EPASI *Educational Policies that Address Social Inequality*

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Socrates
Education and Culture

Educational Policies that Address Social Inequality

Overall Report

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The EPASI project is a programme of analysis of educational programmes in fourteen European countries, designed to address various forms of social inequality. The project analysis was conducted in the period 2007 – 2008. This report is the final summary report of the whole project, details of which are at http://www.epasi.eu.

The analysis is intended to be used within the overall framework of the EPASI programme.

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The EPASI project was conducted by the following institutions:

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A note on using this report

This study has a number of component elements. We have looked at seven particular areas or groups, and particularly at whether educational disadvantages are seen in these areas, and if so, how policies have been attempted, or not. These seven areas are addressed in seven ***Thematic Reports***, on

- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Gender
- Disability
- Minority ethnic groups
- Indigenous minorities
- Linguistic minorities
- Religious minorities

One of the principal basis for these Thematic Reports were our in depth studies of the policies and practices of some fourteen European countries. These are analysed in our ***Country Reports***:

- Belgium (Flanders)
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- France
- Greece
- Ireland
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- The Netherlands
- Slovakia
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

In each of these countries we systematically analysed about twenty projects – 284 in all. These ***Project Studies*** were selected, as far as possible, to cover our seven themes, and also to include a range of sizes of projects, and national, regional and local projects. These are collected together in a searchable on-line database, on the project's website at www.epasi.eu. We also made four more detailed ***Case Study*** reports for each country – 54 in all.

This overall report draws on all these materials, referring to the Thematic Reports, Country Reports and Case Studies by name. All of these are available as downloadable documents from the website. In this report, the documents are hyperlinked to the documents on the project website, and the Project Studies are hyperlinked to the database.

1 Reducing Inequalities in Education

The importance of reducing inequalities in education

Educational policies and practices have the possibility of either reproducing social structures, or of changing them. If a society has substantial and persistent inequalities – whether of the distribution of wealth, or of recognition of rights, or of access to social provision, or of recognition of culture or language – then it is possible, indeed probable, that educational practices will replicate these inequalities.

It has been argued by many social theorists that there is an inherent tendency for education to reproduce existing knowledge and social structures. Bowles and Gintis (1976) noted a 'correspondence' between the social relations developed in schools (such as hierarchies, fragmentation and competitive behaviour, and alienation from work) and those found in, and required by, capitalist modes of production. Bourdieu (1973) argued that educational provision, particularly in the definition of the curriculum, drew heavily on the 'cultural capital' of the middle classes, disenfranchising other cultures: Apple (1982) makes similar claims. Lynch (1989) critiques this "purely economically deterministic view of the process of class reproduction [as] inadequate" (p 24), and subsequent studies have examined more closely how school processes, such as streaming by ability, have reinforced differences in attainment and in social divisions (Jones *et al*, 1995; OECD, 2007, p 39).

Other researchers have focussed on differential levels of participation in education, where pupils from less advantaged groups are less likely to remain in full-time education: Goldthorpe (1996) and Erikson and Jonsson (1996) argue that lack of both economic and (increasingly in recent years) cultural resources make parents from lower social classes less able to support their children in studying, or to make them aware of the potential benefits of continued participation in post-compulsory education.

Many parents, citizens and policy makers have a general expectation that schools will educate pupils to know the same knowledge that was known in earlier generations, to have the same understandings and values as their teachers, and to behave in the same way that their parents behaved. Of course, the same stakeholders also require schools to add new knowledge and skills to what they transmit, to reflect changes in technological and economic development: these demands are generally instrumental in character (equipping the next generation for newer opportunities for work), and are generally seen as an addition, rather than as a substitution. This general expectation results in social inertia, and the perpetuation of social inequalities. It also reproduces the acceptance of inequalities, in that particular (generally minority) groups are expected not to achieve as well, and to participate in further education to a lesser extent, than the mainstream.

We need at this initial stage to distinguish inequalities between individuals and inequalities between groups. There will always be some form of inequality between how individuals perform and succeed in many aspects of life. It is important that resources are given to ensuring that significant inequalities are minimised, by giving additional support to disadvantaged individuals, and even more important that societies recognise that everyone has equality in terms of human rights, dignity and esteem (Lambrechts, 2009, p3 –4). What this report primarily addresses is inequality between groups: that is, where an identifiable population has an overall distribution of performance significantly different from the distribution of performance of the mean population. There are aspects of inequalities that may apply to both individuals and groups: Burchardt and Vizard (2008) distinguished three - inequality of outcome (that is, inequalities in central or valuable aspects of life

that are achieved), inequalities in autonomy (that is, varying degrees of independence in decision-making about lives, the realities of choice and control), and inequalities in processes (that is, differential subjection through discrimination or disadvantage by others).

If a group within the population are achieving a less favourable distribution of educational outcomes than the majority of the population, then we argue here that it is reasonable to make an initial presumption that there have been inequalities in social and educational policies. The objective of policy should be to ensure that all groups within society have similar profiles of attainment. To achieve this may require differential (*unequal*) treatment for a particular group. The onus should be on those responsible for educational policy to demonstrate that all necessary policies are in place to achieve this. It is useful here to develop the principle set out in the *Macpherson Report* (UK Home Office, 1999), which examined institutional process within a UK police force around the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence. The report defined the term 'institutional racism' to refer to

> the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (Para 6.34)

In other words, it is the *outcome* of policy and practice that is significant, not the intention. In respect of this study, the fact that various groups continue to suffer educational disadvantage, despite policy initiatives to counter this, suggests that whatever the intentions, educational systems institutionally discriminate against the disadvantaged. The term educational institutional inequality might be useful employed to identify the collective failure of an educational institution or set of institutions to provide appropriate educational services to a minority group of the population because of their social, cultural, linguistic or behavioural characteristics. This can be detected in educational policies and practices that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which leads to the group as a whole to achieve a lower set of educational outcomes than the majority population.

Several reasons have been advanced that argue that educational provision should be used to help reduce inequalities. Some of these may give rise to particular tensions, and potential contradictions with other policies may need to be addressed. If the European Union – which frequently prides itself on its diversity – is to develop educational policies that are effective in reducing inequalities, this process must be managed with great care, and a careful balance struck between competing and contradictory arguments for educational intervention.

Addressing inequalities for ***social reasons***

> It is divisive if different social groups have the perception that they are treated less equally than others, in terms of their access to social, economic and cultural rights. In a more equal society, where status, access to social goods, and economic differences are relatively similar between all groups, society generally is more likely to be cohesive, and there is less likelihood of social disorder. More people are likely to participate in civic behaviour, because they will believe that their voice will be listened to, and their active involvement will contribute to change. Education is, however, only one of the potential agents for change in this sphere, and other agencies will also need support (Wilkinson, 2005; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). Individuals, disadvantaged minorities and society as a whole will benefit.

Addressing inequalities for ***economic reasons***

> Modern economies and societies need a well-educated and innovative workforce, to maximise social wealth. If groups have unequal access to education, and if groups tend to fail to meet their maximum potential, than society and the economy as a whole suffer from this wastage of human capital. People who are poorly educated are more likely to be dependant on others: ensuring that everyone achieves their maximum in educational terms will directly benefit everyone. However, activities that focus exclusively on education to increase economic competitiveness frequently increase inequalities. In a number of instances, education that is overtly instrumental in its nature reproduces inequalities by preparing workers to fit hierarchical roles in the workplace.

Addressing inequalities for ***reasons concerning human rights***

> Respect for the rights of all individuals and groups requires that we minimise, as far as possible, differences between individuals and groups that may result in differential access to rights – not just political and civil rights, but also social, economic, cultural, religious and linguistic rights. This conception includes education as *bildung*, the unity of the development of the individual through their own autonomous needs for learning (Prange, 2004). But this rational can sometimes also lead to inequalities: the provision of educational routes that are designed to address individual needs can lead to forms of streaming that do not allow flexibility, change and individual development. For example, vocational-academic divides in educational provision can close down future potential access to learning and development, creating inequalities in life-long learning. Diversity of provision that is designed to respect individual needs and difference must also allow flexibility and provide potential for the individual to change course.

