, psychologists, and therapists). Additionally, there is a focus on **inclusion of children with additional needs**. Schools dealing with **linguistic diversity** were described to be highly disparate and measures applied as based on individual teachers' decisions. Furthermore, **special language courses** help young children arriving

in Luxembourg (*Classe d'accueil*). A high share of students with **additional needs** attends regular schools, which is regarded as a positive development among stakeholders. Another way to tackle educational inequalities is to **provide support in homework activities for students from lower SES families** as well as connecting **formal and non-formal education** for tackling educational inequalities. Lastly, employing teachers from other countries can help address shortage of teachers in primary school.

3.6.3 Pioneering practices for tackling educational inequalities

According to stakeholders, pioneering practices are rather dependent on the personality and attitudes of teachers and their classroom practices. Connecting educational research with teachers' practice can lead to pioneering practices, considered by stakeholders to be practices that **go beyond regular lessons and curriculum**, and that **address all students' needs** instead of focusing exclusively on well-known vulnerable groups. Furthermore, having a **multilevel perspective** is regarded as pioneering. Stakeholders also highlight that it is pioneering to focus on **integration rather than separation** when it comes to participation of **students with additional needs**. **Joint activities of children with different backgrounds** (migration background, SES, school track) in **non-formal education** are thought to be an innovative way to reduce prejudices. **Participative approaches** are also stressed (providing equal opportunities for students' voices and participation in decision making processes), as well as **self-determined learning methods** in classrooms, to correspond with students' individual needs. **Teaching life and green skills**, like how to live healthy and sustainably, as well as content that prepares students to live independently, such as how to handle money (**financial and social education**), are also regarded as pioneering practices. **More flexibility within the education system** was mentioned as pioneering in the focus groups (e.g., concerning curricula and languages of instruction). Other pioneering practices mentioned were **individual teachers who act to address educational inequalities** as well as **stronger involvement of parents**. Additionally, focusing on **increasing academic performances and mutual support of students on different competency levels** was discussed. **International public schools (IPS)** are perceived as pioneering regarding approaches to multilingualism, teacher and student recruitment, as well as leadership. (See Appendix 1 for more information.)

3.6.4 MILC and beyond

Adopting a **life course perspective**, stakeholders emphasise harmful and long-lasting consequences of educational inequalities. Inequalities in higher education and vocational training are considered a result of practices in primary and secondary school, especially regarding pupils with migration backgrounds. It is thought to be crucial to adapt mechanisms at ECCE and primary levels that hinder such initial social or cognitive inequalities from turning into educational inequalities at later stages of schooling. Furthermore, **discrimination due to teachers' bias** is considered a determining factor in students' educational trajectories. **Segregation of students by linguistic background** is also deemed to have continued impact over students' life course. A **multilevel perspective** is further implied in the context of curriculum development affecting individual students' chances to succeed. Moreover, reforms on the national level are believed to affect teachers' practices and their willingness to develop pioneering projects.¹³ Discrepancies between understandings and instructions on the macro level and the reality in schools makes the implementation of new guidelines difficult. Innovation at the school level is determined by teachers' attitudes and thus their openness and willingness to implement new approaches and ideas. In terms of **intersectionality**, a combination of socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds is mentioned as a factor leading to educational inequality, where Portuguese boys are particularly disadvantaged. Intersectionality is also addressed regarding not only the combination of socio-economic and linguistic background but also of socio-economic and sociocultural background.

¹³ For example, the reform of 2009 decreased teachers' willingness and motivation to engage themselves in projects.

3.6.5 Common narrative and main dilemmas

According to stakeholders, there is a **lack of willingness on the part of the Ministry of education (MENJE) to invest more in education**. **International public schools (IPS)** were regarded as an inadequate solution to tackle educational inequalities in the long term. Challenges with **linguistic diversity** are present because **multilingualism in the education system is characterised by rigid guidelines** and increased risks **at segregation**. Concern was also expressed regarding **inclusion of students with special needs**. It was stated that inclusive education might not always be the best solution, but it may be problematic for teachers who fear expressing their ideas may be interpreted as anti-inclusive. Furthermore, **top-down decision-making and reforms** were regarded as often being **counter-productive** in the education system. Additionally, stakeholders had concern regarding the focus of the Luxembourg educational policy on **satisfying voter’s interests**. **Lack of autonomy** for schools to develop and implement projects may also be problematic as **heavy administrative burdens** of project implementation can hinder teachers’ actions. Also, some **teachers lack willingness to support reforms** and put them into practice. **Teachers with a longer service history** enjoy a privileged position when it comes to selecting classes (classes with high number of students at high risk for educational failure can be left to less experienced teachers). In this regard, there is **resistance among some teachers** who are well-organised in teacher unions and can counter any type of innovation in the education system. Generally, it is challenging to **transfer existing pioneering practices to the traditional education system** by raising the question how such approaches could become a national standard.

3.6.6 Characteristics of current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities

Stakeholders largely agree on four main dimensions of educational inequality: **socio-economic, linguistic, migration background-related, and additional needs-related**. Linguistic background and multilingualism were the most discussed factors while other sources of inequality almost appeared as secondary matters in the discussions. Furthermore, manifestations of educational inequalities can be observed in **access and participation** in education as well as in **treatment** and success of students. The current focus of measures is individual support in several forms aiming to compensate shortcomings, but stakeholders had contradicting opinions on how gaps related to academic knowledge or linguistic skills should be compensated. Approaches for tackling educational inequalities should focus on different societal levels comprising changes in the education system and curriculum as well as changes in teachers’ attitudes and practices. More resources, equipment, and staff are also needed to tackle educational inequalities. Moreover, increased **collaboration between teachers, parents, and students**, as well as with actors within **non-formal education**, was highlighted. Pioneering practices should focus on the needs of all students, offering participation and respecting their autonomy. Additionally, pioneering practices should open up **more flexibility** within the education system and curriculum. Stakeholders strongly recommended observing pioneering practices in IPS, and in schools where formal and nonformal education are combined, or in all-day schools.

3.7 Norway

3.7.1 Understanding educational inequality

Socioeconomic background and parent’s educational level are indicated as important factors affecting students’ educational trajectories. Those from less privileged socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds can provide less means and resources for realising the expectations of the education system. The key issue here is the **unequal distribution of resources or capital** among the young, the families of the young, or the social-cultural groups they belong to. There seems consistency among the views of interviewees in that both structural inequalities – **unequal distribution of resources and unequal recognition of resources/capital** – are seen to impact families’ students’ values and attitudes

towards education. Stakeholders agree that there is a **correspondence** between social, cultural, and economic positioning and the production/reproduction of educational inequality. Although the **geographical area, neighbourhood, and family** are indicated as important parameters for educational inequality, it is also argued that **peer groups** (composition), their attitudes and practices are essential for understanding the emergence of educational inequality as well. The **content of schooling** is another dimension identified in the interviews. It is argued that the focus on theoretical knowledge in the education system discriminates against practical knowledge and experiences. Several other dimensions of educational inequality got addressed by the informants, e.g., **disability, gender, migration, place, and school segregation**. Finally, the interviews indicate that the **institutional affiliation of the stakeholders seems to make a difference** regarding what aspects are brought to the fore in defining and understanding educational inequality. While stakeholder from the **policy field** seem more focused on overarching strategies and frameworks for education (**policy orientations**), **stakeholders engaged in concrete educational practices** focus more on situational relational dynamics of educational processes (**practice orientation**). In addition, interviews highlighted the **missing link/lack of cooperation between different actors** within the field of education, the **separateness of formal and non-formal** learning environments and the **misrecognition of practical knowledge in favour of theoretical knowledge** (and knowledge reproduction).

3.7.2 What to conclude for tackling educational inequality

On the one hand it is argued that the way to reduce educational inequality is to **improve teacher education** and the **quality of teachers** for mitigating social-cultural differences more effectively. This should be facilitated by: a) **focused and specific investment in areas** where it is most needed; b) forms of **positive discrimination** which focus on extra investment for helping the disadvantaged, thus balancing outcomes. **Unequal treatment is therefore necessary to obtain equality of outcome**. It is further argued in favour of a greater **focus on individual needs** and situations. The **cooperation** between different departments, agencies, regulatory bodies, the families of the children/young, schools and vocational industry organisations is also stressed. The discussions reveal that there are substantial (material and immaterial) resources-related (hence structural) **differences or inequalities between schools** in providing the same opportunities, offers, means of access, and measures for tackling educational inequalities. Furthermore, it is highlighted that there is **insufficient cooperation** between schools and other institutions for tackling educational inequalities. The education system and related institutions are too **fragmented and not flexible enough** for tackling inequality. There is a **lack of coordinated action**. Results finally point to measures and initiatives running/lagging **behind innovative developments** rather than heralding these.

3.7.3 Pioneering practices for tackling educational inequalities

There seems to be a common understanding among the interviewees as to how '**pioneering**' is to be understood: as something 'exceeding regulated boundaries', 'changing outcomes' and 'transcending or overcoming or going beyond' theories, approaches, methods, and practices termed 'established'. Thus, doing something pioneering means **questioning the taken for granted, the existing and established**. Pioneering practice for tackling educational inequalities should be, or are already, based on a change of perspective **foregrounding 'community'** as a central embedding factor for school performance. Pioneering practices melt together or **interlace theoretical knowledge and experiences with practical knowledge and skills**, thus putting theoretical and practical knowledge and abilities on a par. In the discussions, at least one strategy and three concrete practices were named and debated several times: Områdesatsing, and TAM (Security, Responsibility and Coping), Guttas campus and LIM, respectively. (See Appendix 1 for more information on interventions.)

