Early School Leaving Prevention and Engaging Parents from Ethnic Minority and Migrant Backgrounds: Key Issues and Guiding Principles Across 9 European City Municipalities

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Abstract

The aim of this report is to inform future strategic planning for the 9 European city municipalities in the PREVENT project regarding early school leaving prevention and parental involvement in relation to ethnic minorities and migrants. This report is based on the responses of PREVENT municipalities to questions regarding their strategic role for facilitating and further developing parental involvement of ethnic minorities and migrants in their children and young people’s education, for prevention of early school leaving. It is also based on a number of site visits to the projects in municipalities and on international research in this area. This report builds on the research that informed the main Policy Recommendations Report (Downes 2014) for the PREVENT project. This main report addressed a range of key themes all of which are also relevant for ethnic minorities and migrants. Focus for current purposes is mainly on issues where municipalities can intervene in this area, though broader issues at national level are also discussed.

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Key areas requiring attention and action from municipalities highlighted in this report include: Teacher Preservice and Inservice: Supports to Develop Teachers’ Cultural Competence, Awareness of Diversity and Second-Language Teaching Skills; Municipalities’ Role in Challenging Grade Retention Strategies in Schools that can Impact on Migrants and Ethnic Minorities; Municipality Support for Early Childhood Services; Mediating Structures for Social and Emotional Support. A range of issues requiring strategic focus are with regard to the following guiding principles for municipalities and schools: Collaboration and Representation; Parity of Esteem and Building on Strengths; Illegality of School Segregation; Commitment to Dialogue and Cross-Agency Cooperation: Avoidance of Diffusion of Responsibility.

Municipalities can facilitate communication between ethnic minority parents across schools to connect parent associations that may already currently exist. They can provide outreach spaces in the community, in welcoming and accessible locations for ethnic minority groups and migrants in order to build bridges to them socially, as well as educationally. They can foster approaches to develop parent mutual peer support processes. It is evident from the range of municipality responses that many municipalities have no or very few ethnic minority teachers in their schools. This requires change and strategic planning involving municipalities and educational institutions for this change. The lack of substantive representation of ethnic minorities and migrants, including NGOs representing them, on some (though by no means all) of the PREVENT Local Support Groups for their Local Action Plans for parental involvement for early school leaving is a serious concern. It impinges upon key principles of representation, collaboration and dialogue.
The municipality also needs to lead the professional development of staff in community based services it funds which have direct work with marginalised ethnic minority groups and migrants to ensure they are working with them according to progressive principles - and not based on deficit labelling and discriminatory viewpoints which may exist in the wider population more generally, in at least some cities. During our PREVENT visit to a predominantly Roma residential area district Předlice, in a suburb of Usti, Czech Republic, the PREVENT group were shown a Primary school Předlice that we were told was basically a segregated Roma school. Such a segregated school is in clear violation of human rights, namely the right to education of Roma students in non-segregated schools, recognised by the European Court of Human Rights.

More dialogue is needed at national and municipality level with key stakeholders such as parents and NGO’s representing ethnic minorities and migrants about ways to delay potentially damaging and premature selections processes (such as those in Germany and the Netherlands). This policy dialogue with ethnic minorities is also needed regarding policy and practice change to grade retention strategies which have already been highlighted to be strongly criticised in international research as being detrimental to students’ learning, motivation and wellbeing, thereby impacting also on early school leaving. Municipalities can play a key role in documenting the scale of grade retention activities taking place in their local schools, with a particular impact upon migrants and ethnic minorities. This can also help identify more progressive initiatives at school levels in those schools that do not use this strategy. For future dialogue with relevant local people from ethnic minorities, NGOs representing them and local schools, it is recommended that the municipalities consider having a number of different area based Local Support Groups for early school leaving prevention and parental involvement, rather than simply one central one. This could also help facilitate sharing
of good practice across networks of schools in the same neighbourhood and help address local issues specific to some and not other areas of a municipality.

It is evident from visits to community based lifelong learning centres and social support centres, some funded by municipalities, that expression of symbols of the cultures of origin of different ethnic groups and migrants is not yet a feature of these centres or community spaces. These visited community centres and spaces do not yet sufficiently build on the strengths of the groups they are seeking to engage with and support. A number of the municipality responses did not specify a concrete lead agency who coordinates and builds bridges to other agencies for the support of parents and children as migrants and ethnic minorities. Many responses to this question on a lead agency referred to more than one organisation. There needs to be a clearly defined role for leadership and coordination of system responses in each municipality and this must be communicated to migrants and ethnic minorities as part of an active outreach process rather than waiting for migrants, for example, to find the relevant office.
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Acknowledgments

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Responsibility for any errors and omissions in the report rests with the author.
Aim

The aim of this report is to inform future strategic planning for the municipalities in the PREVENT project regarding early school leaving prevention and parental involvement in relation to ethnic minorities and migrants. This report is subsequent to the development of municipalities’ Local Action Plans for parental involvement for early school leaving prevention. It seeks to offer a basis to improve upon current strategic development in this area for the municipalities.

Method

This report is based on the responses of PREVENT municipalities to questions regarding their strategic role for facilitating and further developing parental involvement of ethnic minorities and migrants in their children and young people’s education, for prevention of early school leaving. As part of the research, the author conducted a number of site visits to the following municipalities, Antwerp, Gijon, The Hague, Munich, Nantes, Usti, in his role as thematic expert to the PREVENT project. The report is also based on international research in this area and builds on the research that informed the main Policy Recommendations Report (Downes 2014) for the PREVENT project.
Scope

This report examines issues regarding parental involvement for early school leaving prevention with regard to ethnic minorities and migrants in 9 European cities’ municipalities. It is designed to supplement the main Policy Recommendations Report, *Towards a Differentiated, Holistic and Systemic Approach to Parental Involvement in Europe for Early School Leaving Prevention* for the Urbact PREVENT project. This main report addressed a range of key themes all of which are also relevant for ethnic minorities and migrants. The focus of this supplementary report is on additional issues of distinct relevance affecting ethnic minorities and migrants concerning parental involvement and early school leaving prevention. As many additional issues of distinct relevance are context specific to particular countries and municipalities, the scope of this report pertains primarily specifically to the 9 participating municipalities in the PREVENT project. These issues may be of relevance in a wider EU context, though that is only a secondary aim of this particular report. The PREVENT project municipalities are from Antwerp (Belgium-Flanders), Gijon (Spain), The Hague (Netherlands), Munich (Germany), Nantes (France), Sofia (Bulgaria), Stockholm (Sweden), Tallinn (Estonia), Usti (Czech Republic)\(^2\).