These arguments are not to suggest that all individuals should be precisely equal, or that societies should be uniform. There will always be individual differences, and these differences may lead to some inequalities. Cultural diversity in particular should be distinguished from social diversity: cultural groups will have different practices, but all groups should have equal social rights and access to social goods, and should be expected to participate equally in social and political activities.

These three arguments for equality will be accorded different priorities by different individuals and groups. We suggest that all societies will contain people who would advocate different priorities. If policies were developed that addressed only one of these arguments, they would neglect the other aspects of equality represented by the other two arguments. An initial recommendation might therefore be that policy makers seek to reduce inequalities in education for all three reasons, and explicitly operate on a broad front.

The context of this project: the European Commission's brief

The European Commission's briefing document (European Commission, 2006) identified all three reasons for promoting educational equalities:

- the need for 'an harmonious education'
- 'the importance of key skills for the development of knowledge-based economies' and
- 'provid[ing] everyone with a high-quality education, enabling them to achieve' (ibid, p 5).

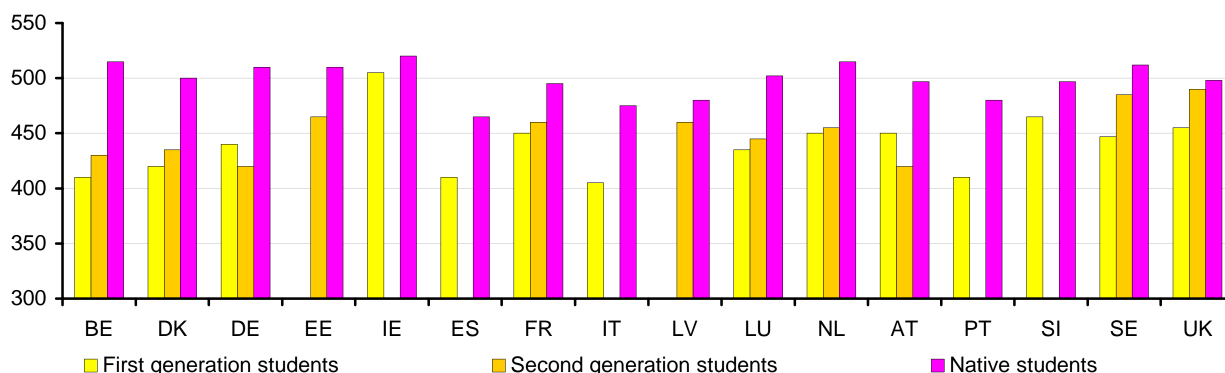
These broadly correspond to the three reasons for addressing inequality set out immediately above.

The Commission document drew attention in particular to the varying proportions of young people who at the age of 17 had not obtained the minimum higher secondary education certificate and who were no longer in education. It also highlighted the disparities between different European countries in such rates, but there are also, within each country, significant variations in participation and achievement by different social groups. These were identified as ‘at risk of unemployment’ – ‘Pupils who do not make the most of the education offered are frequently identified as what some people term risk groups. This term should not give the idea that failure is inevitable and that education systems can do nothing’ (ibid, p 5). The wording used here implies that education is ‘offered’ evenly, systematically, and in a way that is equally open to all, and can be read to suggest that the reasons for not ‘making the most of the education offered’ are the result of pupil (or parent) choice. It must be pointed out at the outset that the responsibility for differential uptake has in many cases structural reasons, and is not simply the responsibility of the individual or family, or of a particular disadvantaged group. Discourses that ‘demonise’ individuals or groups are unhelpful.

Since commissioning the project, the Commission has published a Green Paper (European Commission, 2008) on aspects of migration and education, that highlights the variations between outcomes in different countries. Figure 1 shows, by country, the differences in reading scores by first generation, second generation and ‘native’ students. The key comparison to be made here is *not* the comparative scores between countries, but the extent within each country to which first, and particularly second, generation students approach that county’s norm for ‘native’ students. In most countries there is only minimal improvement between generations, with substantial differences between the second generation scores and the ‘native’ scores. In two countries (Germany and Austria) there is a fall in attainment – second generation pupils perform *less* well than their parents had performed. Only two countries – Sweden and the UK – show substantial progress.

Figure 1 - Differences in student performance in reading, by immigrant status and country 2005

(Performance on the reading scale – mean score; omitting all countries where no 1st or 2nd generation details available)



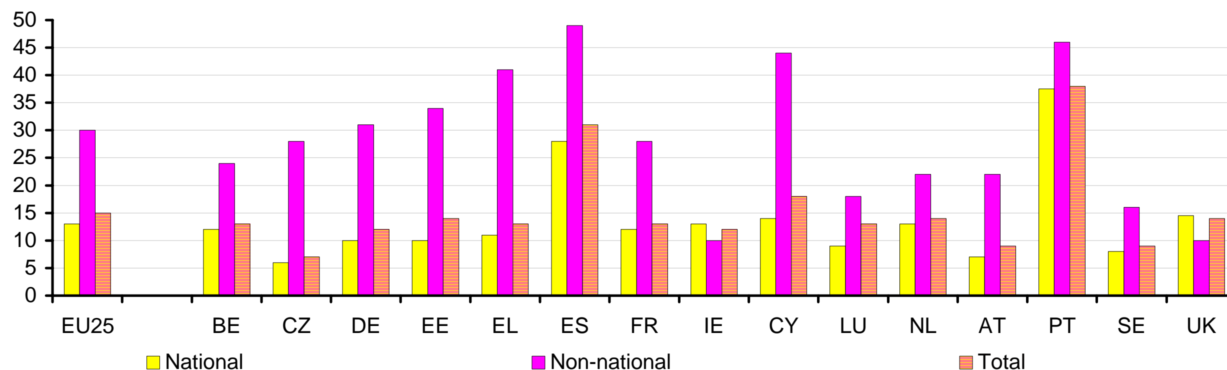
Data source: OECD PISA 2006 (Adapted from European Commission, 2008, Figure 3, p 6)

Figure 2 shows the proportion of young people between 18 and 24 years of age who have only compulsory secondary education and are not in any form of education or training. There are wide variations in the overall level of this between countries, and inter-country comparisons are again not useful. The key comparison to make in each case is the relative proportion of non-nationals to nationals. In most countries, far more non-nationals are not continuing their education when compared to nationals. But the ratios are not the same between all countries. In some countries, more than three times as many non-natives are not continuing their education compared to nationals, while in other countries it is much less than three times as many. In two countries – Ireland and the UK – a *higher* proportion of non-nationals are in continuing education or training. These discrepancies show how very much educational policies and practices are different in terms of educational outcomes for these particular groups, and the potentially different characteristics these groups may have in different countries. Equivalent data is not available for other kinds of

groups, or for all countries, but these figures suggest that there are very great disparities between countries in terms of equality of educational outcomes.

Figure 2 - Share of early school leavers by nationality, 2005

(Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with only lower-secondary education and not in education or training, by nationality, 2005; omitting all countries where no Non-national details are available)



Data source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey), 2005 (Adapted from European Commission, 2008, Figure 5, p 7)

Nevertheless, in most European countries it has been recognised, often for 30 years or more, that schools and other educational institutions have a significant role to play in combating social inequalities and the impact of family and environment on success at school. There have been many initiatives and policies that have been termed 'compensatory' – that is 'intended to distribute educational resources unequally in order to improve the chances of success for pupils in disadvantaged groups' (European Commission, 2006, p 6). The Commission have noted that there have, however, been relatively few robust analyses or evaluations of the success of these policies.