3.7.4 MILC and beyond

MILC dimensions were mentioned several times in the in the interviews and discussions Regarding **intersectionality socioeconomic background in combination with country of origin, language, culture, and ethnicity** are seen as interlaced in the context of educational inequality. Likewise prevalent in several interviews is the **multilevel perspective**. It is argued that educational inequalities and potential practices to combat them are linked to both micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of analysis. Based on this argument **early efforts and follow-up** of students falling behind are emphasised as important to make sure these students are successful later in life. Furthermore, having a **temporal understanding** of MILC, participants underline that existing context and resulting practices can change – they do not have to be accepted as everlasting.

3.7.5 Common narrative and main dilemmas

Stakeholders are proud of the Norwegian education system, seeing it as a **basic pioneering practice** in itself. They understand schooling in Norway as way of **providing equal access and opportunities** to all pupils independently of background, gender, ethnicity, and ability. They also argue that it **aims to prevent dead ends** in educational promotion and development by providing transition possibilities between higher education and apprenticeship tracks. Among key aspects in the narratives are: the **problem of recognition and redistribution of capital**; the issue of equal treatment, access and (partly) outcome of educational practices; the issue of **coordination and integration of practices** tackling educational inequalities; the need to strengthen **cooperation between corporate and natural actors**; the **discrimination of practical knowledge and experiences against theoretical knowledge** in schools; and the need for more **differentiation and individualisation of actions** for tackling educational inequalities. Stakeholders are especially concerned with embedded **grassroot activism** based on **mutual understandings and the negotiation** of how to practically tackle educational inequalities (bottom-up strategies). However, in arguing this they see also a range of dilemmas educational practice faces when trying to provide **equal access, treatment, and outcome** in education. First, there is a tension between the **institutionalised, formalised, routinised, material, and spatialised** on the one hand, and **grassroots, experimental, new or different and reflexive actions** on the other. **'Customised solutions' or 'case focused approaches'** tailored to concrete educational needs of specific groups or students seems to contradict the **idea of equal treatment** based on the idea of a **'one size fits all' approach** to all children and young people, regardless of whether they are in vulnerable positions or not. This is strongly connected with the dilemma of **top-down vs. bottom-up approaches** increasing pedagogical competence and practice. Furthermore, also the Norwegian education system is confronted with a **growing tension between theoretical knowledge focus** (institutionalised capital) on the one hand and **recognition of practical skill as institutionalised capital** in school on the other. Finally, **networking and interconnecting of services** ('caring siege' and 'normalising grip') are seen as strongly conflicting with issues of **anonymisation, confidentiality, de-stigmatisation, and de-labelling**.

3.7.6 Characteristics of current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities

Practices of tackling educational inequalities are seen as **structurally, relationally, spatially and temporally embedded**. At the fore are perspectives which underline the importance of the focus on **'problem zones'** using **integrated approaches** for reducing educational inequalities. **Target groups** are young people who struggle with schooling, have a high risk of dropping out, and grow up in disadvantaged socioeconomic and cultural settings. Existing practices try to apply **'holistic' approaches** including different actors (school, social work, family, peers, apprenticeship and labour market actors) to help those young people who struggle with schooling. In doing so, they aim at **more practical and less theoretically focused education**, fostering the development of practical skills and abilities. Also characteristic for these practices is **close cooperation between the formal and non-formal fields of education**.

3.8 Spain

3.8.1 Understanding educational inequality

Stakeholders identify several types of educational inequality. On the one hand, they stress **inequalities of access**, considering that this inequality of access would also include the post-compulsory stages and/or extracurricular activities. From this point of view, inequalities of access persist since social status influences the likelihood of access to educational activities or to the different post-compulsory education paths. In this sense, **school segregation** will, in turn, be a product of this inequality of access (inequality in access conditions). On the other hand, stakeholders point out **process inequalities** and **results inequalities**. However, there is **no terminological consensus** of how to define educational inequality. There are **many diverse terms** such as: inequalities of ‘processes’, ‘results’, ‘treatment’, ‘experiences’, ‘performance’, ‘participation’, among others. In any case, this leads one to talk about the persistence of inequalities beyond access that continue to put the equity of the education system at risk. Regarding the **main vulnerable groups** that suffer from educational inequality and social exclusion, there is a great consensus in pointing to those with **lower socioeconomic status and ethnic minorities**, particularly immigrants and Roma. Women are a group that, although suffering from a clear axis of inequality, is not identified as vulnerable in itself. Finally, in relation to the **explanatory factors**, **social inequalities** (low incomes, precarious conditions, families' low capacity to provide educational support, and cultural barriers), **ethnic inequalities** (mismatch with school’s expectations and cultural skills) and **gender inequalities** (boys face higher risks of early school leaving and lower school performance compared to girls).

3.8.2 What to conclude for tackling educational inequality

Among stakeholders there is considerable consensus on the diagnoses, although not so much on the interventions. However, the actors systematically mention the same areas of action to reduce inequalities: **access inequalities** – act on high school segregation, existing differences according to the typology of the schools, biased access to post-compulsory studies (academic or VET) or highly unbalanced extracurricular offer, etc.; **processes inequalities** – eliminate repetition, address school absenteeism, and increase the sense of belonging in certain social and ethnic groups, improve individualised attention and mentoring (reinforcement of educational skills), reduce ratios, revise the gender equality plans, etc.; **results inequalities** – reduce early school leaving, improve academic performance, improve the possibilities of educational transition, and better support the school trajectories of vulnerable groups, etc.

3.8.3 Pioneering practices for tackling educational inequalities

According to stakeholders, a definition of innovative practice must include as a minimum common denominator the following three elements: **generating change**, **being based on knowledge**, and **adding social value**. Practices that do not meet these criteria should not be considered. Some of the most important ones identified are: **Promociona**, **Magnet Schools Program**, **New Opportunities Schools** and **Education360**. These practices all seek to enrich the opportunities of young people from vulnerable backgrounds, enabling their educational development in both formal and informal education. Other initiatives mentioned are: **Empieza por Educar**, **Menttores Program** or **Funding by Formula** (not yet applied). None of these initiatives come directly from the public administration, although the latter collaborates by financing most of them. (See Appendix 1 for a more in-depth description of each pioneering practice.)

3.8.4 MILC and beyond

Two aspects of the MILC approach are widely considered by stakeholders: the **life course perspective** and **multilevel approach**. Stakeholders repeatedly point out that **educational inequalities develop**

gradually. Continuous references are made to the fact that the **previous school trajectory greatly conditions future opportunities and results**, and that it is **difficult to reverse** difficulties accumulated over time. To tackle these **cumulative inequalities**, stakeholders consider the need to **intervene in both school and out-of-school settings** (in informal and non-formal education). On the other hand, they stress that **inequality occurs at different levels**: individual, group (classroom), and community. These arguments appear both at the analytical level (in the way inequality is understood) and at the level of proposals (in the interventions that may be successful in reducing such inequality). However, the issue of **intersectionality** is not particularly present in the discourses we have collected. Vulnerable groups tend to be thought of as isolated, each with their particularities and barriers, but without attending to their internal diversity or the overlap between vulnerabilities.

3.8.5 Common narrative and main dilemmas

There were several dilemmas raised among stakeholders. First stakeholders raised the issue of how to define innovation since **innovation is contextual** and thus variable in meaning. They agreed that it implies **responsibility towards the common**, that it must imply equity as a premise, and that **evaluation** stands as a fundamental pillar of innovation. Any **measure that involves separating can end up segregating**, especially if not implemented with the aim of improving learning but rather of classifying students according to what comes next. Thus, **individualisation and flexibility are not 'good' or 'bad' by definition**. There is a **digital gap** at two levels: access and use. Is necessary to **overcome the 'one device for each student' rhetoric** and focus on the aspects that accompany digitisation so that technological innovation does not widen the digital divide. Stakeholders also underlined that the **community and the school play complementary roles** but that that there is often a **lack of cooperation or even competition** between both in tackling educational inequality. Finally, there is a **paradox of gender equality**: the curriculum is androcentric and, if one does not offer teachers gender training, the situation will be perpetuated. Coeducation is key to avoiding these paradoxes. It is necessary that coeducation is present transversally in all the actions of the school from early education onwards (beyond sporadic actions). It is difficult, for instance, to change what boys or girls want to study without first changing the context of reference.

3.8.6 Characteristics of current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities

In the Spanish context, inequality is a relevant issue. **Grade repetition and early school leaving** are understood as the main indicators of this inequality. **School segregation and the digital divide** appear as important dimensions on which to act. To summarise, we can highlight three main characteristics of good practices in the fight against educational inequality: 1) they **combat segregation**, not enhance it. This includes both the more obvious segregation between schools, as well as the more subtle internal segregation (avoiding specific measures for vulnerable students that entail a separation from ordinary groups); 2) they **try to act**, as far as possible, **on school problems at the early stages** of the school system before they become entrenched. They are **preventive rather than reactive measures**. Some initiatives to alleviate inequalities in advanced stages do not try to solve problems but rather to manage them, usually falling into a **'damage minimization' logic**; and 3) they pay attention to both formal and non-formal settings. They try to **overcome the duality 'in' vs. 'out of school'** by acting simultaneously in both spheres. This is linked to understanding school bonding beyond its instrumental aspects, paying attention also to the expressive aspects.