The scope of this review report is further limited, as it is not based on research directly with parents, students or schools in the participating municipalities. It is based predominantly on responses of the 9 municipalities in the PREVENT project to a range of questions. Therefore the scope of this report is to address a number of strategic issues to guide policy and action across these municipalities. It does not purport to be a

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\(^2\) Catania (Italy – Sicily) was included in the main Policy Recommendations Report but did not participate in this supplementary report
comprehensive overview of required approaches and issues even in these 9 municipality contexts. A recent EU Commission study across 15 countries has identified four types of educational support policies that facilitate the integration of Newly Arrived Migrant Students in their education systems: linguistic support, academic support, outreach and cooperation and intercultural education (PPMI 2013). Another more comprehensive review at EU level is the NESEE report on these issues (Heckman 2008). Focus for current purposes is mainly on issues where municipalities can intervene in this area, though broader issues at national level are also adverted to.
A. Introduction: Specificity of Context

There is a growing critique in the international research literature of approaches which seek to classify disparate groups of people in homogenous terms, such as classifying them as migrants or in broad categories of ethnicity. People are not born as migrants and such an essentialising label that emphasises only this dimension of a person’s identity is a reductive simplification (see Kitching 2014). A migrant family is one in which at least one of the parents was born outside of the country of residence (Crosnoe & Fuligni 2012). This invites the further question as to the status and needs of migrants from other EU countries and from non-EU countries. As a recent report for the EU Commission
states, ‘Newly arrived migrant students are a new target group that has not yet been explicitly identified and defined within EU policy-making and that of many European countries’ (PPMI 2013). Migrants are from often hugely diverse backgrounds. Similarly, approaches for ethnic diversity also need to recognise that even those of a common ethnic background may have quite different educational and socio-economic background profiles in different countries. Dogra et al. (2012) highlight ‘flaws’ in research ‘such as combining disparate ethnic groups, and treating all Black and minority ethnic communities as homogenous and merely different from a homogenous White majority’ (p.265).

This variation in context of the kind of needs of ethnic minorities is evident, even at a cursory glance to contrast the needs of, for example, the Roma in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, with Moslems in France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. Again issues that may arise for Moslems in, for example, France, in light of the Charlie Hebdo killings, require differentiation from other countries, together with further contextual specificity across cities compared with whole countries. Some of these issues, such as racism in relation to ethnic minorities in France, are taking place in rapidly changing contexts that require close attention to local factors. Without a detailed assessment of needs at a local school, community and municipality level, this report can only raise provisional issues for consideration, many of which involve search for further local knowledge. Nevertheless, a range of key issues pertaining to principles, processes and structures can and will be identified to help guide municipality policy and strategy in this area.
It must be further recognised that other contextual differences apply across the 9 participating PREVENT municipalities. Some countries, such as France, legally prohibit ethnically specific data collection and seek to operate a State policy of ethnic blindness in the name of commitment to formal equality before the law. Other countries, such as Sweden, offer a legal commitment to educational support in the mother tongue of ethnic minorities. To illustrate a further contextual difference, the Czech Republic has been found to be in violation of EU law regarding the discriminatory practice of disproportionate streaming of Roma children into remedial special schools in the case of *DH and others v Czech Republic* 2007 (see also O’Higgins & Bruggemann 2014). The Roma population constitutes the largest ethnic minority in Europe, in total being close to 12 million citizens (Rostas & Kostka 2014). The illegality of educational segregation of Romani children has been demonstrated in the European Court of Human Rights by judgments in *DH and others v Czech Republic* (2007), Sampanis v. Greece (2008), Orsus v. Croatia (2010), Sampani v. Greece (2012) and Horvath and Kis v. Hungary (2013) all of which rejected ethnic segregation in mainstream schools and the placing of Romani students in special schools for children with mental disabilities (Rostas & Kostka 2014). As Curcic et al., (2014) highlight, facing public and political opposition, the Czech Ministry of Education stopped the elaboration of the National Plan for Inclusive Education during the 2010-2012 period. They also point out that Roma face the most negative perceptions and stereotypes from the majority population in Spain (Curcic et al., 2014).

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3 In Sweden, teaching in the child’s mother tongue in primary and secondary school often takes place in the child’s school if there are three or more learning the same language. In upper secondary, sometimes the student has to travel to another school. Besides education in mother tongue, a student can also have support from a mother tongue teacher to get through the Swedish literature in science, social science etc. once a week or during ordinary lessons.
In the EU in 2010 there were 25.9% of foreign born students leaving early from education and training against 13% of native ones (PPMI 2013). It is also be emphasised that it is vital not to construct ethnic minorities and migrants in deficit terms. Any focus on their distinct needs in a given municipality and educational system requires an approach that builds on their strengths and which celebrates diversity. US and UK research highlights that many ethnic minority groups and migrants are, despite socio-economic and language-related obstacles, doing better than the children of native-born parents on most developmental indicators (Garcia-Coll & Marks 2011). In the words of Crosnoe & Fuligni (2012), ‘diversity in outcomes related to diversity in sending and receiving contexts is the order of the day’ (p.1473). It is important also to note that not all migrants identify with their original ethnic background (Dogra et al. 2012). Moreover, multiracial individuals may be mistakenly perceived as monoracial members of their minority groups (Ho et al., 2011) (see also May et al., 2004 on hybridity of identities).

In a Spanish context, Merino & Garcia (2011) recognise that it is harder for migrant students to obtain the compulsory education certificate, though they also highlight that the heterogeneity of migrants in terms of their ethnic origin and migrant generation has not been addressed sufficiently in the explanation of their early school leaving. Curcic et al., (2014) observe an excessive level of early school leaving for Roma in Spain, ‘especially by the time the students reach the secondary grades’ (p.262). Garaz (2014) contrasts the variance in education levels between Roma minorities in different European countries in comparison with the general population. Students whose parents have completed at least lower secondary education reaches 79% in Bulgaria for the general population compared with 64% for Roma; it is 87% compared with 56% in
the Czech Republic. In other words, the 31% difference between Roma and the general population whose parents have completed at least lower secondary education in the Czech Republic is double the 15% difference in Bulgaria.