In summary, our brief was therefore to

- Analyse priority education policies that might effectively improve the situation for the most socio-economically disadvantaged pupils; and to
- Identify compensatory policies that are effectively implemented, to allow the exchange of good practice.

However, we noted that the European Commission's brief had a number of further dimensions. Its prime concern was with the equality of educational *outcomes* for disadvantaged groups, rather than ensuring that there was equality of educational *opportunity*. The Commission were also of the view that education need not reproduce inequality, but has the power and potential to transform educational and social outcomes. These two points gave us a clear direction and focus to our work. The brief also suggested that there are a number of 'at-risk' groups that educationally underachieve, but did not specify which groups these might be. One of our early tasks was therefore to pragmatically identify possible disadvantaged groups. The brief also specified that the focus of the study should be on programmes that systematically addressed under-achieving groups, not programmes that targeted individuals; and that the focus should be on policies that targeted groups through the distribution of resources and programmes – in other words, that there was an expectation of unequal, differential treatment in order to achieve change. We were asked to examine both local initiatives and national policies, and we have included not only local and central government initiatives, but also some by non-governmental organisations in our analysis. Above all, we recognised the project was to determine what policies work, why they work and what conditions are necessary in order for them to be effective and efficient.

It is the *outcome* of educational policies that is significant, not simply the intention. In respect of this proposal, the fact that various groups continue to suffer educational disadvantage, despite policy initiatives to counter this, suggests that whatever the intentions, the educational systems of the countries of Europe are *institutionally discriminating* against the disadvantaged. These issues are discussed at greater length below.

2 The methodology adopted to address the brief

We approached this brief by moving from the analysis of individual programmes that were designed with the intention of addressing inequalities in education to an examination of the way whole countries employed dominant discourses of inequalities. From this we have attempted to describe variations and similarities across Europe towards particular kinds of inequality: we selected seven types (see below).

Project Studies

The seven partner institutions in the study (see Figure 3 below) each took on responsibility for the analysis of about twenty projects and of the national policy in each of two countries, their own and another country. This was a two-stage process.

We began by agreeing on a set of broad criteria by which to select about twenty projects in each country. They were to be projects on which a reasonably large and reliable set of information could be collected. We wanted the twenty projects to include at least one that focussed on each of the seven thematic areas, preferably two. They were to include some projects that were organised and carried out at national or large-scale level; and some that were local, operated by local governmental authorities, or by non-government organisations. We wanted most, but not all, of the projects to focus on young people before they started in higher education.

An agreed set of descriptors was used to collect data and evaluate each ***Project Study*** (of which there were 20+ in each of fourteen countries). These can be summarised as follows:

Basic descriptive data

- Name of the Project
- Country
- Theme or themes the project was directed towards (from the list of seven themes)
- Funded, and type of funder (for example, central government, charity)
- Organisers (those responsible for delivering the project)
- Target group (specific)
- Start date/end date/duration

Activity description

- Project Aims
- Project Rationale
- Was the target group represented in the organisation or delivery of the project?
- Scale of funding; location; number of intended recipients

Description of outcomes

- What was done in the course of the project; project website; other relevant websites
- Was it evaluated, and if so, how, by whom
- What were the outcomes?
- Were there any official recommendations as a result of the project?
- Comments and evaluation by team
- References

Full reports on each of the 284 project studies can be downloaded from the project website.

Figure 3:

The partner institutions and staff in the EPASI project

The Epasi project was a collaboration between seven institutions of higher education in the European Community. These institutions, and the staff in each institution who worked on the project at various stages, are listed below.

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Case Studies

Four of the projects from each country[1] were also selected to be described at greater length, in more narrative terms, as ***Case Studies***. It was intended that these might be used by practitioners and policy makers seeking a more descriptive account of interesting project reports.

Country Reports

Each team then made an analysis of the policy objectives and practices of each country, illustrating these were appropriate with reference to relevant Project Studies. We thus compiled fourteen ***Country Reports***, on the following countries:

Belgium (Flanders)
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
France
Greece
Ireland
Luxembourg
Malta
The Netherlands
Slovakia
Spain
Sweden
United Kingdom

Thematic reports

We identified seven broad areas on which we focused our investigation (see the section in the following chapter: 'What kind of groups are disadvantaged, and why?). These were

Socio-economic disadvantage
Gender
Disability
Minority ethnic groups
Indigenous minorities
Linguistic minorities and
Religious minorities.

We looked to see if all such minority groups suffered educational disadvantage. We established a series of markers, discussed at more length in Chapter 3. We tried to determine whether, compared to the prevailing levels of attainment or participation in the particular country, members of any of these groups had lower levels of –

- Functional literacy
- Continuation in education or training when they were post compulsory schooling age

[1] In the case of Cyprus, there were only two Case Studies.

- Participation in higher education
- Employment

or higher levels of -

- Exclusion and/or expulsion from school establishments
- Social exclusion, as evidenced through being bullied, etc (which relate to social exclusion within education, rather than directly to poorer achievement)

or whether there was evidence of -

- Significant differences between the balance of subjects (vocational/academic routes; gendered subject choice; or other forms of institutional segregation).

Within some of these areas, we found that there were some groups that did *not* show evidence that they were disadvantaged, and these we did not consider in our further analysis.

The Research Questions

Throughout all aspects of the work, we kept the following research questions before us:

- What educational policies have been used to combat social inequalities?

  We focused on policies targeted at groups who were meeting social inequalities, not at individuals; and identified specifically educational activities, not broader policies of social regeneration, that may also have contributed to positive educational outcomes.

- How have these inequalities been identified? What analysis has there been of their causes?

  We were interested in what steps had been taken to identify inequity, and whether this was systematic or reactive to pressures. How much investigation had there been into possible causal factors?

- Was the programme focussed on members of the group, or on wider society?

  In some instances, the expectation of lower rates of success is that educators and policy makers expect for and anticipate failure; this may also affect the group's own self-perception and esteem, leading to a self-fulfilling prediction. Action may need to be taken with wider society to raise expectations, or with all members of a society to prevent alienation and the processes of 'othering'.

- How have they been targeted? How resourced?

  What steps were taken to effectively identify where resources should be used?

- How have the groups concerned been consulted and involved in these policies?

  We wanted to see if members of the targeted group were involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of policies, or whether policies were being applied in a way that ignored their voices and effectively disempowered them.

- What training programmes have been designed to implement and sustain the policies – to develop and support a committed and effective professional group to do this?

  Was the policy designed to be sustained after the initial impetus? Were steps taken to embed changes into on-going professional practice?

- Have policies been national or local in their design and implementation? What opportunity and support is there for local initiative at the educational institution level?

How much were policies designed from the top to 'cascade' down, and how much were they 'bottom-up' policies? To what extent did local actors in the community have ownership over the policies and programmes?

- How have policies been evaluated and monitored?

  Was a systematic programme of evaluation built into the project from its inception? Was it sufficiently independent? Did it feed back into policy-making to ensure that lessons were learned?

- What can be learnt to inform future policy development to address educational disadvantage?

  What generalisable lessons are there from these projects?

3 Educational Inequalities: persistence, areas of inequality, and targeting action

Before analysing the responses to inequalities in detail, and identifying policies that have succeeded or not, this chapter will examine the various explanations that have been put forward to explain why some groups are educationally disadvantaged. It will then examine which groups appear to be encountering inequities in their educational achievement - which have been adopted as the principal themes explored in this study - and discuss the markers by which inequities can be identified. The chapter concludes with a brief examination of some of the principles of restoring equity.