3.9 Switzerland

3.9.1 Understanding educational inequality

From the interviews, **different conceptions of educational inequality** emerge. Stakeholders with a strong practical focus tend to understand the term as a lack of equity, while those with an academic focus describe a more formal understanding of inequality. The stakeholders share the understanding that educational inequalities arise from unequal opportunities. They emphasise that **all children show potential to succeed in education**, but that they face different challenges. **Socioeconomic status is perceived as the greatest risk for educational inequalities**. A low socioeconomic status is associated with lower levels of family support, limited knowledge of available support services, psychosocial stress, and limited access to social resources. **Parents' knowledge about the support** and upbringing of their children as well as their **educational aspirations** are particularly relevant for the emergence of educational inequalities. Individuals with a **migration background** often face difficulties in (linguistic) comprehension and in addition have low socioeconomic status. At school, children with a migration background are systematically underestimated in terms of their achievements and competencies and are disadvantaged when moving on to higher levels of education and employment. In terms of **gender**, boys are more at risk than girls in the school context, although the academic lead and advantage of girls decline at the transition to upper secondary education. Finally, there is still some separation of people with **disabilities** into special schools, especially in some cantons, which is regarded as highly problematic.

3.9.2 What to conclude for tackling educational inequality

Raising awareness in society and in politics is an important precondition for reducing educational inequalities. There is a need for a deeper engagement with vulnerable groups as well as a school planning development that promotes diversity; separate special school settings should be used sparingly. In terms of **decreasing social segregation**, those responsible for school planning, for (public) schools, as well as for measures keeping students longer in the education system are seen to make an important contribution. **Early childhood** is referred to as a particularly sensitive phase, whereby measures to reduce educational inequalities in the pre-school sector require in particular the support of parents. This includes **extracurricular activities and support services** in the field of early childhood education and care. These measures compensate for the lack of parental resources in terms of child encouragement and facilitate the integration of children from different social and ethnic backgrounds. **The school system should be permeable, transparent, and inclusive**. The **integration of children with disabilities** into the public school improves the knowledge and the interaction with people with disabilities. **'Special needs' education** expertise and competencies should be incorporated more into regular **teacher training**. **Individualised learning opportunities** and a holistic approach in terms of **assessment and career aspirations** should be encouraged to enable the fulfilment of the potential of all students.

3.9.3 Pioneering practices for tackling educational inequalities

Stakeholders identify a number of pioneering practices. In particular the following projects were mentioned during the interviews and focus groups: PAT (Parents as Teachers), ChagALL, GelBe, Mosaikschulen (mosaic schools), das Prinzip Vielfalt (the diversity principle), all-day schools, Bildungslandschaften (educational landscapes), mandatory early learning courses in the language of instruction in the canton of Basel-Stadt, A Primo, Future Kids, quota limitation in the canton of Zug, QUIMS (quality in multicultural schools), Rock your life!, anonymised application, mentoring during career entry, Schritt:weise, Network of coordinators, German courses, Primano as well as the HSK-Unterricht (Native language and culture classes). (See Appendix 1 for more information.)

3.9.4 MILC and beyond

Stakeholders show a conception of educational inequality fully in line with the MILC approach. In terms of **multilevel analysis**, the **interrelation between macro-, meso- and micro-spheres** is insisted upon. In terms of the first level (macro), institutionalised measures and practices are considered sustainable as they are less subject to political developments and regularly changing responsibilities. However, due to the federal structure of the education system in Switzerland, there is a risk of cantonal differences manifesting inequality differently. The second level (meso) highlights the disadvantaging role of ability-based grouping and the promotion of sensitivity-based teacher education. In terms of the third level (micro), stakeholders point to the importance of expert networks to support the most disadvantaged families. **Intersectionality** is also widely taken into account in the stakeholders' discourses. The **overlap between migrant origin and low socioeconomic status** is particularly highlighted, but also the specific effects of the **overlap between migrant origin and (male) gender**, or between **migrant origin and disability**. The **life course perspective** is likewise fully integrated in the stakeholders' analyses and proposals. **Early selection is mentioned as a risk factor** that generates cumulative inequalities. Finally, **transitions between stages are mentioned as fundamental turning points** to explain long-term inequalities.

3.9.5 Common narrative and main dilemmas

The analysis of the discourses brought into play in the individual interviews, FGs and workshop reveals some relevant dilemmas. First, there are **different conceptions of educational inequality**: stakeholders with a more practical orientation tend to understand inequality in terms of lack of opportunities. Stakeholders more linked to the academic field emphasise equity of results and the right to lifelong learning. The Swiss political system, with its federal structure, produces important dilemmas in terms of public intervention. Second, **reforms at the national level** are slow and complex. Communal policies are often more efficient and adapted to the environment, but this generates important inequalities between territories (for example, the cantonally differing provision of early childhood education is especially mentioned). Third, there is the **early childhood education versus early selection**: there is a clear consensus among stakeholders that early childhood education and care is vital to reduce educational inequalities. However, it is clear from previous interviews that access to services is not equal for all families. This is due to language difficulties or different provision of services by cantons. Fourth, there is the dilemma between **separate school environments versus inclusive and integrative school environments**: students with severe disabilities are still educated in special schools, at least in some cantons. This deprives them of access to more inclusive regular classes. It is pointed out that standard schools should integrate more special education competencies. However, there is a risk that additional competencies in schools will lead to more students being diagnosed with disabilities. Fifth, as a dilemma emerges also that of **multilingualism as an opportunity versus a deficit**: proficiency in the language of instruction and familiarity with the education system are considered fundamental prerequisites for educational success. It is especially important that language acquisition support includes the home language so that a positive language environment is created, and multilingualism can be used as an opportunity (and not a deficit). Sixth, worth mentioning further is **teacher promotion versus selection**: this dilemma was highlighted in relation to competency orientation and the simultaneous measurement and evaluation of performance. Selection based on performance-related characteristics carries a high risk of educational inequalities and overrides different preconditions. At the same time, it is precisely these individual differences that are important for targeted and sustainable student support. Finally, noteworthy likewise is **flexibility and support versus equity**: ability groupings and similar measures can serve to target vulnerable students, but they also stigmatise. Various support measures can help vulnerable students, but also be mostly taken advantage of by more privileged students.

3.9.6 Characteristics of current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities

The **distinctive elements** of the Swiss context are closely **linked to its federal political structure and the linguistic configuration** of the country. Thus, the **dilemma between autonomy** (of cantonal policies) and **equity** (at the national level) occupies a central role in the discourses. The **linguistic diversity** of the population appears as an element that **complicates inequality and the ways to address it**. Analysing the speeches and solutions proposed by the stakeholders, we can point out some characteristics that **successful interventions** must share. First, for being effective on the longer run, they should be implemented nationwide (harmonised across cantons or at the national level), receive **sufficient funding**, and adopt a **long-term view**. **Small-scale initiatives** are usually **not very sustainable**, and quality cannot be assured. Second, they should preferably **act early in the education system** to reduce long-term disadvantages. These interventions should **target vulnerable groups, avoiding** as far as possible to **be monopolised by already privileged groups**. Third, **inclusive contexts** are preferable to separate forms of education. This applies both to the issue of special education and to measures based on grouping by level. Last, educational inequalities cannot be tackled by educational measures alone; **comprehensive social change is needed**: valuing multiculturalism, multilingualism, questioning some aspects of the meritocratic principle, and understanding that **educational inequalities reflect economic and social inequalities**.

4 Summary and implications

The aim of this report has been to explore and summarise in *vignette* format stakeholders’ knowledge and experiences of educational inequality and current practices aimed at tackling educational inequality and to identify pioneering practices in each partner country. For doing this, SHs, FGs and workshops were carried out in every project partner country. For recruiting most relevant stakeholders, we used an open definitional frame allowing a less restricted recruiting procedures based on local, regional or national ecologies regarding educational inequality and strategies for tackling them. Thus, the research teams were free to choose the stakeholders as long as they were able to inform the research team about programmes (governmental and grassroots efforts) that have been launched at the country, regional, local or institutional level to tackle educational inequalities. In line with the PIONEERED proposal, we aimed at national, regional and local government officers responsible for educational equality and inclusion, policy makers, teacher union experts, educational practitioners, teacher educators, representatives of community-led neighbourhood groups, parental organisation representatives, representatives of transnational networks tackling educational inequalities (PIONEERED, 2020: 28).

Based on the provided research instruments (e.g., semi-structured interview guides and analysis templates), the relevant data was gathered via soundings with relevant stakeholders (one workshop, two focus groups and six expert interviews) in every consortium partner country, taking into consideration the country and context-specific ecologies. The results were summarised in a country report that included: findings regarding the main codes of analysis; contextualisation of results; and a summary. The main codes provided by UIB/UCM were:

- general conceptions about educational inequality;
- reducing educational inequalities;
- pioneering practices with special focus on: i. reconstructing the understanding of pioneering practices concerning educational inequalities; ii. reconstructing the fundamental aims of a proper “pioneering practice”; iii. collecting relevant practical examples provided by the stakeholders;
- MILC dimensions; and
- main dilemmas.

The country reports feed into this current report whereby each country received equal space to express its peculiar characteristics concerning:

- understandings and problem-framing regarding educational inequality;
- what to conclude for tackling educational inequality;
- identifying pioneering practices which are intended to reduce educational inequalities;
- MILC and beyond; and
- common narrative and main dilemmas.