To illustrate the contextual specificity of needs of even the same ethnic minority across different European countries, findings from the European Ties project in relation to ethnic Turkish students are revealing. Variation in early school leaving across Turkish second generation students with low-educated parents was focused upon in the European Ties project. Here it was found that there was notable differences across European countries. For example, 8% of Turkish second generation students with parents with low levels of education left school early in Sweden, this rose to 16% in France, 26% in the Netherlands and to 32% in Belgium, 33% in Germany (Herzog-Punzenberger 2015). Therefore even the same ethnic group cannot be assumed to be at the same level of need across different European countries. A similar profile of notable variation is observed for access to higher education for Turkish second generation students with parents with low levels of education in these countries (Herzog-Punzenberger 2015). Other factors associated with educational dimensions of even the same ethnic minority in different countries can also be observed with regard to variations in age of entry into education and age of first selection processes based on performance (Herzog-Punzenberger 2015).

Table 1. Education Levels of Turkish Second Generation Students with Parents with Low Education Levels (Herzog-Punzenberger 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower Secondary or Below</th>
<th>Upper Secondary and Vocational</th>
<th>PostSecondary and Tertiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brussels</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antwerp</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paris 12.5 36.4 51.1
Strasbourg 23.8 51.6 24.6
Stockholm 7.0 56.1 36.8
Frankfurt 34.1 63.8 2.2
Berlin 36.8 60.2 3.0
Rotterdam 37.2 42.5 20.4
Amsterdam 31.0 43.0 26.0

B. Additional Aspects of Themes from Policy Recommendations Report (Downes 2014) that require further consideration with regard to the needs of migrants and ethnic minorities

Table 2 summarises the key themes of the main PREVENT Policy Recommendations report (Downes 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>- Outreach (Community and Individual)</th>
<th>- Health</th>
<th>- Promoting Democratic Systems in School – Inclusive Systems as Emotional-Relational Communicative Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Family Support Outreach for Mental Health, Emotional Support and School Attendance</td>
<td>2.1 Sleep Difficulties of Pupils</td>
<td>3.1 Communication between Parents and Teachers, including Parental Involvement in School Policy Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Family Literacy Outreach</td>
<td>2.2 Alternatives to Suspension/Expulsion from School: From Structures of Exclusion to</td>
<td>3.2 Communication between Students and Teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While all of these issues are directly relevant to ethnic minorities and migrants, the question arises as to additional aspects of these themes that require further consideration with regard to the needs of migrants and ethnic minorities.
Communication between Students and Teachers

Teacher Preservice and Inservice: Supports to Develop Teachers’ Cultural Competence, Awareness of Diversity and Second-Language Teaching Skills

The EU Commission Staff Working Paper on early school leaving (2010) highlights the need for development of teachers’ relational and diversity approaches:

School-wide strategies focus on improving the overall school climate and making schools places where young people feel comfortable, respected and responsible…While these schools usually rely on a handful of dedicated and committed teachers who choose to stay despite the difficulties, it is essential that teacher education prepares future teachers to deal with diversity in the classroom, with pupils
from disadvantaged social backgrounds and with difficult teaching situations. It is also essential to improve school climate and working conditions - especially in disadvantaged areas (p. 23).

Acknowledged subsequently in the Council Recommendation (2011), the Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation in relation to early school leaving further highlighted this issue of teacher professional development:

Supporting and empowering teachers in their work with pupils at risk is a pre-requisite to successful measures at school level. Targeted teacher training helps them to deal with diversity in the classroom, to support pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and to solve difficult teaching situations (p. 12).

The Commission’s Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving Prevention Report (2013) develops these themes:

Initial and continuous education for education staff: The quality of teaching and the competences of the teachers are a determining factor in the contribution teachers can make to reducing ESL. High quality teaching and learning calls for the continuous professional development of teaching staff. Adopting a learner centred approach in teacher education with a focus on diversity and inclusion is recommended. Teachers should be capable of identifying different learning styles and pupils’ needs and be equipped with the skills to adopt inclusive and student-focused methods, including conflict resolution skills to promote a positive classroom climate. Teachers should be supported in dealing with diversity in terms of the social and ethnic background of pupils… (p.20).

This report continues:
Support to teachers: Developing the capacity of school staff to create and maintain learning environments that support at-risk pupils is of crucial importance to reducing ESL. Teachers may need support to develop and adapt different methodologies and skills to meet the needs of individual pupils. (TWG 2013, p.22)

Thus, there is a clear emerging European and international consensus about the need for conflict resolution skills and diversity awareness training for teachers (Downes 2013).

PISA results regarding feeling of belongingness and being an outside at school are relevant for some of those ethnic minority students and migrants who fall within the classification of being ‘disadvantaged’. They are an indicator of school and classroom climate across national contexts.
Table 3. Percentage of socio-economically ‘disadvantaged’ students who agree/disagree with the following statements (PISA 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>I feel like I belong at school</th>
<th>I feel like an outsider (or left out of things at school)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>S.E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>(1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>(1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>(1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>(1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>(1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>(0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>(1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>(1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>(1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>(1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>(0.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Particular concerns must be noted here for the context of France regarding students’ sense of belongingness. Belgium is another country with notably low scores on this dimension in an international context. Both Sweden and the Czech Republic reveal scores that are below the OECD average on this dimension. While this highlights the need for school climate interventions at systemic levels, especially in these countries, the scores across other countries still leave room for further development for inclusive systems.

Another relevant issue to be addressed at teacher preservice and inservice is the quality and extent to which teachers are trained in second language acquisition. A recent report for the EU Commission states:

A lack of focus on second language acquisition as a distinct competence and the low status of the language support courses are often reported as issues for teachers. To increase the number of qualified specialist teachers in second language development, some countries have introduced this as a subject of pre-service and in-service training. Training of teachers can be easily organised both in centralised and decentralised systems; however, in centralised education system there are more favourable factors for compulsory practice. (PPMI 2013, p.94)

This report continues:
It is important that not only language teachers receive training for working with immigrant children, but subject teachers as well. It is advisable that subject and specialised language teachers are working together so that teaching of academic subjects and language happen in a coordinated way, which can also help avoiding the delay of academic learning due to the low language proficiency. (PPMI 2013, p.95)

The Commission’s TWG report (2013) seeks ‘Better integration of newly arrived migrant children: Children from newly arrived migrant families need targeted support to acquire the language of tuition and to catch up with the curriculum. Inclusive learning environments can support their integration and increase their educational success’.