Explanations offered for the persistence of educational inequalities

Responses to educational disadvantage have been varied, at both societal and governmental level. The general discourse of meritocracy is prevalent: this is the argument that all that is necessary is a system in which 'the best' can 'rise' to the top. This is a particularly insidious argument: it implies that those who do not succeed – even entire groups of people – are themselves responsible for any disadvantages they suffer. It discounts institutional and structural impediments to success, and ignores the fact that those who do 'succeed' in a meritocracy take steps to ensure that their children become embedded in structures that will ensure that they succeed regardless of 'merit'. "Pure meritocracy is incoherent because, without redistribution, one generation's successful individuals would become the next generation's embedded caste, hoarding the wealth they had accumulated" (Diamond and Giddens, 2005). It is often forgotten that the term meritocracy was original conceived and used as a satirical argument against mixing conceptions of equality with notions of merit (in *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, Young, 1958).

At any one time one can detect a mixture of some or all of a number of explanations of why disadvantage may be evident, each bringing with it implicit and explicit implications for policies that might redress the situation. They represent a wide variety of debates, from 'commonsense' explanations found in popular media discourse to more elaborated arguments and explanations. Some are quite historic and outdated, but nevertheless are still employed today, and are not always challenged. All of the following explanations have been offered over the past two or three decades.

Pathological explanations

These suggest that any inequality is largely the consequence of individual characteristics or behaviour, or possibly group characteristics. For example, some people have taken the view that intelligence is largely genetically determined, and that therefore no amount of education, or additional targeted educational resources, is likely to make a difference in achieved performance. Examples of such arguments are described in the UK Country Report (Leathwood *et al*, 2008, p 18). In the United States context, Herrnstein and Murray (1994) and Murray (1984) claim that Afro-Americans inevitably achieve less intellectually and economically than white Americans, for pathological reasons – a nexus of genetic and cultural endowment that makes them dysfunctional. Many writers have powerfully contested this, for example Spicker (2006) and Kärfve (2000). Yet this rationale is still sometimes used with reference to disabilities, where medical, rather than social models are often used (Lambrechts, 2009, p 3): the change in designation from 'pupils with special needs' to 'pupils in special needs' (Hartsmar, 2008, p 19, 22) is an attempt to reject such a medicalised approach (but see also the legislation in Greece, Spinthourakis, 2008b, p 11).

Transmitted deprivation

Related to the previous explanation, some hold that the poor educational attainment of individuals or groups can be attributed to upbringing. The term 'cycle of deprivation' has been used to suggest

that disadvantaged parents may have 'deficient' parenting skills, and their children therefore will also be disadvantages in terms of educational outcomes, and pass these on to their own children (Joseph, 1972). The theory has remained popular, despite a series of empirical studies showing that it was unsound (Rutter and Madge, 1976; Berthoud, 1983; Welshman, 2006).

A form of this, the social heritage model, was once popular in some Scandinavian countries; it was particularly advanced in Denmark with reference to the education of delinquent children (Jonsson, 1969), as a counter to medicalised or pathological explanations related to genetics or biology (Cederberg *et al*, 2009, p 4). *Negativt social arv* (negative social heritage) refers to 'poor' family culture and a low social class position, with the associated negative markers these bring. There have been significant critiques of this (in Denmark by Ejrnaes, 1999 and Sivertsen, 2007, and in Sweden by Vinnerljung, 1998). Certain families in poverty were thus perceived as dysfunctional, with the transmission of inadequate behaviour from one generation to the next. The Roma population, in particular, are not uncommonly characterised as having dysfunctional familial patterns that 'transmit' deprivation from generation to generation (Dooly *et al*, 2008a; Spinthourakis *et al*, 2008b, Vrabcova *et al* (2008a, 2009). The policy implications of such an explanation would be to target resources at interventions in parenting, in order to remedy presumed 'deficits'. But Gordon *et al* (1999) thoroughly investigated such claims, and very effectively dismissed them as not having any standing in reality. Many studies of intergenerational continuity have found that most children of disadvantaged parents are not themselves subsequently disadvantaged.

Home based factors

Other analysts and commentators suggest that material deprivation affects educational outcomes (for example, through poor health or a lack of resources in the home (such as books) and lack of facilities (like a quiet place to do homework). If the family size and family environment affect the degree of stimulation a child receives, and hence affect development, then policy initiates should direct resources at the general alleviation of poverty with associated programmes to improve parental understanding of such home based factors. These factors are often used to identify non-mainstream parenting practices, often in a process of stigmatisation. Examples can be seen in some attitudes towards the Roma (see above), and in some countries Muslim home factors are similarly used to 'explain' poor educational performance (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2008b; Geurts *et al*, 2008). Homes where the principal language is not the national language can sometimes be similarly characterised as offering a deprived background (Dooly *et al*, 2009, p 5). Educational policies that provide homework centres for pupils whom it is presumed have will not have help or guidance at home are a response (for example, in Denmark: Cederberg *et al* 2008b). The problems with this analysis are clear: the lack of recognition of diversity leads to a discourse of deficit and parental blame.

Expectations in the Classroom: School factors

A fourth contemporary explanation has been that disadvantage and inequitable outcomes arise from the failure of schools to respond to pupils' needs. Aspects of this might include low levels of resources, a limited curriculum, and low teacher expectations, all of which might be further exacerbated by streaming, the restrictive examination system (both of which can lead to lowered teacher expectations), and high teacher turnover. The very well-known studies that demonstrate how low teacher expectations of particular groups leads to low performance by the group include *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (Rosenthal and Jacobs, 1968), but can be found both much earlier (Merton, 1948) and also in more recent studies (Brophy *et al*, 1974; Good, 1987; Brophy, 1998; Ferguson, 1998). The argument here is that good schools can make a difference, and that resources should be directed at enhancing school organisation, resources, and teachers' abilities and attitudes. The classic study by Rutter and his associates (1979) suggests that schools can make significant differences. A range of educational practices identified in this study show the wide prevalence of

teacher expectations of particular categories leading to underperformance – for example, among ethnic minorities (Lambrechts *et al*, 2008, p 8; Williams, 2009), linguistic minorities (Tozzi *et al*, 2008), children in special needs (Moreau *et al*, 2008, p 13), and Roma children (Vrabcova *et al* 2008a, p 12; 2008b, p 8). School structures and provision reflected these expectations (Leathwood *et al*, 2008, p 8; Cederberg *et al*, 2008a, p 7). In some countries whole rafts of programmes were designed to reform such attitudes (Vallejo and Dooly, 2008, p 4).

Structural views

Structural theories relate educational disadvantage to the structure of society. These sociological and political explanations argue that class disadvantages and poverty are reflected in educational attainment because of the combination of home and school factors: low reservoirs of cultural capital, socio-economic disadvantage, and educational structures designed to maintain inequalities (such as hierarchies of school types, socially differentiated curricula, etc). Post-structural views have a relation to this set of explanations, relating to the discursive construction of inequalities. Major theorists include Bourdieu (1973; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) (referred to above); Giddens has also extensively explored structuration (1984, 1991). In Sweden, there was systematic investigation into the extent to which structural discrimination and related factors affected educational attainment (Sawyer and Kamali, 2006; Runfors, 2006; see Hartsmar, 2008, p 14). In some countries, restructuring educational provision, particularly in the creation of 'action zones', has been a response to this analysis (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2008a, p 14).

Poststructuralist explanations

Post-structuralist theories give central attention to the concept of discourse, as a set of practices and beliefs that produce what they pretend to describe. As Davies argued,

> … in poststructuralist theory the focus is on the way each person actively takes up the discourses through which they and others speak/write the world into existence as if it were their own. (Davies, 1993, p 13)

In practice, this means that groups or individuals positioned as, for example, under-achieving in the dominant educational discourse of, for example, ethnicity or gender, may also challenge such positionings. So, while recognising the influence of ethnicity, gender, etc., the focus of post-structuralism is on the agency the fluidity of the self.