This report step is focusing on providing in orderly form the very rich results regarding the understandings of educational inequalities in the respective countries, conclusions based on these understandings, existing pioneering practices, as well as emerging challenges and dilemmas when tackling educational inequalities. Based on this framing we decided not to provide contextualisations of the national discourses within the respective education or welfare systems. Thus, we did not wish to anticipate here any comparison of results either between the country vignettes although its results already indicate a range of common as well as different aspects regarding the understandings and problem definitions of educational inequalities. Neither was our interest to draw comparatively focused conclusions from these framings, existing pioneering practices in our consortium partner countries, and contemporary dilemmas and challenges regarding the implementation and practicing of pioneering approaches and practices. This will be at the core of the D5.2. Finally, it is important to be aware that the meaning of many of the terms we use in the vignettes content– e.g. educational inequality, outcome, practices etc. – can vary according to the country-specific contexts in which they are used. Therefore, readers should be very mindful and considered when comparing the vignettes not taking for granted ‘common meanings’ or ‘understandings’ of the ‘container terms’ used in the descriptions. The content of the ‘containers’ can only be derived from thick descriptions and contextualised descriptions which will be in focus in the upcoming deliverable D5.2.

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6 Appendix

6.1 Appendix 1: Pioneering practices named - by country

6.1.1 Finland

- The Finnish educational system itself regarded as a foundational pioneering practice.
- General comprehensive school enables young people to proceed in educational path according to one’s interests and capabilities. Almost all Finnish pupils complete the comprehensive school and then continue either to upper secondary or vocational education.
- Educational system without dead ends was regarded as a key principle of the Finnish educational system. If students complete vocational education, they can still proceed to the university of applied sciences or university. Also makes it possible to choose the open university route to university education if one completes a certain number of courses and apply to the university.
- Three-tier support in providing special education (where there are no longer groupings of students needing special education to different tracks).
- Extending compulsory education was perceived as especially important for students from lower SES families.
- Academic teacher education was regarded as unique and pioneering in the Finnish context; and regarded as innovative in an international context.
- High-quality early childhood education and care
- Positive discrimination: More funding provided to schools that are in the lower SES areas with additional support for pupils with more needs.
- Broad freedom for school principals.

6.1.2 Germany

- The German educational system is seen critical regarding its innovative or pioneering capacity. Many aspects are perceived as inspired from foreign contexts.
- However, there are several local, regional or national initiatives – model programs – with often temporary time horizon. The following practices or project were named in the context of pioneering initiatives:
 - Learning vacations: aim on providing children which experience learning lags after the longer Easter and summer vacations with enrichment activities throughout the vacations; those measures are named particularly pioneering as they help to overcome a strong division of sociopedagogical (non-formal) approaches to education and those of schools (formal education), which have a high impact in the ‘sectorized’ system of German Education. They somewhat stand for an understanding of school that conceives it as an open house for all educational activities in the lives of children and families, and therefore also promote the limitations of school lessons and also the openness of the premises for activities beyond the 'normal classroom'.
 - Social Index: Hamburg (s.a.) as a well-established structure of combining academic expertise, fair monitoring and distribution of public spendings;
 - Education Houses: like the Bildungshaus Lurup in Hamburg, where ECEC and Primary Schools are combined and employ a most coherent and inclusive pedagogical practice with a lot of support structures for families as well.
 - Education Communes: A coherent outcome-orientated governance already established in some German municipalities (and the related Education Offices “Bildungsbüros”), for instance the MAUS-Program (Mannheim Support System for

Schools). The MAUS program enables students to receive tailored support services at schools, even at weekends and during vacations if necessary.

- Family Classes: Here, parents and children come together to school for one day in the week for at least 3 to 4 months to improve the parents’ skills to support children’s school-related learning by making them aware of problems in work and social behaviour and helping them and their children; as "experts" of their own situation, to help each other.
- Family Centres: Combined with ECEC and more and more also Primary Schools (s.a.), which offer holistic, threshold and inclusive support structures for parents and children in a networked manner.
- Mentoring Programs: Here, the supervising institution places and supervises university students who enter into weekly meetings with elementary school students for approximately one year, primarily supporting them in developing self-confidence and self-efficacy; also involves learning from a model, which also helps to ‘add’ more social capital to the students.
- Social Work in ECEC: here the state of Rhineland-Palatine has implemented a new social-space related allowance, which allows particularly for employing social worker in ECEC facilities, which aim to establish network structures of support for children and families.

6.1.3 Hungary

No particular pioneering programs or practices are mentioned in the country-specific report because stakeholders were promised anonymity. Anyone knowing the Hungarian CSO field would be able to identify the stakeholders if the programmes were mentioned here. The indicated lines of intervention are the following:

- Methodologies that are flexible and focused on the individual needs of the students, active pedagogies.
- Greater interconnection between the different agents involved in the educational system (students and families, teachers among themselves and with school management, etc.).
- Fluid communication with the students' families and with the environment in a broader sense.

6.1.4 Ireland

- DEIS programme (Department of Education) for primary and secondary school students attending schools in disadvantaged areas. The programme offers additional supports that are not available to students in schools serving more affluent areas. While there are different support approaches available under the general umbrella of DEIS, some of these approaches have been particularly successful in supporting children and families.
- The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) (Professional Development Service for Teachers) - library programme gives additional resources to students in certain DEIS schools, having a full-time librarian and a special budget for books.
- Aspire2 (DPS Group is a global consulting, engineering and construction management company, serving high-tech industries around the world) targets schools serving disadvantaged areas. It is a focused intervention for senior students, for students in 5th and 6th year (upper secondary education). The schools get financial assistance from a company over 2 years; the company also provides mentoring and coaching, work placement and work experience for the students. The programme was seen to have broader benefits for the students in giving them a voice and developing their confidence.

- The Business in the Community Programme (Business in the Community Ireland is a private sector movement for sustainable change in business) came about with a view to engaging the business sector in Ireland to provide whatever support is needed to schools, and to bring the world of work closer to young people prior to them leaving school. The programme was seen to be particularly beneficial in broadening students’ horizons and raising their aspirations.

6.1.5 Lithuania

- “I choose to teach” program: to send qualified teachers to disadvantaged or remote schools.
- “Cultural Partnership” and “Cultural Pass”: with the aim of increasing access to non-formal education through state-level funding.
- Leaders' time program: Initiative to improve the skills and knowledge of school leaders
- Millennium Schools program: supporting school personnel's competencies to work with students with special needs.
- “I will help you learn” program: voluntary initiative designed to help students learn by distance, in person or blended learning.

6.1.6 Luxembourg

- Teacher development education provided by IFEN (Institut de Formation de l'Éducation Nationale) aiming to support teachers in reflecting on their practices.
- Service d'éducation et d'accueil, SEA) and several providers of leisure activities. Coordination and collaboration between formal and non-formal education.
- Joint activities of children with different background characteristics (migration background, SES, school track) in non-formal education were assessed as pioneering as they provide opportunities to reduce prejudices.
- “Eis Schoul” is an all-day school with trained and engaged teachers.
- Fully state-funded international public schools (IPS): The innovative potential of the IPS that reach beyond tackling linguistic inequalities was emphasised.
- Pioneering projects in specific schools:
 - “Kannercampus Belval” and “École Jean Jaurès” (Esch) were recommended as projects combining formal and non-formal education.
 - “Cap Futur” (“Lycée Guillaume Kroll”) aims to support students’ self-development through social or cultural commitment in the society.
 - “École du Brill” (Esch) has implemented several initiatives for school development for a heterogenous student population.
 - Peer assisted mentoring was mentioned as a pioneering project at “Lycée Aline-Mayrisch”.
 - “Tutorat”, which has been implemented at “Athénée de Luxembourg”, provides individual teacher support for students that goes beyond regular lessons aiming to support specific interests. However, they criticized that the project is based in a school with a high reputation and is needed elsewhere.
 - Another approach is “Pédagogie active” which has been implemented in several schools. One example given was “École Internationale Mondorf-les-Bains”.

6.1.7 Norway

- The Norwegian educational system itself is – due to its comprehensive school character - seen as a basic pioneering practice. General comprehensive school in Norway aims at providing equal access and equal opportunities to all pupils independently of background, gender,

ethnicity and ability. It provides means for enabling young people to proceed in educational path according to one's interests and capabilities aiming at equal outcomes based on interests and capabilities.

- The Norwegian educational system also tries to prevent dead ends in educational promotion and development by providing transition possibilities between higher education and apprenticeship tracks. It also provides open university routes for higher education based on door opening courses without having a university-entrance diploma.
- The following practices or project were named in the context of Pioneering initiatives:
 - Områdesatsing (loosely translated to 'area focused measures'): is named several times as a framework for practices explicitly focused on geographical areas which are regarded as focus areas in need of extra resources.
 - TAM: (Security, Responsibility and Coping): This is a teaching program that motivates young people with different problems to complete school. Instead of falling outside school and society, young people struggling with common schooling learn mastery and gain social competence through practical tasks, the project participants improve the results at school, and get fishing and outdoor life as important and stimulating hobbies.
 - Guttas campus: Guttas Campus is a two-week intensive learning camp with follow-up at the mentor center for one year after the camp. The target group is boys who find school challenging, and who want to strengthen themselves academically and socially before they start upper secondary school.
 - LIM (Homework, Sports and Food): Is a free/voluntary focused activity offer for students from 5th to 7th grade. The project is a collaboration between the primary school, FAU, local sports clubs and the Sports Council (IRB). Through this collaboration, students get homework help, food and try themselves in various activities such as football, athletics, gymnastics, climbing, tennis, hockey and much more completely free.