Municipalities may be in a position to play a leadership role in the promotion and development of such inservice courses for teachers, as well as in engaging in dialogue with teacher education institutions, including universities, about these aspects as core elements of teacher preservice preparation.
The EU Commission’s TWG report (2013) recommends that migrant children be placed within the same age group as their native peers to ensure their successful inclusion. In France, Germany and the Netherlands, migrants as well as native students commonly repeat a grade, while in other countries, this practice is very rare (Borodankova & de Almeida Coutinho 2011). The educational attainment of migrant students is better in comprehensive systems with late selection of students to different ability tracks and worse in systems of high selectivity (Heckman 2008). Early testing and grouping of students according to their academic abilities contributes to inequality of educational opportunities for disadvantaged children (OECD Reviews of Migrant Education 2010).
Municipalities can play a key role in documenting the scale of grade retention activities taking place in their local schools, with a particular impact upon migrants and ethnic minorities. This can also help identify more progressive initiatives at school levels in those schools that do not use this strategy. Municipalities can document and disseminate good practice in this area across schools to influence schools to minimise this practice, a practice recognised internationally as being detrimental to students. This issue is also relevant to teacher preservice and inservice as it requires development of teachers’ capacity for differentiated teaching – for teaching different levels of ability at different paces with differentiated lesson objectives during the same lesson.

**Municipality Support for Early Childhood Services**

Community based early childhood education and family support centres were a major theme of the PREVENT Policy Recommendations Report (Downes 2014), with a focus on Community Lifelong Learning Centres as an outreach approach to promote cultural bridges and cultural identity in school systems as well as family literacy outreach. This point needs to be accentuated for early years second language learning of ethnic minorities and migrants. Heckmann (2008) cites the following studies on the benefits of early childhood services for future educational development of migrant children: Spies, Büchel and Wagner (2003) found that attending kindergarten in Germany substantially increased the
likelihood of migrant children attending higher level secondary schools. Schofield (2006, 100) notes that the PISA studies confirmed that the 15 year olds in many countries who had attended forms of preschool education scored substantially better than those who did not. The Heckmann (2008) report’s first recommendation is to install an effective preschool system and child care system; it improves the educational opportunities, attainment and school careers of migrant students.

Mediating structures for social and emotional support
Mediating structures between the State and families for social and emotional support was an issue highlighted in the Policy Recommendations report (Downes 2014), including through a lifelong learning focus to develop Community Lifelong Learning Centres as Outreach Cultural Bridges and Identity in School Systems. Isolation and lack of social and instrumental support is an issue highlighted in research regarding migrants. In a Dutch study involving migrants from more than 10 different nationalities with regard to perceived social support after a disaster, it was found that 4 years after the disaster a third of the affected immigrant group felt that they did not have one single person to talk to and they had no one with whom they could share their emotional problems (Drogendijk et al. 2011). A Norwegian study found that Pakistani migrants had a lower level of social support than native Norwegians (Syad et al. 2006)⁴.

Main findings from visiting Munich (reported by Tallinn, Antwerp and Nantes municipalities) were a clear cooperation concept with the parents, recognising the importance of running the long day groups, parents’ cafes – taking into account the parents’ possibilities. This an example of a key outreach mediating structure for social and emotional support relevant to ethnic minorities and migrant parents. The Parents Association of the school Di Donato, Italy, is another good practice example of involving parents highlighted by a recent EU report:

The “Parents’ Association” in addition to Italian language courses organizes also the courses of English, Arab and Chinese, which are accessible not only for students of migrant origin, but also for the parents of students, both of Italian and not-Italian origin. The “Parents’ Association”, which grew up from the initiative of students’ parents in 2003, is very active at the level of school (physically it shares the

⁴ See also the Nantes municipality response on ‘Risk of isolation’ as one of the main difficulties of ethnic minorities and migrants.
spaces of the school) as well as in the broader local context. Currently it counts around 100 members. Many parents of migrant origin participate actively in the association and contribute to the organization of different activities, which span from game room and spaces of art, to catching up activities, intercultural events and sports. Parents of different students of migrant origin (Morocco, Argentina, Bangladesh, Philippines, China and others) take active part and manage themselves some of the existing activities. In some cases also grandparents of students are actively involved in the activities.’ (PPMI 2013, p.106)

Municipalities can play a key role here in three aspects. Firstly, they can facilitate communication between ethnic minority parents across schools to connect parent associations that may already currently exist. Secondly, they can provide outreach spaces in the community, in welcoming and accessible locations for ethnic minority groups and migrants in order to build bridges to them socially, as well as educationally. Thirdly, they can foster approaches to develop parent mutual peer support processes.
C. Responses from Municipalities to Key Questions
Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
<th>Country response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the three biggest difficulties/problems migrants and/or ethnic minorities in your municipality have in relation to early school leaving and parental involvement? ANSWERS TO QUESTION 1 ARE ON SEPARATE TABLE BELOW</td>
<td>We have a Somalian organisation who is very involved in a lot of things connected to children’s upbringing. They work very close to the City District. They hold courses in different matters, they work together with schools and they do “Nightwalking” Friday and Saturday nights to make the neighbourhood safer and so on. Every year they have an event with Well, we think. We have focused on that parental group.</td>
<td>We have a Somalian organisation who is very involved in a lot of things connected to children’s upbringing. They work very close to the City District. They hold courses in different matters, they work together with schools and they do “Nightwalking” Friday and Saturday nights to make the neighbourhood safer and so on. Every year they have an event with Well, we think. We have focused on that parental group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any examples of good practice for working with migrants and/or ethnic minorities in your municipality (that are not already in the Good Practice Sourcebook)?</td>
<td>Yes but not enough. We are going to start a reference group with just parents to have more input from them. In long term we hope that the groups will join each</td>
<td>Yes but not enough. We are going to start a reference group with just parents to have more input from them. In long term we hope that the groups will join each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do your LAPs address specific needs of migrants and/or ethnic minorities?</td>
<td>No. But our City district have Citizen Centre were you can get help with a lot of things. They also give information evenings about different matters occasionally.</td>
<td>No. But our City district have Citizen Centre were you can get help with a lot of things. They also give information evenings about different matters occasionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are migrants and/or ethnic minorities represented directly on your Local Support Group?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a lead agency coordinating migrants needs in your municipality, if so, what is its name?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there is data on migrants and/or ethnic minorities early school leaving rates in your municipality can you please provide this?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there is data or estimates of the percentage of teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds in schools in your municipality can you please provide this?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
parents, headmasters and local politicians to celebrate the best Somalian girl and boy with highest grades from secondary and upper secondary (gymnasium). Even the Minister of integration has attended two years in a row.