Poststructuralist theories also argue that while gender, social class, ethnicity, etc. are usually categorised as dual, oppositional and fixed, they are fluid and multiple aspects of the self. In educational theory, the study of nursery school boys' interaction with a woman teacher by Walkerdine (1998) represents an infamous illustration of individuals' agency and of the fluidity and multiplicity of the self, as the nursery boys contest their position as 'dominated' in the pupil-teacher interaction to position their teacher as 'dominated' (and, thus, themselves as 'dominant').

Several of the Thematic Reports in this study point to constructions of identity in this poststructuralist discourse: for example, in terms of gendered identity (Spinthorakis *et al*, 2009, p 5), or ethnicity (Williams *et al*, 2009, pp 20-21), or of the construction of identities around languages (Dooly, *et al*, 2009, p 10, 20).

What kinds of groups are disadvantaged, and why?

This project seeks to analyse a range of different types of educational disadvantage, because different social groups suffer disproportionately from different kinds of social disadvantage (see, for

example, Lambrechts *et al*, 2009, p 5). It is important that policies are focussed on *specific* requirements, and that they are implemented and monitored to address those needs. The widely-used category of socio-economic disadvantage has many related aspects. The conception of social capital, and exclusion from this relates to a range of potential categories: it is likely to correlate and intersect with minority ethnic and indigenous status, with minority language status, and with disability. There are significant gender differences in income in most European states, thus intersecting gender with economic status.

The outcomes of the educational process can demonstrate inequality in various ways, differently illustrating how forms of disadvantage can become institutionally entrenched. For example, some educational outcomes demonstrate how certain groups are disadvantaged: completing formal education at a young age, for example, is a particular outcome for pupils from economically disadvantaged groups, while low educational attainment, while linked to this, may also characterise particular ethnic minority groups. But the disadvantage suffered by young women as a result of educational processes are not necessarily because of their length of education or their levels of achievement (in several countries these are better than males), but in the way that the curriculum institutionalises gendered identities and opportunities (see Spinthourakis *et al*, 2009: on variations in levels of pay and education, p 6; and on the proportion of women in higher education, p 7.)

The issues of how and why various categories are identified and named (and are thus socially constructed) have consequences in terms of how people have a sense of themselves. It can be seen as allowing the construction of practice *vis a vis* educational participation in ways that reify the category. As well as the potential to empower a community, there is also the possibility of shifting responsibility onto the community or the individuals in the community to solve the problems for themselves: the neo-liberal offer of a 'choice' can shift the onus for change to a group who may not be in any sense responsible for, or able to address, wider structural and attitudinal causes (Dovemark, 2004; Hartsmar, 2008, pp 5, 27). Identifying a new category makes possible new practices and performances for those who have been labelled (see, for example, Kärfve 2000, and Hartsmar, 2008, p 22). Identification of an 'at risk' category inevitably has social consequences. There are also issues concerning different categorisation practices and terminology in different countries: the Belgian country report in this project (Lambrechts *et al*, 2008, p 4) draws attention to the naming practices within the term special educational needs; while in the Netherlands report (Geurts *et al*, 2008, p 22) schools with large proportions of minority ethnic pupils are categorised with terms that might cause offence in other countries. It is important to recognise that intersectionality is a critical factor in understanding the multiple identities and categories that arise (Moreau, 2008 pp 157-8; Ross, 2008, pp 91-104). Thus, for example in Denmark (Cederberg *et al*, 2008b, pp 11-12, 13) coming from an immigrant background is strongly correlated to poverty (Dahl, 2005) and educational disadvantage is strongly related to both a poor social economic background and to poor levels of use of Danish (Christensen and Sloth, 2005). In Sweden, Behtoui (2006) showed the intersection between ethnic background and social background, the former being used in popular discourse to discount the effect of poor living conditions: social class acquires an ethnic face (see also Moldenhawer, 2001).

Thus many groups will suffer educational disadvantage through multiple aspects – for example, being both poor, members of an ethnic and religious minority, and speaking a different language to that of the majority of the population. Each of these attributes may contribute to the overall disadvantage in a different manner, and it is useful, for analytic purposes, to identify how marginalisation and disadvantage are identified and created through different categories, though, as observed for example in the Czech Republic (Vrabcova, 2008a, p 17) this may lead to confusion and lack of coordination between project organisers.

A further aspect of this has been the development of newly recognised categories, for example in disabilities: the UK report (Leathwood, 2008, p 6) notes the issues in accurately categorising some of these, as many of them are self-declared (on this see also Kärfe, 2000). In the UK again, minority ethnic categories are being subdivided as differences in educational attainment are detected: the category 'Black African' (itself distinguished from 'Black Caribbean' and 'Black Other') is now sometimes divided, in the context of education, into extended codes to differentiate differently achieving groups (see also Williams *et al*, 2009, p. 13).

It is also important to recognise that neither minority status nor difference in themselves necessarily imply disadvantage, or inequality. There are many examples of different groups that are not educationally disadvantaged, and this project is focussing *only* on specific groups that *are* educationally disadvantaged. The categories that we describe below and use in this report will have examples within them of groups that are fully incorporated into the educational mainstream, and achieve a distribution of achievement and outcome that are the same as that of the rest of the population. To give two brief examples: in Cyprus, minority religious/ethnic groups such as the Latins, the Armenians and the Maronites are not considered educationally disadvantaged (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2008a, p 4) and in Denmark the minority language group in Schleswig/Slesvig-Soenderjylland are not educationally disadvantaged (Cederberg *et al*, 2008a, p 14-15);

For analytic purposes, this project has identified and focused on seven groups of those potentially disadvantaged in terms of educational outcomes and performance. They may not be equally disadvantaged in each country; and will probably each be disadvantaged for a range of reasons, some but certainly not all of which will be held in common. There are problems in making comparisons between some of these groups in different countries: not only do nomenclatures vary, but also the very conceptualisation of the basis of social difference varies widely between countries. Each of these groups is the subject of one of our Thematic Reports.

Socio-economic disadvantage

Economic disadvantage is a major (and perhaps a significantly underlying) characteristic of educational disadvantage. Family poverty is a significant marker of educational underachievement. However, economic disadvantage alone does not explain all social disadvantages, and other categories must also be employed to explain the institutionalisation of disadvantage and discrimination (Cederberg *et al*, 2009).

Minority ethnic disadvantage

This is often linked to other aspects of disadvantage, for example, that experienced by people from some minority ethnic communities, whether settlers, refugees or asylum seekers, who suffer also from racism. Some countries, however, refuse to collect data on minority ethnic status, noting both that its self-definitional nature may lead to lack of consistency, and suggesting that identifying ethnic groups is in itself racist, and in the belief that identifying minorities counters an inclusive republican definition of inclusive citizenship. Other countries hold that racism can only be challenged by identifying these groups, and then targeting provision and monitoring achievement. Some countries identify ethnic minorities that have settled in the country for several generations as 'immigrant', even though they may no longer have meaningful associations with the country of origin of their grandparents, while other countries use the term 'migrant' only to include the individuals who have migrated. (Williams *et al*, 2009).

Indigenous minority disadvantage

Europe's own longstanding indigenous minorities, of which the Roma are but one example, are not infrequently the victims of xenophobia and of educational disadvantage (see, for example, Pinnock, 2001) *Denied a Future - the Right to Education of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller Children*). However, the definition of this group shows marked variations between different countries, and sometimes minorities that have lived in the territory for several hundred years are still not considered 'indigenous'. In some countries, terms borrowed from geology to differentiate 'original' rocks from those that have been deposited by sedimentary action ('autochthonous' and 'allocthonous') have been used to justify differentiating groups that have no links with any other territory. In this report, we have pragmatically distinguished minorities that have been settled for over a hundred years as 'indigenous', and more recent settlers as 'minority ethnic' (Vrabcova *et al*, 2009).

Disability as disadvantage

People with disabilities are another group for whom educational attainment data suggests that they are disadvantaged. The term disability has been recognised in recent years to encompass a much greater range than impaired physical abilities (Lambrechts *et al*, 2009).