6.1.8 Spain

- Promociona (Fundación Secretariado Gitano - Non-profit social entity that provides services for the development of the Roma community in both formal and non-formal education) - The objective is to ensure that young Roma complete their compulsory studies and continue studying in order to lower ESL figures and improve the conditions of access to the labour market for the Roma community.
- Magnet Schools Program (Fundación Jaume Bofill - Non-profit organization with the aim of promoting social transformation and change) - The alliance with an institution of excellence allows vulnerable educational institutions (formal education) to develop an innovative and quality educational project, an attractive project that is becoming a reference project in its territory.
- New Opportunities Schools (Spanish network of second chance schools - the association brings together more than 30 partners whose purpose is to provide concrete and effective solutions to young people who are outside the educational system and unemployed) - The Second Chance Schools (E2O) provide young people between 15 and 29 years of age without employment or qualifications, an original pedagogical model based on innovative training through personalized itineraries.
- Education360 (Fundación Jaume Bofill - Non-profit organization with the aim of promoting social transformation and change) - Community initiatives that focus on collaborative work between various actors and that offer educational opportunities for learning and development outside of school time for children and young people.
- Empieza por Educar (training for teachers in highly vulnerable environments). The ExE Program is a professional development program aimed at young people and professionals who aspire

to generate educational and social change for the benefit of equal opportunities for all boys and girls. For two years they will teach in educational centers in disadvantaged environments, pursuing the academic growth and skills of their students while receiving training and support to maximize their impact.

- Menttores Program (educational reinforcement and fight against the digital divide). Menttores is a program designed to offer free individualized educational reinforcement to students from disadvantaged backgrounds most affected by COVID-19.
- Funding by Formula (not yet applied, focused on the equitable distribution of resources according to the needs of educational institutions). FxF models that pursue an equity function must favour the principle of progressiveness in the distribution of resources. This implies an allocation model of an incremental nature based on the needs of educational centres. The principle of progressiveness is confronted with the models of linear allocation of resources, ensuring a distribution according to the needs of the centres to guarantee a fairer financing and free of possibility or capacity biases.
- PROA+. Updated version of a similar measure (PROA), but as a novelty it is not only focused on academics, it also tries to reinforce the attachment to school. To this end, it also intervenes in non-formal education, with complementary activities outside school hours. The program is only applied in schools with a significant percentage of low SES students and with low achievement.

6.1.9 Switzerland

- Mosaik schools - aim to reduce the impacts of ability grouping by offering different forms of comprehensive schooling at lower secondary level or by not making any tracking in performance-based school types. This is seen as very positive, successful, and could therefore be identified as ‘pioneering’.
- PAT (Parents as Teachers) - association focuses on supporting children from 0 to 3 years and their low-income families with a migration background and German as a second language.
- A Primo - the a:primo association aims at the charitable and sustainable provision of early childhood development for socially disadvantaged children of preschool age.
- Mandatory early learning courses in the language of instruction in the canton of Basel-Stadt – includes a “selective obligation” to send children with insufficient proficiency in German to an institution with integrated language support.
- GelBe project. Awareness-raising project in teacher training to support of children from disadvantaged families.
- Rock your life! - European network of volunteers fighting for social mobility and education equality. For teacher training and the support of children from disadvantaged families.
- Schritt:weise create encounter spaces and networks for families and professionals to support parents and accompany transitions to compulsory schooling.
- QUIMS – aims at strengthening the skills in the language of instruction, school success and social integration in public schools with a pronounced multicultural composition. It has a pioneering role in this regard, as the program has been legally anchored in the canton, thus guaranteeing its continuation in the long term
- The ChagALL project – focuses on the transition from lower to upper secondary school of highly motivated students with migration background and from lower income families.
- LiFT project (Capability through individual support and practical training) focuses on the transition from lower to upper secondary level. A private project in informal education, aims at students from lower secondary school onwards who are in a difficult starting position with regards to integration in a VET program.

6.2 Appendix 2: How to templates for doing the data collection and data analysis

6.2.1 WP 5 (5.1a). HOW TO Template Stakeholders INTERVIEWS

This document provides guidance for qualitative interviews with key stakeholders required in:

Task 5.1: Exploring stakeholders’ knowledge and experiences of current practices that aim to tackle educational inequality in each country

Note on contextualising this guidance: We encourage partners to take their context into account to guide their decision-making and research process. Hence, this is not a prescriptive approach/framework. UCM/UIB are available for support and reflection on this.

Who the stakeholders are

The identification of stakeholders should enable identification and understanding of current or already implemented pioneering practices that aim to tackle educational inequality. The selection of interviewees should provide information about situationally -and contextually related programs that have been launched at the country, regional, local or institutional level to tackle educational inequality on the pre-schooling, primary and secondary schooling within your context. In addition, the selection should also, as far as possible, help to prepare the qualitative case studies of tasks 5.3 (e.g., selection of specific cases - kindergarten / school for the analysis of pioneering educational practices). In this regard, though the emphasis is on the local, stakeholders with regional or national knowledge/expertise are needed. This can comprise teacher union experts, educational practitioners, teacher educators, representatives of community-led neighbourhood groups, representatives of parental organisations, representatives of transnational networks tackling educational inequalities etc.

It is important that the chosen stakeholders can inform us about pioneering practises regarding the preschool, primary and secondary school level as well as pioneering practices in fields of non-formal education. Since we have partner countries with quite different educational systems (federal vs. national), we leave it to the partners of which stakeholder they strategically choose for identifying ‘pioneering practices’. Thus, partners are free to decide as long as stakeholders identify concrete practices currently on work or already implemented. However, to understand partner specific selection strategies it is important here that partners provide the UCM/UIB team with some bullet points of “why” they have chosen them and not others.

The number and selection of stakeholder interviews

We suggest taking a phased approach to your interviews, first identifying one or some key stakeholder informant(s), then learning from the interview(s) to identify further key stakeholders. This may reinforce interviewee selection via the snowball-explorative-grounded recruiting strategy. However, even if partners are free to choose their strategy for identifying relevant stakeholders, we consider the national report relative to mapping policies (WP 3, task 3.1) to be a good framework to guide the selection of the stakeholders sample.

The following table can be filled once the interviews are concluded.

Table 1. STRUCTURAL SAMPLE: INTERVIEWS

Country: Research Institution:		
Expert name	Stakeholder’s Institution	Interest group (educators, policy makers, academics, families...)
		Educational Stage
		Justification (Short text)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

We propose the following steps ahead of the interview:

1. Contact the stakeholder by email to introduce the research project, to share the Participant Information Sheet, to invite them to participate and to explain their voluntary informed consent if they agree to participate.
2. Offer a face-to-face or online conversation to the stakeholder for discussing any questions they might have regarding the interview.
3. Sent the consent form so that verbal consent can be given at the beginning of the interview, and signed consent received at the end.
4. Provide the headline themes for the interview so that stakeholders can feel prepared in advance.

To ensure diversity in stakeholder participation and to enable the representation of their identities in reports, ask the stakeholders about their role in organisation/service, gender and work experiences in the field, e.g., how long they have been working with issues of educational inequality, with policies and practices to tackle educational inequality, in which sector of the educational system.

Considering the COVID-19 context, PIONEERED partners are free to decide if they use online, or face-to-face interviewing. We suggest avoiding the telephone interview, as they are too impersonal for the involvement required for a fruitful in-depth interview. However, in case of

COVID19-related constraints, online interviews could be the best option (Fielding et al., 2017).

Aims of the semi-structured interviews

- to explore stakeholders’ knowledge and experiences of current practices that aim to tackle educational inequality,
- to engage stakeholders who have knowledge and experience of policy and practice areas related to educational inequality and practices to tackle it, ● to provide the stakeholder an opportunity to direct the discussion depending on their interests and experience,
- to gather information that will be valuable for identifying and understanding pioneering practices to tackle educational inequality regarding the locality/place and the context of the practices being identified.

WP5/T5.1 Topic Guide

Note: Interview guide for the WP5/T5.1 semi-structured stakeholder interviews should be adapted in relation to your local realities. UCM/UIB are available for support and reflection on this.

The following topics are meant to structure the discussion and to centre the discussion around. Questions are meant as prompts, which should be used, depending on the direction the interview discussion takes.

Before starting with the interview please check that the interviewees consent verbally at this point to have the interview and whether they are happy to have the interview audio recorded. This is important for accuracy in representation.

Start recording the interview

TOPIC 1: Build an understanding of the ‘problem definition’ provided by stakeholders – How do they understand and think about educational inequalities and the aim to reduce them, what experiences do they have in the field, what practices do they know and what practices do they wish to be implemented?

Questions to consider:

1. How do stakeholders understand educational inequalities?
 - a. What are the different dimensions?
 - b. What are the factors that contribute to educational (in)equality in the partners context?
 - c. What different types of educational inequality (thinking here about access, treatment or outcome) come into view and are perhaps more/less prevalent?
 - d. Are there certain disadvantaged groups (deemed vulnerable) that come into view which have higher risk of facing educational inequalities?
2. How do stakeholders think educational inequalities can be reduced?

3. What types of situation and context-related programmes and practices do stakeholders know (Make a note about the practises named. You will discuss them more closely under TOPIC 2)?
 - a. What are the explicit and implicit objectives of these programmes and practices (e.g., target groups/institutions, aim(s), pedagogical devices)?
 - b. To what extent they are considered to go beyond taken-for-granted approaches and/or practices?
 - c. When would a practice to tackle educational inequality be ‘pioneering’ (aspects, criteria’s, dimensions)?
 - d. Is there anything ‘pioneering’ about the practices addressed by the stakeholder?
4. What do stakeholders want to change and keep in the future regarding way of tackling educational inequality?
5. What challenges, dilemmas do they see?
6. What is their prospective analysis concerning education inequality?