| The Hague | See below | No, we do not have a migrant or ethnic minority approach. We tread every one as an individual and if there are migrant problems we treat them as a person with migrant problems. | Not specific, it is a fact that all schools in the Hague have to deal with parents from different backgrounds, cultures and languages, so we promote parents to help each other | In The Hague the population contains all sort of people from multiple cultural and ethnic background, so, yes, some ethnic minorities / migrants are represented in our Local Support Group but they are there because of their work or knowledge and not because of their background | The municipality of The Hague has a small department of integration issues and there are several platforms from people of the same background (Polish, Moroccan, Antillean, etc) who tried to improve things for their own members. | In The Hague there are on a yearly basis approx. 1200 early school leavers. Among them are a lot of students from ethnic or migrant background* | Sorry, no data on that one |

| Sofia | See below | Sure, Sofia Municipality has a local policy and many examples of good practices for working | Our Local development plan covered three models | Our Local Support group has involvement | Regarding refugees: ü At the state level - Agency for Refugees, which has structures at | According an official data the refugees number (with received status) are over 500 Unofficially awaiting refugee status are over 1000; there is also informally increases wave | Yes, there are teachers with Roma origin on |
| with migrants and ethnic minorities, but all of them are related only to group of people with are registered and have statute of refugees or ethnic minorities. | with measures for educational integration (which are probated and realized at school level) These measures are designed to address registered ethnic minorities, refugees and/or immigrants which are able to get support according EU and national legislation. Such measures include - individual planning support to social, health and educational needs, training of professionals who work in this area, activities and programs to involve of Roma mediators / teachers who work with ethnic group (Roma kids and parents). | local level - At local level - centres for social work and public support Regarding ethnic minorities: ü At the state level - Commission on Human Rights and anti-discrimination ü At local level - Public Council for Ethnic Minorities, which includes representation of Roma leaders and all ethnic groups of refugees in the winter to Bulgaria as to other European countries; According to official data Roma community in Sofia is just over 6% of the population of the capital, but according to unofficial data, Roma Travellers that come in the city are much more. | of refugees in the winter to Bulgaria as to other European countries; According to official data Roma community in Sofia is just over 6% of the population of the capital, but according to unofficial data, Roma Travellers that come in the city are much more. |

At local level - centres for social work and public support Regarding ethnic minorities: ü At the state level - Commission on Human Rights and anti-discrimination ü At local level - Public Council for Ethnic Minorities, which includes representation of Roma leaders and all ethnic groups of refugees in the winter to Bulgaria as to other European countries; According to official data Roma community in Sofia is just over 6% of the population of the capital, but according to unofficial data, Roma Travellers that come in the city are much more. |

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At local level - centres for social work and public support Regarding ethnic minorities: ü At the state level - Commission on Human Rights and anti-discrimination ü At local level - Public Council for Ethnic Minorities, which includes representation of Roma leaders and all ethnic groups of refugees in the winter to Bulgaria as to other European countries; According to official data Roma community in Sofia is just over 6% of the population of the capital, but according to unofficial data, Roma Travellers that come in the city are much more. | the territory of Sofia Municipality working within the educational system; One of them is involved as a part of our ULSG; Such statistics is difficult to be presented, since most of them are presented as Bulgarian citizens and they do not indicate themselves in the official statistics or in the database that are representatives of the Roma community (it is according the right of self-determinati on); |
| Munich | See below | Various projects or supportive measures for migrants and/or ethnic minorities, which include parental education, amongst other things, are coordinated by the Department of Social Affairs, Office for Housing and Migration, Munich LAP does not focus on migrants and/or ethnic minorities but on all Munich citizens, and there live a lot of people with "migrant Yes; one member of the Munich LSG, has a migrant background. He is consultant for school education questions of | Department of Social Affairs/ Section for Housing and Migration, Office for Intercultural Work Department of Local Affairs/ Integration of migrants and homeless people | If available, provided by Section for Education Monitoring, Department of Education and Sports Status: requested | In the Sofia Municipal Council, also in the state National Assembly there are representatives of the Roma community who identify themselves as Roma, Turks and representatives of other minorities. |
and the Department of Education and Sports
• SchlaU-School (German Schulanaloger Unterricht für junge Flüchtlinge; schoolanalogue education for young refugees)
• Various projects with focus on the promotion of speaking skills
• Local (i.e. neighbourhood-oriented) education counselling tailored to the needs of migrants and/or ethnic minorities
• Integrated Counselling Centre for migrants (German Integrationsberatungszentrum Sprache und Beruf für Migratinnen und Migranten)
• Migration Counselling for adults and youngsters
• Project “Integraion macht Schule im Quartier”
• Etc.

background in Munich, anyway
• Main support schemes of the Munich LAP and former Munich basic schemes, like the scheme for inter-cultural or education (German Leitline Interkulturalität/ Leitlinie Bildung), include measures that take the needs of migrants and/or ethnic minorities into consideration

migrants. • He is also a speaker at seminars for intercultural work with parents in the educational program of the BLLV (Bavarian Teachers Association) and has worked as a language instructor for Kurdish and Turkish.

Antwerp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since the late eighties the city finances ‘the Schoolbridge’. They are for many years our most important partner in the field of parental counselling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Schoolbridge (see 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The 8 (see 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• International committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• De8 : Antwerp integration center. Since January 1st it’s part of the Antwerp agency for integration and naturalisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.de8.be">www.de8.be</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don’t have specific data on minority groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Education and Sports (municipality level)
• Status: requested
involvement. They work with schools, parents, teacher training. Nowadays it’s a diverse team of 24 educational welfare workers. Their focus is the gap between parents and schools. Although they don’t focus specifically on parents with a migrant background they mostly work with this parents.