Gender and disadvantage

Gender is an area in which there is a range of often deeply-ingrained attitudes that lead to different social expectations of roles, and hence to discriminatory and disadvantaging practices in areas of social reproduction such as education. Stereotypical behaviours can lead to gendered practices in educational provision and expectation. While in many cases, women and girls achieve comparatively better educational standards than men and boys, they nevertheless find that subject choices can be constrained by assumptions about future roles, and that employment prospects are inhibited. Under the term gender, we also consider educationally discriminatory behaviour and disadvantage towards individual's sexual orientation, particularly as this may affect lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered individuals. Many educational policies construct social attitudes that condone gender discrimination. (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2009).

Linguistic minorities and disadvantage

There are many examples of equating a dominant language as *the* language of a particular country. This may lead to social practices that marginalise and discriminate against linguistic minorities. Many of these are long-standing minority languages in the country, that are widely spoken in particular regions, but may not have official recognition. Others are world languages that have more recently established themselves within particular communities who have migrated to and settled in Europe. Educational practices that discriminate against languages other than the mainstream are particularly damaging to pupils whose home language is different. There is much evidence that children need to be supported in the development of their home language in order to achieve future linguistic competence, and that such support greatly sustains the development of bilingualism and multilingualism. Conversely, attempts to suppress or ignore the home language, or to forbid its use in schools or in public places, undermines both individual development and social cohesion. We also note with concern hierarchical attitudes towards different languages, privileging national languages over regional, and regional languages over world languages (Dooly *et al*, 2009).

Religious minorities and disadvantage

The relationship between religion and education has a complex history, perhaps particularly in Europe. Different countries have developed very different sets of structures and expectations about the role and place of religion within state education, and about the extent to which religion is taught,

or taught about, within the curriculum. We are not concerned here with these matters, but with the possibility that some religious or faith groups may not have the same levels of educational provision, or have similar levels of educational achievement, than others. This is a particularly difficult and sensitive area for policy makers in a number of countries, and may particularly apply in contexts in which either there is a very dominant religious faith or denomination, where provision for those outside this faith may be not equivalent to that provided for the dominant group; or where there are religious minorities whose practices and behavioural patterns are not catered for or recognised. These contexts need not necessarily give rise to inequalities in provision or in attainment, but we consider cases where this may be so, and policies that might address these (Étienne *et al*, 2009).

This list is not to suggest that there are necessarily deliberate policies of discrimination in these areas, but that, even unwittingly, the effects of existing policies create, sustain and may even accentuate the degree of disadvantage. Nor are these necessarily the only groups who may suffer educational disadvantage.

Markers for inequalities

How is it possible to tell whether a particular group is suffering from some form of educational inequality? We have attempted to use a series of markers that may signify inequality of outcome. The emphasis throughout this study on educational *outcomes*, rather than on educational *opportunities*, is significant and deliberate, and discussed in Chapter 4. We attempted to find evidence of differences between the achievement or performance of a group when compared to the prevailing national norm. This was not always straightforward or indeed possible, because of the very wide variety of ways in which data is collected in different countries, and, as has been noted above, the different categories and conceptualisations of difference that are found between countries. Studies such as the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), organised by the OECD, provide valuable comparative data, in a significant (though limited) number of areas (see, for example, European Commission, 2004; Haar *et al*, 2005; Stanat *et al*, 2006; Heckmann, 2008). These studies were sometimes useful in comparing practices and outcomes between countries, and are referred to where appropriate in the Thematic Reports. Our prime analysis, however, was conducted at the national level, where our comparison was between a particular group and the national norm. Some countries provide detailed analysis of the educational attainment of some disadvantaged groups (for a detailed example, see Department for Education and Skills, 2006), but in no country did we find reports on all these areas of potential inequality.

These markers need to be used for assessment, where applicable, towards the end of the period of compulsory education, but they will also need to be addressed within that period, and before formal education, as part of the process of working to address these educational inequalities.

Literacy

The level of functional literacy achieved, at whatever age for which data was available, was used as the prime proxy for attainment. Although some countries could also produce comparative data between different groups for curricular areas, or for combinations of standards reached in groups of subjects, this seemed to be the most ubiquitous measure. Figure 1 (in Chapter 1, above) shows some of the kinds of comparison that can be made, both within countries and, to a more limited extent, between countries.

Post compulsory education participation in education or training

The European Union's emphasis on achieving a highly educated workforce predicates a significant proportion of the population staying in education beyond compulsory schooling, either for further education or for training (as shown in Figure 2, above). This is sometimes associated with a category called NEET – the proportion of the young adults '*n*ot in *e*mployment, *e*ducation or *t*raining'. In terms of policies of social inclusion, any evidence that particular minorities were significantly less involved in education and training after the end of compulsory schooling would indicate significant disadvantage.

Higher Education

As part of the above, the continuing demand for a highly skilled and knowledgeable population (for 'the knowledge society') anticipates that a growing proportion of the population will enter higher education. Higher education can provide particularly significant access to professional occupations, to influence, power and social goods, and to better remunerated work. Yet in most European countries, admission to higher education is skewed in favour of particular socio-economic groups, and sometimes against ethnic and linguistic minorities and those with disabilities. There are also considerable gender disparities between different subjects. We therefore examine access to higher education as a marker of potential inequality.

Employment

Although educational systems are not provided merely to enable access to employment, most people expect one of the outcomes of successful education to be regular and satisfying employment. While the measurement of employment rates and occupational patterns of different groups will be indicative of potential larger societal discrimination, it will also indicate the level of educational success reached by members of a particular group.

School exclusion

Although schooling may be compulsory for particular periods, schools often have the ability to exclude pupils, on a temporary or even permanent basis. There is evidence that schools may sometimes exercise this on the basis of the willingness or not of the pupil to conform to particular behavioural expectations, and these sometimes involve bias or discrimination against what is seen as 'normal' or 'mainstream' behaviour or practice. Exclusion rates that are high for particular minority groups thus reveal both that some members of this group are not receiving a full education, and that there may be possible discrimination against cultural practices that are seen as 'not normal'

Social exclusion and bullying

Such discrimination is not only sometimes instigated by schools when they exclude pupils, but is also carried out by other pupils against their peers, in the form of bullying and other forms of harassment. When this is targeted against particular minorities, it can damage the learning and study opportunities of those who are bullied. Where records are kept of incidents of bullying, evidence that members of particular minorities are proportionately more bullied than others again indicates that there is some educational disadvantage occurring.

Subject balance and other structural issues

Finally, in some instances educational systems apply, wittingly or wittingly, structural barriers to access to educational provision that may give rise to inequalities to particular groups. Restricting access to certain types of schooling as 'academic', as opposed to 'vocational', for example, can in practice limit entry to higher status educational streams to members of particular socio-economic

groups. In many cases, an early division of this kind can mean that a child who has started on the 'vocational' route will find it very difficult to switch to the 'academic' route, if at all. Such early setting into streams has important implications in potentially restricting later access to higher education (see above). There are also pressures of differential expectations of groups of pupils being used to affect subject choice – very commonly expressed examples of this function to restrict the entry of girls to scientific or technical subjects, but there are many others.

References to these markers are made, wherever possible, in each of the Country Reports (where in most cases there will be a specific section devoted to them), and in the Thematic Reports, which attempt to summarise the position across all the countries in the study with respect to the particular themed area of inequality.

Inequalities of outcomes and unequal and targeted redress

In Chapter 1 we referred to the concept of institutional inequality as the collective failure of an educational institution or set of institutions to provide appropriate educational services to a minority group of the population because of their social, cultural, linguistic or behavioural characteristics.