TOPIC 2: Build information about programs and/or practices to tackle educational inequalities regarding levels of the educational system, formal and informal education and the geographical and/or administrative level.

Questions to consider:

1. Characterization of the programmes or the practices named above:
 - Programme/practice 1
 - ...
- When, why, by whom the program/practice was launched?
2. At what level of the educational system?
 3. In formal or informal education?
 4. At what geographical/administrative level have the identified programmes and/or practices been launched – at the country, regional, local or institutional level and what are the reasons for this?
 5. Do these programmes or practices concern governmental and/or grassroots efforts?
 6. What were their target groups?
 7. What were the pioneering practices aiming at?
 8. On what was the focus (opportunity/ equal chances, treatment and/or outcome)?
 9. How have the identified practices been implemented?
 10. What have been the main outcomes (positive, negative, compared to the official aims)?
 11. Has there been any evaluation of the program/practice?

Closing questions

Final question to give space to any themes or issues that have not been addressed that the stakeholder thinks is important.

You might also want to ask how the PIONEERED project could help the stakeholder in reducing educational inequality or in learning from other pioneering practices examples. Use this opportunity to ask about further involvement in PIONEERED – here especially regarding participation in focus group interviews and/or in the workshop. You might also want to use the opportunity to discuss any possibility of further collaboration around educational inequality and pioneering practices to tackle it.

Thank the stakeholder for their time and engagement with the project.

Stop the audio recording

After the interview

We suggest to establish a code for each interview conducted: Research Institution code+underscore+Date(XX.XX.XXXX)+CodeTechnique*underscore+number of interviews 01 to 06. Example: UCM_12.02.2022_IN01

Planning for analysis

Each PIONEERED partner will be asked to do an analysis of their case study data for each task using a framework to be provided by the end of February. This will guide partners in preparing an analysis report, supported by data to evidence the arguments being made. Please undertake your interviews and analysis in the most appropriate language for your cases, however, we will ask for your case study report for each task to be in English.

Research activity Timeline	
Stakeholder interviews February 2022	
Case study analysis and report writing by PIONEERED partners	due date 15.04. 2022
Cross-context analysis by WP leads UCM/UIB and Report about stakeholder knowledge regarding current practices tackling/ reducing educational inequalities in each country	D.5.1 due date 31.05.22

REFERENCES

Fielding, N. G., Lee, R. M., & Blank, G. (2017). The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods. In *Online Research Methods*. SAGE.

6.2.2 WP 5 (5.1b). HOW TO Template Stakeholders FOCUS GROUPS

This document provides guidance for focus groups with stakeholders required in:

Task 5.1: Exploring stakeholders’ knowledge and experiences of current practices that aim to tackle educational inequality in each country

Note on contextualising this guidance: We encourage partners to take their context into account to guide their decision-making and research process. Hence, this is not a prescriptive approach/framework. UCM/UIB are available for support and reflection on this.

Planning for analysis

Each PIONEERED partner will be asked to do an analysis of their FG study data using a framework to be provided by UCM/UIB at the end of February 2022. This will guide partners in preparing an analysis report, supported by data (transcript quotes) to evidence the arguments being made. Please undertake your FG, transcription and analysis in the most appropriate language for your cases, however, we will ask for your report to be in English.

<i>Research activity</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Fieldwork: Focus group interviews	February 2022/beginning of March
Report writing by PIONEERED partners	By mid of April 2022
Cross-context analysis by UCM/UIB	By end of May 2022

As well as in the case of the stakeholders' interview records, we should follow a pragmatic approach to allow an efficient investment of project resources. Each conducted focus group should have: 1) a digital record of the audio (even if it has been recorded in audiovisual mode since the video usually takes up a lot of space); and 2) a brief written summary of the content and a set of quotations (verbatim) identifying anonymously the different profiles and reflecting the most relevant information. As recommended before, it is not necessary to transform digital audio/audiovisual records into traditional written transcriptions. However, this approach should be understood as a suggestion and partners are free to record the data as they deem appropriate.

Who the stakeholders are

The stakeholder's identification should enable the understanding of current or already implemented pioneering practices focused on tackling educational inequality. Based on the previous interviews sampling experience and stakeholders own suggestions, as well as complemented by national reviews carried out on WP3, a wide amount of information will be generated (situationally and contextually) about programs launched at the country (at a state, regional or local level) tackling educational inequality on the pre-schooling, primary and secondary schooling as well as in sectors of informal education. In addition, the selection should also (as well as the interviews to the stakeholders did) help to prepare the qualitative case studies of tasks 5.3 (e.g., selection of specific cases - kindergarten / school for the analysis of pioneering educational practices). In this regard, though the emphasis is on the local, stakeholders with local, regional or national knowledge/expertise are needed. This can comprise teacher union experts, educational practitioners, teacher educators, representatives of community-led neighborhood groups, representatives of parental organisations, representatives of transnational networks tackling educational inequalities, etc.

Based on peer discussion about the main concepts and notions concerning inequality in education and pioneering practices implemented for tackling educational inequality focus groups will provide space to give their opinion in a more nuanced and discursively challenging way, building together a group process that will allow further exploration and reflection about educational practices able to make a difference, hence, to change the status quo.

It is important that the chosen stakeholders can inform us about pioneering practices regarding the preschool, primary and secondary school level as well as pioneering practices in fields of non-formal education. As in the case of the interviews and trying to include the diversity of each country's social reality, we leave to the partners the decision of which stakeholder they strategically choose for focus group participation (federal, national or local).

However, to understand partner specific selection strategies it is important here that partners provide the UCM/UIB team with some bullet points of "why" they have chosen them, and not others, as well as a description of the strategic motivation of the particular compositions of the focus group (in each of the two cases). It means, to explain briefly why the research team thinks that this particular combination could be interesting, and the interactions generated in the group could be analytically fruitful (table 1).

How many focus groups

Two groups per country will be held, bearing in mind that it would be most useful to promote meetings with different profiles and, as far as possible, proposed as complementary (that is, that the first one and the second one do not have similar compositions).

Number of participants (face-to-face and online focus groups)

In the ideal case of non-COVID measures being in place, we would recommend having a focus group discussion with 6 to 8 participants. However, given COVID-19 constraints, online focus groups can appear as the most suitable option. In the case that the focus groups interviews are conducted online (which can be decided depending on the particularities of each country's restriction level), it is recommended gathering a smaller number of participants per focus group (Poytner, 2010) probably a maximum of 4-5 participants. This recommendation is due to a purely practical/methodological matter, given that the videoconference mediation circumstances are particular and different to the physical group techniques regarding discussion flow, speaking time, possible disconnections, engagement and length of the focus group.

Online mediated focus groups

Due to the given situation online focus groups could be the most suitable option in most PIONEERED partner countries. Online focus groups are a technique that slightly differs (especially in the field work step) from traditional focus groups (Abrams & Gaiser, 2017).

In our case, advantages of the online modality of the focus groups are that they can also be done under physical and/or social distancing measures, providing higher place related flexibility for joining the discussion and can, as long as all participants give their consent, be easily audio-visually recorded, not saying that it is mandatory to record it on video. Every partner can decide on his own about the recording method.

In any case it is important to specify this circumstance in the first contact step (informing each participant that the focus group discussion is going to be recorded in audio or audiovisual mode).

It is up to the partners which recording tools or video conference software/platform (Teams, Zoom, etc.) they use depending on the resources of each institution. However, only those tools should be chosen who guarantee information/data protection according to data protection regulations of your institution, national regulations and PIONEERED ethnic guidelines.

Next steps

Stakeholders and focus group participants will be invited to the planned workshop, but it may be wise to open up the workshop for broader participation and audience. We aim to have between 10 to 12 participants in the workshop.

Aims of the Focus Groups

- to generate debate and discussion among stakeholders about the main notions of educational inequality and pioneered practices tackling education inequality (pioneered practice, equality, etc.)
- to explore stakeholders’ knowledge and experiences of current practices that aim to tackle educational inequality
- to engage stakeholders who have knowledge and experience of policy and practice areas related to educational inequality and practices to tackle it
- to provide the stakeholder an opportunity to direct the discussion with other stakeholders depending on their interests and experience
- to gather information that will be valuable for identifying and understanding pioneering practices to tackle educational inequality regarding the locality/place and the context of the practices being identified
- to compare different statements, problem definitions and points of view in different contexts and national reality frames

Time	FG timespan will depend on its development and the involvement of the participants, but we suggest not to extend it much longer than 2 hours (however, this is also meant as a flexible benchmark 😊).
Materials	audio-recorder, or a digital tool for recording short socio-demographic questionnaire (<i>view Annex 1</i>) PIONEERED_Information Sheet and PIONEERED Informed Consent Form
Interviewers	an interviewer who leads the focus group
Collecting some socio demographic data about participants Table 1	Please fill in the information listed in Table 1 regarding the FG participants. We recommend that this information is collected before starting the respective FG, during preliminary contacts with associations or with the participants.
Privacy and informed consent	Before starting the focus group, participants must be informed about PIONEERED and the aim of the focus group (PIONEERED Information-Sheet) and should have signed the Informed Consent Form. We recommend collecting signed informed consent in a preliminary contact with the participants and not at the beginning or after the FG discussion. Just in case you have forgotten to sign or have forgotten to ask or haven’t received the consent from all participants, ask at the beginning of the discussion if anyone objects to recording.
COVID - information and guidelines	If you do the FG in person, please inform participants about the COVID-19 measures in place and how you adopted existing measures to protect participants health (social distancing, use of masks, hygiene ...)