• www.deschoolbrug.be

in Antwerp schools. School is a strange and difficult environment for parents because of differences in social background and of course it has also often to do with a migrant background. Our LAP is part of the website of the education policy department. Schools and local actors can find information about parental involvement. The key action will be a yearly event on October 15th: Day of the parent – Making school together.

(umbrella organisation for several organisation of ethnic groups)

• www.deschoolbrug.be

Nantes

See below

Inside a special Programme (PRE – We can’t say we address No

We don’t have a public agency but a department

No

No

with an ethnic minority background is an exception.
Programme pour la Réussite Educative), we organize dedicated workshops for learning French with parents and children specific needs because our recommendations are all imagined for any pupil but we can say that because many of our suggestions are directly linked to a better way for reaching parents the implementation of these will have to be adapted to concrete situations.

inside the city’s administration with a public policy, about “Migration, Integration and Diversity”, included in our municipal strategic Plan with 3 main axes:

I Ensure the inclusion of migrants in public policy Ø promote access to rights of migrants Ø promote access to rights of migrants Ø Participate in welcoming newcomers

II Promote international and intercultural “Metropole” to strengthen social cohesion and citizenship of residence Ø Foster active citizenship Ø Organize a dynamic work about the memory and history of immigration Ø strengthen the recognition of cultural diversity come asset of the international dimension of the “Metropole”

III Provide tools for local players to understand migration issues Ø realization of studies and analysis of migration Ø develop awareness raising, training and communication Ø participate in local, national and European networks
To do that, a local consulting Council –CNCA- was created with people from the municipality and migrants (Conseil Nantais pour la Citoyenneté des Etrangers). With 3 main goals:
- promote the expression of migrants, coming from outside E.U, in the life of the city
- co-produce the policy for welcoming and integration for foreign populations
- promote access for all to public policy

| Usti | See below | We state reverse scholarships and tutoring in families in the Sourcebook, apart from that we think that creation and implementation of Action plan itself is a good practice example | In our LAP mostly we take in consideration education of all kids, but in it you would find some characteristics focused on migrants or ethnic minorities in School clubs, Parents - unexpected collaborators and Reverse scholarships and Tutoring. | Yes, teachers assistant, and few parents from our target group, but not on a systematic base | There exist 2 agencies: government agency for asylum seekers and NGO called Counselling Centre for Integration http://p-p-i.cz/en/About-PPI/ | It does not exist | Exact data do not exist, but according to People in need there is not more than 10 Roma teachers, or more likely assistants of teachers |

| Gijón | See below | Secretariado Gitano works since 2008 the With all the Good | Yes they are, with the | The Municipal Office for Migrant Population | 1. ACCEM. This Association has databases of children and families only in monitoring. | No data |
PROMOCIONA PROGRAM:
The PROMOCIONA program, carried out under the Operational Program Fight against Discrimination, aimed at students who are in the final cycle of primary education and compulsory secondary education and whose main objective is to get higher rates of school success in these stages educational and promote continuity of Roma students in post-compulsory education. An ambitious program that started in the school year 2008/2009. The municipality of Gijón is carried out from that school year. It works with families where children have truancy, problems in living together, or any particular situation that affects negatively the children. ACCEM performs the following programs: Interpreters and intercultural mediators in health, social or educational services. Training for professionals / Practices related to diversity and integration participation of Secretariado Gitano (OMII.FMSS) is a service of guidance and information aimed at migrants. It offers private and public resources. It also gives advice and information in different areas (Administrative, health, housing, employment, training, etc.) and different groups (employers and employees, volunteers, social organizations, etc.)

2. ACCEM (SPANISH ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE OF MIGRATION) is an NGO dedicated to improve and more vulnerable people life conditions and especially the group of refugees, migrants and people experiencing or at risk social exclusion.

2. SECRETARIADO GITANO has a nationwide study: COMPARATIVE STUDY MARCH 2014 national data related to early school leaving in the Roma community, data is fully transferable to Gijón. This study is available on the following page and is in English.

https://www.gitanos.org/upload/92/20/EstudioSecundaria.pdf
| Tallinn | See below | Our good practices are already in the Good Practice Sourcebook | Our LAP is addressed homogeneous way to the needs of all parents. | No | We have Police and Border Guard Board on the state level. | No | No |
**Table 5.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>What are the three biggest difficulties/problems migrants and/or ethnic minorities in your municipality have in relation to early school leaving and parental involvement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country responses</td>
<td>Stockholml Little or no knowledge about what school in Sweden demands. Some parents have very little school background from their home country, some are illiterate. Or they do not understand the difference between schools in their home country compared to school in Sweden. School in Sweden has some responsibility while parents and home have other and rather big responsibilities. Parents do not know how to do without those possibilities. The children understands the differences rather quick and when they get a little bit older they starts to threaten their parents with, “if I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>To be successful in school you have to have practical experiences outside the school and away from the closest surroundings. Your theoretical experience has to be complemented by practical experience. To see, hear, taste, smell and join a different reality to transform what you have read to expand the sense of coherence. Many parents do not understand this complementary knowledge or believe that it will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Sweden we are not allowed to punish or dismiss pupils. The rules in school and the way Swedes are supposed to bring up children without physical or mental punishment is strange for many immigrants. They do not understand how to do without those possibilities. The children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Hague</strong></th>
<th>Low income, low education, bad housing and no integration in the Dutch society</th>
<th>Young immigrants do not have a proper role-model in their social circle and are not encouraged to develop themselves; even if they are, they feel resistance and discrimination when they look for jobs</th>
<th>Communication with parents is a problem because they do not always understand information given by school, teachers and social service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sofia</strong></td>
<td>A shortage of financial resources for a package of measures, not only in educational institutions, but also in social and health system</td>
<td>Administrative and legislative issues related to the legitimacy of refugees or ethnic groups (for example – the opportunities for any measures relating to the refugees are only when they receive legal status of &quot;refugees&quot; or ethnic</td>
<td>Communication issues related to the proper connection with the migrants and ethnic minorities – such as language barrier, representation and non-effective participation in policy making;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Other Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munich</td>
<td>Language barriers</td>
<td>Missing or little understanding for/appreciation of the „value” of education</td>
<td>No/ little approaches for „real” parental participation/involvement that fits to the needs of migrants and/or ethnic minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antwerp</td>
<td>School teams are generally white, middle class and female. A class group is very diversely composed. There is a big gap between school and home, teachers and parents, children and schools.</td>
<td>44% of the children that grows up in a family with one not-EU parent grow up in poverty.</td>
<td>Language problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nantes</td>
<td>Linguistic issues</td>
<td>Knowledge of schools’ organisation in general and French one in particular</td>
<td>Risk of isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usti</td>
<td>Motivation and approach of parents concerning education – there are big families with many problems in one time (housing, social benefits, debts, addictive patterns, conflicts within family</td>
<td>Often parents reached only elementary level of education – they perceive school as an institution that causes problems only</td>
<td>Parents are poor – lack of room and quiet environment for kids Parents don’t see their involvement in school preparation, homework, communication with school or support of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gijón</td>
<td>The dropout is one of the problems of the Roma and their resolution marks one of the fundamental challenges that the current education system and society in general is facing. Difficulties and problems: 1. The incidence of severe material deprivation on the development of the school year is quite significant. Problem: SEVERE POVERTY. 2. Greater drop out when lower level parent’s education. Problem: LOW PARENTAL LITERACY 3. In the case of early school leaving, it can be concluded that there is also a large influence of socioeconomic and cultural situation. Problem: CULTURAL SITUATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallinn</td>
<td>We have not addressed this topic in the frame of Prevent project.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Conclusions and Recommendations