In other words, it is the *outcome* that is significant, not the intention. In respect of this study, the fact that various groups continue to suffer educational disadvantage, despite policy initiatives to counter this, suggests that whatever the intentions, the educational systems of the countries of Europe are institutionally discriminating against the disadvantaged. However, it is important to recognise that the use of this term should not be to allocate blame, but to identify systematic and institutional policies and practices that sustain inequalities and to thus address how these might be overcome. The right to learn is a universal right (Universal declaration of Human Rights, Article 26).

The principles of distributive social justice set out by John Rawls advocate that, in order to provide genuine equality of opportunity, society should

> give more attention to those…. born into the less favourable social positions … to redress the bias of contingencies in the direction of equality. In pursuit of this principle greater resources might be spent on the education of the less rather than the most intelligent [sic], at least over a certain time in life, say the early years of schooling… (p 100-101)
>
> … resources for education are not to be allotted solely or necessarily mainly according to their return as estimated in productive trained abilities, but also according to their worth in enriching the personal and social life of citizens, including the less favoured. As a society progresses, the later consideration becomes increasingly more important. (p 107)
>
> (Rawls, J. *A Theory of Justice.* 1971)

4 Addressing the Issues

In chapter one we examined why educational inequalities should be addressed, and in chapter two we outlined our general approach to this study. Chapter three explored a range of underlying explanations that have been offered for inequalities, and suggested some of the potential groups that might be 'at risk' of being disadvantaged. This chapter will analyse the various approaches that have been adopted towards inequalities in education. It will attempt to categorise these approaches, and to analyse their efficacy in successfully addressing the issues.

Our study is concerned specifically with inequalities in education that are attached to particular groups or categories, rather than about individual differences. Educational and social inequalities are thus related here to social structures, rather than to personal attributes. Nevertheless, decisions about the level of educational engagement, and the extent to which the individual elects to attempt the next level of education are, in part, the consequence of individual actions. Some of these decisions will be made by those responsible for the application of educational policy, such as making decisions on which type of education particular individuals might take – whether this be streaming pupils towards particular subjects, examinations, or types of schooling, or offering advice to pupils about available options. Other factors will be governed by decisions made by the individual pupil (or their families). As Archer and Hutchings (2000) demonstrate about choices made by working-class young people on whether to enter further and higher education, the desire to potentially 'better one's self' will be tempered by factors such as a history of educational non-success, fear of failure, and the potential costs of such a decision. The decisions that are made will tend to be risk-averse, but rationalised into a discourse about further study 'not being for people like me' (see also Archer, Hutchings and Ross, 2003). Breen and Goldthorpe (1997) argued that young people used a technique of 'relative risk aversion': that their principal goal in schooling was to acquire a level of education that would allow them to attain a class position at least of the same level as that of their family, or to avoid downward mobility. Breen (2001) subsequently extended this to argue that two factors contributed to educational careers – pre-established family decisions about attaining a particular educational threshold and beliefs about the probability of educational success.

This is not to shift responsibility for decision-making to the individual, because the context in which an individual, student, or their family, makes a decision about an educational threshold, or about the limit of their aspiration, or about the relative chances of success, are all conditioned by the educational discourse into which they have been encultured. Because discrete groups are responding in ways that are significantly different from the majority population, it can be suggested that these groups are systematically being regarded by educational policy-makers and professionals as being less likely to succeed, and less likely to aspire to higher levels of education or employment. They will be undertaking significantly greater risks if they attempt educational activities that are regarded as the norm by their peers in the majority population. If members of a particular group are consistently streamed into particular kinds of subjects or schooling (for example, 'non-academic' or vocational, or non-scientific), then the degree of choice that they are able to exercise later in their educational career will be curtailed. If they are persistently regarded as not likely to achieve, or are guided towards stereotypical training pathways or careers, then their aspirations will be limited. If they are expected not to be educationally successful, then they will be less likely to achieve, and if they consequently have a record of educational failure, then they are less likely to want to risk moving into contexts in which they may again fail educationally. This is not to deny agency to individuals, but to recognise that there are powerful structural and cultural constraints that limit this agency.

Nicaise (2000) has suggested that inequalities in education arises from two different forms of failures. Firstly, failures on the demand side, where unequal opportunities arise because of the socio-economic characteristics of social groups (such as poverty, material or cultural deprivation, health or lack of social or cultural capital) led, for the reasons identified by Breen (2001, above), to individuals from these groups declining to take up educational opportunities. Secondly, there are failures on the supply side, where educational policies and practices lead to disadvantageous treatment of members of a group in the educational process: this would include both institutional prejudice against these groups and the inability of institutions to actively respond to the specific and different needs of particular groups. Both of these are structural failings; and each interacts with the other. If the 'supply side' institutions cannot adequately support the group, then they create a situation in which members of the group lower their aspirations and expectations of success, and make fewer demands on the educational system. This interaction creates the conditions for self-sustaining failure, and there seems little value in debating the primacy of either side in terms of causation. The circle needs to be broken.

There are three broad possible approaches to this, which are not necessarily wholly alternatives. In our surveys of programmes, we found evidence of all three strategies being used.

Equality of Opportunities

This appeared to be the predominant approach, enshrined in many statutory organisations that were charged with the duty to ensure that everyone had equal access to provision. These approaches were often advanced within a neo-liberal discourse (for example, Leathwood *et al*, 2008, p 8), that often employed the language of competition – for example, references to ensuring that there is 'a level playing field' imply that some individuals will 'win' in education, and others will inevitably therefore 'loose'. The role of the state or the educational provider is to produce a set of conditions or rules that will simply even the odds.

The high level of intersectionality described above means that multiple inequalities can be addressed in a multifaceted way: the project Reading with parents is just one example of many that we found: this project targeted socio-economically deprived families, of minority ethnic background, and speaking a minority language. Many such projects are targeted at pre-school education, attempting to ensure that children from backgrounds considered 'deprived' in some way will start primary education on the same basis as other children (Geurts *et al*, 2008, p 11; Cederberg *et al*, 2008a, p 5-6). An alternative (or an additional) approach is to extend the period of compulsory education, thus preventing disadvantaged, or potentially disadvantaged children 'dropping out' at too early an age (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2008b, p 7; Leathwood *et al*, 2008, p 16-17. This acts to ensure an equal 'supply' of education. Other measures to provide supply-side equality of opportunity included improving the school attendance of at risk groups by addressing truancy and dropouts (for example, the School Completion Project in Ireland , and the School Attendance Promoters in Spain).

Some countries had programmes that provided financial support for families, to ensure their children attended school such as the Time-out project in Kortrijk Belgium, and the Greek programme to financially support Roma parents send their children to school (Spinthorakis *et al*, 2008b, p 6). There were a number of programmes that provided integrated social services programmes for particular groups that were designed to equalise opportunities: in Greece, for example, an ambitious Social Care and Development project, and in Spain, for the visually impaired, for the Roma, and for those with motor impairment. The Irish Transition Supports Project offer support and training to unaccompanied asylum seekers approaching the end of compulsory schooling or leaving reception centres (see Williams *et al*, 2009, p 18). Many programmes addressed specific 'deficits' for groups. This was done, for example, in mainstream education for

pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties in Belgium. In the UK, there were programmes that sought to widen participation in higher education to include groups traditionally not going to university, such as Aim Higher (directed at socio-disadvantaged groups) and Fair Enough (lower socio-economic classes), and there are a number of instances in our report on language inequalities (Dooly *et al*, 2009, pp 4, 22, 26) where 'compensatory' programmes are offered for pupils who speak minority languages. Projects such as The Hinge, based in Flanders, aim to improve familial relationships with schools and encourage university applications by raising aspirations and "strengthening school culture" amongst disadvantaged families (Williams *et al*, 2009, p 17).

These approaches seem predominantly to be addressing the 'demand side' of the equation, by supporting or encouraging groups (or individuals) who are disadvantaged educationally to participate on a better footing, or to continue in study after formal education. They do not challenge the structural barriers to educational success.