Field Work steps

1. Contact the stakeholder by email to introduce the research project, to share the Participant Information Sheet, to invite them to participate and to explain their voluntary informed consent if they agree to participate.
2. Sent the consent form so that verbal consent can be given at the beginning of the interview, and signed consent received at the end.
3. Provide the headline themes for the focus group so that stakeholders can feel prepared in advance.

To ensure diversity in stakeholder participation (just in case they have not participated previously in the interviews), ask the stakeholders about:

- their role in organisation/service
- gender
- work experiences in the field (how long they have been working with issues of educational inequality, with policies and practices to tackle educational inequality, in which sector of the educational system)

Table 1. STRUCTURAL SAMPLE: FOCUS GROUPS

FOCUS Group Code	We suggest establishing a code for each focus group conducted following the same pattern as previous interviews: Research Institution code + underscore + Date(XX.XX.XXXX) + underscore + CodeTechnique(FG) + number of group (01 to 02). Example: <i>UCM_11.03.22_FG02; UIB_25.02.22_FG01</i>
Number of participants	N= _____
Gender	Number of male participants: _____ Number of female participants: _____
Role or (type) of stakeholder	_____; _____; _____; _____; _____; _____; _____; _____;
How long they have been working/active in the field	_____; _____; _____; _____; _____; _____; _____; _____;

Topic guide¹⁴

- A)** Introduction: Welcome to everybody... Thanks for joining us ... Provide rationale why you/the participants are: e.g., we would like to explore with you existing educational inequalities and existing pioneering practices to tackle these inequalities. Provide neat information of the PIONEERED endeavor.
- B)** General relevance of the topic educational inequality in the country from the different perspectives of the stakeholders.
- How do stakeholders understand educational inequality?
 - Are there different ‘types’ of educational inequalities in work?
 - What kind of public discussion do stakeholders identify in reducing educational inequality?
 - Are there any controversy stakeholders can identify in reducing educational inequality?
 - Are there any ‘dilemmas’ or ‘contradictions’ or ‘conflicts’ stakeholders can identify in tackling educational inequality?
 - ... *Feel free to add questions regarding your country specific context* 😊
- C)** What lessons have been learnt from the past about educational inequalities and tackling them.
- D)** Knowledge of current practices that aim to tackle educational inequality from stakeholders (different) perspectives.
- E)** Experiences of current practices that aim to tackle educational inequality from stakeholders (different) perspectives.
- F)** Reflection about success and challenges of practice implementation and in tackling educational inequalities (in the formal and nonformal arena).
- G)** Detailed questions:
- a. cooperation between different actors,
 - b. relation between informal, formal and non-formal education.
 - c. challenges, dilemmas.
 - d. success criteria, why ‘pioneered’?
- H)** What do stakeholders want to change and keep in the future?

Closing questions

Final question to give space to any themes or issues that have not been addressed that the participant thinks is important. Thank the participants for their time and engagement with the project.

Stop the audio/audiovisual recording

References

- Abrams, K. M., & Gaiser, T. J. (2017). Online Focus Groups. In *The SAGE Handbook of online Research methods* (pp. 435–450). SAGE.
- Poynter, R. (2010) *The Handbook of Online and Social Media Research: Tools and Techniques for Market Researchers*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

¹⁴ All partners are invited to let UCM/UIB and all the other partners know asap if other questions should be added.

6.2.3 WP 5 (5.1c). HOW TO Template Stakeholders WORKSHOP

This document provides guidance for the Workshop with key stakeholders required in:

Task 5.1: Exploring stakeholders’ knowledge and experiences of current practices that aim to tackle educational inequality in each country

Note on contextualising this guidance: We encourage partners to take their context into account to guide their decision-making and research process. Hence, this is not a prescriptive approach/framework. UCM/UIB are available for support and reflection on this.

The number and selection of Workshop participants

The selection of who and how many people should participate in the Workshop, should be decided by each partner. Yet the number should be between 4 and 10. In order to perform the Workshop, as well as to select the sample, we suggest to each partner to consider the pre-analysis (although still under construction) of the interviews and focus groups. Taking into account the qualitative experience previously carried out up to this point, each team will probably be able to verify the functioning of the different discursive dynamics in their specific context and will be prepared to carry out a more accurate sampling. Just as a suggestion, we recommend that partners who choose the physical face-to-face mode use larger numbers (6 to 10 participants) while those who choose online modalities tend to make, as far as possible, smaller groups (4 to 6 participants). This is due to the unique dynamics of the digital medium, in which it is especially difficult to moderate discussion spaces with too many members, something that, by its very nature, is less problematic in face-to-face modalities.

The participants can be selected among the previous participants of the qualitative techniques already carried out, following suggestions emerged during the techniques (via the snowball-explorative-grounded recruiting strategy) or even introducing elements we have detected that we have missed in previous research and has been shown as an important gap.

However, even if partners are free to choose their strategy for identifying relevant stakeholders, we consider the national report relative to mapping policies (WP 3, task 3.1) to be a good framework to guide the selection of the Workshop’s sample.

The following table can be filled once the Workshop is concluded.

Table 1. STRUCTURAL SAMPLE: WORKSHOP

Country: Research Institution:				
Expert name	Stakeholder’s Institution	Interest group (educators, policy makers, academics, families...)	Educational Stage	Justification (Short text)
1.				

2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

We propose the following steps ahead of the Workshop:

1. Contact the participants by email to introduce the research project, to share the Participant Information Sheet, to invite them to participate and to explain their voluntary informed consent if they agree to participate as we did previously in interviews and focus groups.
2. Offer a face-to-face or online conversation to the stakeholder for discussing any questions they might have regarding the interview.
3. Sent the consent form so that verbal consent can be given at the beginning of the Workshop, and signed consent received at the end.
4. Provide the headline themes for the interview so that the participants of the Workshop can feel prepared in advance.

To ensure diversity in participation and to enable the representation of their identities in reports, ask the stakeholders about their role in organisation/service, gender and work experiences in the field, e.g., how long they have been working with issues of educational inequality, with policies and practices to tackle educational inequality, in which sector of the educational system.

Considering the COVID-19 context, PIONEERED partners are free to decide if they use online, or face-to-face Workshops.

Aims of the Workshop

The main aim of the Workshop is to reflect (dis)agreements and reflections upon educational inequality understanding and pioneering practices/strategies needed for

tackling educational inequalities, acknowledging idiosyncratic contexts (hence differentiated embeddedness needed for doing pioneering things).

How to do so

To prepare the workshop, we should review the qualitative material generated so far to:

1. Write down a list of the main dilemmas, debates and problems that have arisen in the interviews and focus groups (an analysis already underway).
2. Connect the dilemmas with the particularities of the country itself (WP2 and WP3).
3. Present them to the participants. For example, using data (tables, graphics...) or audio-visual support materials to stimulate the debate. This is something that will be left to the discretion of each partner.
4. Discuss the materials with the participants and ask especially about the possible strategies and solutions to the different problems of educational inequality raised.
5. If you consider it appropriate, expose and openly discuss the theoretical concepts of the MILC method.

The workshop is the methodological opportunity to be able to put in parenthesis the asepsis of qualitative techniques, to be more directive and explicit. The generated data can be valuable to validate previously observed trends.

Before starting with the Workshop please check that the participants consent verbally at this point to have the interview and whether they are happy to have the interview audio recorded. This is important for accuracy in representation.

If your workshop involves the use of graphic materials to comment on, it is preferable that the recording be in audio-visual format.

After the Workshop

We suggest to establish a code for the Workshop following the code established in the preceding techniques: Research Institution code+underscore+Date(XX.XX.XXXX)+CodeTechnique*underscore+number of Workshop.

Example: UCM_12.04.2022_WS01

Planning for analysis

Each PIONEERED partner will be asked to do an analysis of their Workshop data through the elaboration of a brief report (3 to 5 pages). Please undertake your interviews and analysis in the most appropriate language for your cases, however, we will ask for your report for each task to be in English.

The suggested structure of the report is:

1. Brief description of the development of the technique including problems and successes.
2. The most relevant dilemmas and discussions emerged.
3. Possible solutions and strategies suggested.
4. Main conclusions (one page).

6.2.4 WP 5 How to DATA ANALYSIS 5.1a and 5.1b

This document provides guidance for preparing a country report required in:

- **Task 5.1: Exploring stakeholders' knowledge and experiences of current practices that aim to tackle educational inequality in each country.**
- **Task 5.2: International comparison of the findings on stakeholder knowledge with regard to practices to overcome educational inequalities in each country.**

This analytical work will contribute to the following deliverables:

- **D5.1: Report about stakeholder knowledge about current practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities in each country.**
- **D5.2: Working paper (scientific): Existing programme and non-programme related pioneering practices tackling/reducing educational inequalities from a comparative perspective.**
- **D5.3: Workshop on pioneering practices in reducing educational inequality, developing practical tools that foster equitable educational access and participation within education and society.**

1. *Planning for analysis: country report*

Each PIONEERED partner is asked to prepare a report which should include a description of their own fieldwork data (6 interviews and 2 focus groups), supported by data (transcript quotes) to evidence the arguments being made, using this framework provided by UCM/UIB. The report should have an extension of 8-10 pages and should include a one to two pages executive summary.

While the transcription and analysis should be carried out in the most appropriate language for your cases, the report to be sent to task leaders should be in English.