Key areas requiring attention and action from municipalities which have been highlighted in this report include the following:

- Teacher Preservice and Inservice: Supports to Develop Teachers’ Cultural Competence, Awareness of Diversity and Second-Language Teaching Skills

- Municipalities’ Role in Challenging Grade Retention Strategies in Schools that can Impact on Migrants and Ethnic Minorities

- Municipality Support for Early Childhood Services


Other issues requiring strategic focus are with regard to the following guiding principles for municipalities and schools:

- Collaboration and Representation

- Parity of Esteem and Building on Strengths

- Illegality of School Segregation

- Commitment to Dialogue

- Cross-Agency Cooperation: Avoidance of Diffusion of Responsibility
Key Guiding Principles for Municipalities and Schools

It is proposed that each municipality engage in an ongoing self-evaluation process regarding these key principles, together with the structural indicators from the PREVENT Policy Recommendations report (Downes 2014), as a basis for ongoing reform of their activities, structures and processes, as well as of schools they are responsible for.
Collaboration and Representation

Tett et al’s (2001) discussion of collaboration between schools and community agencies in tackling social exclusion contrasts collaboration with simply ‘contracting out’ interventions and describes collaboration in terms of to ‘develop, manage, deliver, fund and evaluate’ activities. While both schools and services recognise concrete obstacles to collaboration such as space and time available, it is evident that strategies are needed to improve communication and collaboration between schools and services, while respecting the professional boundaries of each. Collaboration necessarily goes beyond tokenism and manipulation (Arnstein 1971). It involves what Arnstein (1971) describes as delegated power and citizen control. This contrast with lack of collaboration within which Arnstein would include manipulation, informing, consultation, placation and partnership. New (2011-12) refers to ‘putting Roma students in the subject position of the discourse – as the agents of action and thought rather than the object of someone else’s action and thought’ (p.52)

The lack of substantive representation of ethnic minorities and migrants⁵, including NGOs representing them, on a number of the PREVENT Local Support Groups for their Local Action Plans for parental involvement for early school leaving is a serious concern. It impinges upon key principles of representation, collaboration and dialogue. This requires systemic change in future. Allen (2005) distinguishes between “internal effectiveness of councils (i.e., the extent to which council members function effectively as a group or facilitate relationships among stakeholders)” versus “the external effectiveness of councils (i.e., the extent to which they produce needed community change”). While these

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⁵ With the exceptions of Stockholm, The Hague, Sofia, Gijon and Antwerp
Local Support Groups may have internal effectiveness, it is vital to maximise their external effectiveness through closeness to the communities they are seeking to engage with. Clearer structures of representation and processes of dialogue are needed in many municipalities to actively include NGOs and members of ethnic minority groups in policy, design and implementation of approaches for parental involvement and early school leaving.

Rawls’ (1971) ‘principle of open position…expresses the conviction that if some places were not open on a basis fair to all, those kept out would be right in feeling unjustly treated even though they benefited from the greater efforts of those who were allowed to hold them’. (p. 84). This key principle of open position does not necessarily require commitment to Rawls’ (1971) overall social contract framework (Downes 2014). It is noted in a recent EU Commission report, ‘in most countries migrant parents are not represented in school self-governing bodies’ (PPMI 2013, p.70); in other words, many school governing bodies are not following this key principle of open position.

Roma mediators in schools who are from the Roma community are an example from Sofia municipality of a commitment to representation and inclusion of the Roma minority. The Policy Recommendations report raised this principle as being lacking across municipalities, with the exception of Sofia:

This principle of representativeness regarding the need to employ members of those groups being targeted for intervention in order to ensure cultural affinity, credibility and competence of the project is given insufficient recognition generally across municipalities. A notable exception and leading initiative in this area is that of the Roma mediators, in the Sofia Schools of inclusion in Bulgaria. This pilot
municipal model aims for the inclusion of Roma families in general and, specifically, for an increase in pre school enrolment of Roma children. Training of Roma mediators, training of pedagogical staff and training of institutional experts consists of 20 persons across 3 days training in "Family Involvement", "Effective models for interaction, awareness raising and multilateral partnership”, “Conflict management”, “Communication with institutions”. (Downes 2014).

Access to the teaching profession for ethnic minorities is another dimension of a collaborative response at system level. It is extremely evident from the range of municipality responses to this question that many municipalities have no or very few ethnic minority teachers in their schools. This requires change and strategic planning involving municipalities and educational institutions for this change.
Parity of Esteem and Building on Strengths

Some main findings from visiting Stockholm, according to The Hague municipality, were observation of an ‘Interesting initiative to involve parents and then let them to teach the other parents’. The Hague municipality states in their questionnaire responses, ‘we promote parents to help each other’. This fostering of parent peer support has also been highlighted as vital for language teaching from parents to children and emotionally supportive parenting styles of communication in an Irish context (Downes 2004).

A key recommendation of Heckmann (2008) requires adaptation for focus on the role of municipalities in community based settings; this recommendation is to integrate elements and symbols of the cultures of origin into school life, in the curriculum, textbooks, and in other school material. Heckmann (2008) recommends that this be done in consultation with representatives of the new communities. It is evident from visits to community based lifelong learning centres and social support centres in Nantes, Munich, Usti and the Hague, that expression of symbols of the cultures of origin of different ethnic groups and migrants is not yet a feature of these centres or community spaces. These visited community centres and spaces do not yet sufficiently build on the strengths of the groups they are seeking to engage with and support.

In seeking to move beyond deficit labels, New’s (2011-12) words in a Slovakian context are relevant for a much wider context, ‘official policy discourse continues in the spirit of formal, rather than ontological, equality, whereby little has been done to address underlying negative beliefs about the Roma except to deny that they exist and to put the burden of proof back on the victim’ (p.58). Professional development of teachers
has been a key theme in this report. The municipality also needs to lead the professional development of staff in community based services it funds which have direct work with marginalised ethnic minority groups and migrants to ensure they are working with them according to progressive principles - and not based on deficit labelling and discriminatory viewpoints which may exist in the wider population more generally, in at least some cities.

**Illegality of segregation**

In the words of Rostas & Kostka (2014), ‘school segregation is conceptualised as a physical separation, whether intentionally or not, of Roma pupils from their non-Roma peers that limits their full realisation of the right to education. School segregation is a special form of discrimination which, in Roma case, overlaps with lower quality education’ (p.272). New (2011-12) describes ‘Roma Schools: So-called “ghetto schools” come in several forms, but all are related to residential segregation. One example is the “neighbourhood school” in urban and rural areas where only Roma live’ (p.48). During our PREVENT visit to a predominantly Roma residential area in the Předlice district, in a suburb of Usti, Czech Republic, the PREVENT group were shown a Primary school Předlice that we were told was basically a segregated Roma school. This occurs as the whole area is segregated and nearly all citizens are Roma people. These children go to school that is the nearest to their home. Such a segregated school is in clear violation of human rights, namely the right to education of Roma students in non-segregated schools, recognised by the European Court of Human Rights. It requires challenge not only to education policy structures but also residential policy making in Usti.
**Commitment to Dialogue**

One of the main findings from visiting Antwerp, of the Sofia municipality was ‘neighbourhood stewards’ as the mediators between schools and families – neither representing school nor families, general care and welfare of the child is the priority; helping overcome cultural differences (informing schools about Roma culture, helping Roma parents to enter the school). These were viewed as similar to activities in the Sofia Local Action Plan. In a predominantly Roma populated area of Usti, I was a member of the PREVENT group that visited the local NGO ‘People in Need’ project, a Low-Threshold club Youth Centre called House of Services, situated in the district Předlice, Usti. A reason given to me by a leader of this community based support project for the lack of involvement of Roma parents in the centre was that there were conflicts between Roma families in the area. At the moment there are 2 members of staff of People in Need in Předlice who are of Roma origin. Engaging with the need of Roma families in the area requires a commitment to dialogue with them, including development of conflict resolution processes.

Selection processes in school start at age 10 in Germany, 12 in the Netherlands, compared with aged 14 in Belgium and 15/16 in France and Sweden (Herzog-Punzenberger 2015). One of the main findings from visiting The Hague, stated by Stockholm municipality was the ‘Early age divide between theoretical and vocational educational system found challenging’. More dialogue is needed at national and municipality level with key stakeholders such as parents and NGO’s representing ethnic minorities and migrants about ways to delay potentially damaging and premature selections processes (such as those in Germany and the Netherlands). This policy dialogue with ethnic minorities is also needed
regarding policy and practice change to grade retention strategies which have already been highlighted to be strongly criticised in international research as being detrimental to students’ learning, motivation and wellbeing, thereby impacting also on early school leaving.

For future dialogue with relevant local people from ethnic minorities, NGOs representing them and local schools, it is recommended that the municipalities consider having a number of different area based Local Support Groups for early school leaving prevention and parental involvement, rather than simply one central one. This could also help facilitate sharing of good practice across networks of schools in the same neighbourhood and help address local issues specific to some and not other areas of a municipality.

**Cross-Agency Cooperation: Avoidance of diffusion of responsibility**

Cross-sectoral working is increasingly being recognised at EU Commission level as being key to coordinating services and schools for early school leaving prevention (Downes 2011; Edwards & Downes 2013; TWG 2013). This issue of system fragmentation of multiple, diffuse services and territories was also raised in the Policy Recommendations report (Downes 2014). There is a real need for clarity of responsibility to ensure that families and young people do not fall through the gaps in support services. Many vulnerable populations may not be in a position to access available supports. Therefore, it is key that there is a lead agency who can guide them to the overall picture of services available for them in a given municipality, to ensure the educational and more holistic needs of children and young people from ethnic minorities and migrant families are being met.
The EU Commission’s TWG (2013) report highlights that ‘The administrative process for enrolling newly arrived migrant children needs to be timely and adapted to the specific situation of their families (p.19). Curcic et al. (2014) observe that ‘many Roma parents do not have the means to obtain and submit the array of legal documents necessary to navigate the system’ (p.261). These issues point to the need for there to be one lead agency and person to liaise with a given migrant family to help them overcome various barriers, including bureaucratic ones, at the outset.

Tallinn municipality’s response to the question about a lead agency, ‘We have Police and Border Guard Board on the state level.’ focuses on social control issues. The current focus needed here is one of social and instrumental support for migrants and ethnic minorities, so that there is a clear path of responsibility to provide such support and this is clearly communicated to migrants and ethnic minorities.

A number of the municipality responses to this question did not specify a concrete lead agency who coordinates and builds bridges to other agencies for the support of parents and children as migrants and ethnic minorities. Many responses to this question on a lead agency referred to more than one organisation. There needs to be a clearly defined role for leadership and coordination of system responses in each municipality and this must be communicated to migrants and ethnic minorities as part of an active outreach process rather than waiting for migrants, for example, to find the relevant office.
References


URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants. URBACT is co-financed by the ERDF Funds and the Member States.