Please also indicate if interviews and/or focus groups have been carried out face-to face or online.

For doing the analysis and writing the country report we propose a stepwise procedure comprising three steps of analysis:

- **First step:** you analyze your **stakeholder interviews** in accordance with the analytical coding structure proposed below.
- **Second step:** you carry out an analysis of your **focus groups interviews** in accordance with the analytical coding structure proposed below.
- **Third step:** when you have completed your coding template for both the stakeholder interviews and the FG interviews, please write your **country report (8-10 pages)** summarizing key findings from the stakeholder and focus group interviews. Here we encourage partners to look out for **commonalities/similarities** but also to highlight and comment on patterns of **differences** in the coding templates of the stakeholder and FG interview data regarding the analytical codes.

2. Interview and focus group: methodological clarification

Although the interviews intend to cover a discourse with a more individual perspective based on narratives close to the self-report, the focus group is a more dynamic technique, methodologically designed to capture discursive interactions and to elicit collective knowledge about specific topics (Silverman 2020: 220). Its collective and interactive dimension makes this research technique an opportunity to detect the configurations of the fundamental points of consensus and dissent around social problems.

3. Coding guidance and analysis

The following analytical coding structure was developed from the reflections provided by D2.3. Please use these headline or main codes to undertake your content analysis, using your own preferred approach, method and analytical software. Based on D2.3 five common codes are proposed here which should help guiding the analysis of your interview data and to organize the information. As proposed, please use these codes to analyse **first** your stakeholder interview and **after** your focus groups interview data set. Please also include any further sub-code in ‘others’ if there is a very specific gap not covered in existing codes.

The following five general codes (for both interviews and focus groups) build the frame of analysis of during the individual and focus group interviews:

- a. **General conceptions about educational inequality:** In this dimension, please extract the main understandings of educational inequalities as well as other relevant notions about inequality.
- b. **Reducing educational inequalities:** In this dimension, collect the main tools mentioned by stakeholders during the interview and focus group discussion to reduce educational inequality. Please, also put special emphasis on highlighting successful and unsuccessful strategies based on stakeholders’ experiences or knowledge.
- c. **Pioneering Practices:** Here your analysis should aim on the following aspects:
 - i. reconstructing the understanding of pioneering practices concerning educational inequalities,
 - ii. reconstructing the fundamental aims of a proper “pioneering practice”,
 - iii. collecting relevant practical examples provided by the stakeholders.
- d. **MILC dimensions:** Here your analysis should explore references to multilevel analysis and understandings among stakeholders, intersectionality framing and live course perspectives (MILC approach).
- e. **Main dilemmas:** Partners are encouraged to look out for controversies, dilemmas and contradictions in arguments concerning a) understandings and conceptions of educational inequality and b) consensus and dissent/disagreement concerning strategies for tackling educational inequality. Finally, your analysis should be attentive to explicitly or implicitly proposed solutions to the main challenges and dilemmas of tackling educational inequalities in your reference setting (national, regional or local).

Interviews analysis grid

*Please fill an independent grid for each interview.

Table 1. Interview Analysis Dimensions and Codes

DIMENSIONS	COMMON CODES	ANALYSIS (to be filled by the analysts)	QUOTATIONS (quotes that illustrate and support the analysis)
Conceptions about educational inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of educational inequalities - Other main notions about inequality suggested by the stakeholder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How is educational inequality understood by the different stakeholders? -What stakeholder of what institution took special interest in which topic/ question? -What kind of public discussion or controversy, dilemmas do stakeholders identify in reducing educational inequality? -How do different stakeholders think about reducing education inequality? -Are there target groups? -Which types of inequality are addressed (access/treatment/ outcome)? 	
Reducing educational inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tools or approaches to reduce educational inequality. - Successful and unsuccessful strategies suggested by the stakeholder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What tools or approaches contemporarily exist? -What are their main characteristics? -What are their advantages and/or shortcomings? -What is needed to tackle educational inequality? 	
Pioneering Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of pioneered practices concerning educational inequalities. - Aims of a pioneered practice - Going beyond taken-for-granted approaches - Practical cases and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Which kinds of existing practices are labeled “pioneering”? -How can these practices be described? -What are core domains or central issues of pioneering practices? -What exactly is regarded as new? 	

MILC dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multilevel analysis - Intersectionalities - Live course analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are there any implicit or explicit hints to MILC understandings among stakeholders? -Are dimensions of MILC considered while implementing measures tackling educational inequalities? 	
Main dilemmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main challenges - Dilemmas that have arisen - Possible solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Here we are interested in contradictory processes and dilemmas within professional practice regarding a) types of practices (e.g., participatory vs non-participatory and b) real practice dilemmas (e.g., intentional practice vs unintentional or emergent practice. 	
Others	-		

Focus group analysis grid

*Please fill an independent grid for each focus group:

Table 2. Focus Groups Analysis Dimensions and Codes

DIMENSIONS	COMMON CODES	ANALYSIS (to be filled by the analysts)	QUOTATIONS (quotes that illustrate and support the analysis)
Conceptions about education and inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of educational inequalities - Other main notions about inequality suggested by the stakeholder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How is educational inequality understood by the different stakeholders? -What stakeholder of what institution took special interest in which topic/ question? -What kind of public discussion or controversy, dilemmas do stakeholders identify in reducing educational inequality? -How do different 	

		<p>stakeholders think about reducing education inequality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are there target groups? -Which types of inequality are addressed (access/treatment/outcome)? 	
Reducing educational inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tools or approaches to reduce educational inequality. - Successful and unsuccessful strategies suggested by the stakeholder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What tools or approaches contemporarily exist? -What are their main characteristics? -What are their advantages and/or shortcomings? -What is needed to tackle educational inequality? 	
Pioneering Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of pioneered practices concerning educational inequalities. - Aims of a pioneered practice - Going beyond taken-for-granted approaches - Practical cases and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Which kinds of existing practices are labeled “pioneering”? -How can these practices be described? -What are core domains or central issues of pioneering practices? -What exactly is regarded as new? 	
MILC dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multilevel analysis - Intersectionalities - Live course analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are there any implicit or explicit hints to MILC understandings among stakeholders? -Are dimensions of MILC considered while implementing measures tackling educational inequalities? 	
Main dilemmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main challenges - Dilemmas that have arisen collectively - Possible solutions 	<p>-Here we are interested in contradictory processes and dilemmas within professional practice regarding a) types of practices (e.g., participatory vs non-participatory and b) real practice dilemmas (e.g., intentional practice vs</p>	

		unintentional or emergent practice.	
Others	-		

4. The structure of the country report

Following the principle of maintaining an open approach but trying, at the same time, to allow country comparison of results, we will develop reports made up of three parts:

1. Findings (six pages)
2. Contextualization (one page)
3. Summary (one page)

1. Findings (six pages)

The first part explains and develops the information collected on the grids. It will include the main quotations regarding common codes, and will be structured in two subsections: *Interviews analysis report* and *focus groups analysis report*.

2. Contextualization (one page)

This part provides contextualisation (“thick descriptions”) based on the considerations in WP3 and WP2 (comp. D2.3):

- Descriptions of the type of welfare regime/educational system in the partner countries (national context).
- Results from WP3 regarding policy should be used to contextualise data from each partner country. You can focus on the "inequality debates" in the partner countries and say something to the relation between the stakeholders view and policy analyses (WP3): Are the topics addressed in the interviews issues in the political field/ official measurements?

3. Summary (one page)

The third part, made up of a one-page executive brief summary that refers to the common codes of the analysis, pointing out and highlighting the main findings and conclusions of the analysis. Using the analysis developed through the grids, the executive summary should be able to summarize – in a neat manner – the core results of the analysis.

Stakeholder interviews analysis report

The description should be organized according to the *Interviews analysis grid*: Analysis focusing on “common codes” and undergirded/substantiated with most relevant exemplary quotations.

The reflections provided here should reflect individual stakeholder perspectives with main focus on similarities (acknowledging nuances) or common perspectives and differences.

The different profiles of the key stakeholders interviewed should be also identified. A summary of this information should be provided in table (Table 3).

Table 3. STRUCTURAL SAMPLE: INTERVIEWS

Country: Research Institution:				
Expert name	Stakeholder's Institution	Interest group (educators, policy makers, academics, families...)	Educational Stage	Justification (Short text)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Focus groups analysis report

The description should be organized according to the *Focus group interview analysis grid*: It should include a brief written summary of the content, reflecting the most relevant information (organized according to the “common codes”), and a set of quotations.

The information identified in this section should reflect group discourses, reflecting similarities (acknowledging nuances) and differences.

The different profiles should be also anonymously identified. A summary of the structural sample of each Focus Group should be provided in a table (Table 4).

Table 4. STRUCTURAL SAMPLE: FOCUS GROUP

FOCUS Group Code	<p>We suggest establishing a code for each focus group conducted following the same pattern as previous interviews:</p> <p>Research Institution code + underscore + Date(XX.XX.XXXX) + underscore + CodeTechnique(FG) + number of group (01 to 02).</p> <p>Example: <i>UCM_11.03.22_FG02; UIB_25.02.22_FG01</i></p>
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Number of participants	N= _____
Gender	Number of male participants: _____ Number of female participants: _____
Role or (type) of stakeholder	_____; _____; _____; _____; _____; _____; _____; _____;
How long they have been working/active in the field	____; ____; ____; ____; ____; ____; ____; ____;

Key dates

Research activity	Timeline
Report writing by PIONEERED partners	15th April 2022
Cross-context analysis by UCM/UIB	30th May 2022

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