Equality of treatment

Another set of approaches focuses on the 'supply side', by ensuring that educational provision is tailored to meet the specific requirements of particular disadvantaged groups. These are sometimes referred to as affirmative policies, or affirmative action. There are often objections to such policies: members of majority groups may argue that it is unfair that their needs and requirements are less addressed than those of minorities, for example (see Lipson, 2008). Others have argued that affirmative action (particularly related to quotas for particular groups entering higher education in the United States) have been ineffective (Sowell, 2004), though this has been widely challenged (see, for example, Epple *et al*, 2008). And, from a different perspective, it is argued that affirmative action leaves the deeper structures of inequalities intact: critics suggest that without transformative policies that address the constituent elements of inequality, injustices will persist (see, for example, Fraser, 1997, pp 25-6). Perhaps partially because of these objections (particularly the former ones), policies in this approach tend to be rather muted approaches to what schools and other educational institutions might do to support particular groups.

Many such initiatives focus on aspects of home-school communications, supporting parents and families to be more engaged with learning and schooling. These were often very local activities, working in local areas or even single schools, such as for example the work in Elementary school 132 in Athens, and in an urban school in Sweden, where communications are sent home in the parent's language. Other similar projects covered larger areas: examples of this include a family support project on the Integration of Roma students in Greece, the integrationist 'This works in our school' project in Denmark, and a Spanish project that involved parents helping in the production of Intercultural goods in the classroom.

A number of the programmes we analysed made imaginative use of volunteers in establishing better relationships and communications between schools and parents and their communities. For example, the family literacy programme in Malta (also as a case study, Dooly *et al*, 2008b), and in Spain the Young Guides Programme, which paired volunteers with newly arrived migrant students, with the specific brief of facilitating better communications. In France, the AFEV programme works with volunteers supporting parents and pupils in priority education areas, and in Luxembourg volunteers worked with pupils in the Intercultural mediators programme, and with parents in the Boussole project. There were also broader programmes on gender equality working with local communities (Spinthorakis *et al* 2009, p 16).

A number of activities sought to modify and adapt the curriculum. Generally, these sought to make the curriculum more relevant to particular cultural groups, so that it was less discriminatory. The Unique Urban Class was a French primary school in area of socio-economic disadvantage that used

a Freinet-inspired programme to develop a cooperative learning curriculum promoting a learning culture. Gender equality was an area tackled in this way in several instances (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2009, pp 13-14) as, for example, in the Belgium (Flanders) project Gen-BaSec, which developed a curriculum to tackle gender inequality in primary and secondary schools, and the FETE programme in Malta. A series of activities in a programme directed at Muslim students in Western Thrace (Greece) moved from a first stage programme based on mother tongue teaching, through a second phase, that involved the introduction of new text books, parent and community links and a teacher education programme, to a third phase in which there was significant curriculum change.

Other programmes were directed at modifying pedagogic styles, seeking more appropriate forms of teaching and learning. Some of these were directed at children from poor socio-economic backgrounds, such as the project in Ringkoebing Municipality in Denmark, where a wide-ranging review of pedagogy in work with socio-economically disadvantaged (and other groups) developed a different style of pedagogical communication, designed to give more coherent and consistent learning and meaning to pupils. A Developmental Dialogue programme in Sweden supported pedagogic changes in working with linguistic and ethnic minorities in municipalities that had more than 17 per cent minority children. Also in Sweden, 'Idea Schools' are schools selected because of their high levels of diversity to network in order to develop 'learning styles for diversity'. Pedagogical approaches are also being modified in some programmes that are working with pupils with disabilities. For example, the Autism pilot project in Flanders networks schools that are developing appropriate pedagogic approaches for such children, and there is a similar Developing Competence project in Sweden for pupils diagnosed with severe learning disabilities.

Many countries had developed projects that trained or sensitised teachers and other educational staff about the specific needs of different at risk groups, and in general non-discriminatory practices.

Combating stereotypes in education is an important aspect of teacher training projects. Our report on gender inequalities (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2009, p 14) identifies projects concerned with examining teaching practises, developing new teaching methodologies, eliminating sexism in educational theory and, most of all, sensitising the teaching community and society as a whole. The Gender Violence Prevention project in Galicia (Spain) for initial and in-service teachers is one such example: there are many other initiatives in other areas. For example, in Sweden there are particular teacher education activities for Swedish-Finnish preschool activities, that helps teachers understand this particular minority language group; and similar programmes to help teachers work with Sami pupils, an indigenous minority group. In the area of linguistic minorities, the Swedish Mother Tongue project involves over a hundred teachers in editing and preparing materials for minority language pupils. In France, a programme called CASNAV trains teachers to work with Roma children's educational needs. The needs of disabled children are part of an extensive initial teacher education programme in Scotland (UK Case Study 2: Williams, 2007).

One particular approach which will be returned to subsequently is the recruitment of teaching and other educational staff who themselves are members of disadvantaged groups. Ensuring the teaching profession is representative of all parts of broader society carries with it important messages for pupils and others about inclusion: such teachers are not intended to only work with members of the particular minority group they come from, but to teach all children, thus conveying important messages about inclusion and diversity. If the teaching profession lacks the cultural variety necessary to reflect the socio-cultural range of the school population, few pupils will have opportunities to work with minority ethnic professionals. The process of changing teacher recruitment has probably been implemented most extensively in the UK, where it was recognised over ten years ago that the proportion of teachers drawn from minority ethnic groups was disproportionately low. Recruitment has now accelerated (over 10 per cent of all initial teacher education recruits come from minority ethnic groups), but there are still relatively few older or more

senior teachers drawn from such groups (Williams *et al*, 2008, p 8). A very different approach has developed in France, where some teachers are recruited directly from overseas to work specifically with pupils of that particular national origin: the Teaching First Country Languages programme recruits such teachers, whose salaries are paid for by the governments of their country of origin.

Finally, equality of treatment is seen in the many diverse projects that attempt to include pupils from disadvantaged groups into mainstream educational provision. Many of these are focused on pupils who have some form of disability. Thus there are teachers specialising in disability education in Ireland (Moreau *et al*, 2008, p 4); in the Netherlands there is a general programme to ensure 'fitting education' (*passend onderwijs*), in which each school authority has the responsibility to develop education that fits every child's needs (Geurts *et al*, 2008, p 10); in Cyprus, the Rainbow programme aims to integrate partially-sighted and non-sighted children into mainstream schools; and in Luxembourg the Ambulatory Rehabilitation Department works on the integration of children with physical disabilities and the Centre for Logopedics integrates hard-of-hearing pupils. Our report on the educational inequalities encountered by disabled pupils covers many more examples (Lambrechts *et al*, 2009, p 8). Other inequalities are also addressed in mainstream integration programmes. Special education in Malta is addressed in an Education Reform programme to integrate children. A similar programme, the Ringkoebing bilingual project, works at a local level in a Danish municipality, and in France the RASED project brings pupils in special needs into 'ordinary' classes**.** The Belgian (Flanders) Het Beroepenhuis programme tackles gender prejudice in career choice in an integrative manner, and in Denmark the Evaluation of Bilingual Education in elementary schools examines integrating bilingual pupils into mainstream. There are many similar initiatives to counter social exclusion, such as the National Action Plan in Malta, on poverty and social exclusion, and the French PPRE (Individual School Success Programme) that requires schools to identify pupils with early learning difficulties and to plan how to integrate such pupils' learning into mainstream provision.

Equal outcomes

This third approach treats both supply and demand sides as interrelated, and – as the name suggests – focuses on the achievement of outcomes. Sometimes such approaches are resisted, particularly inasmuch as they may require the unequal distribution of resources. Resistance is, however, not uniform, and in the cases of disability and gender, there seems a greater willingness to expect equality of outcome than is the case with respect to some minorities.

In the area of disability, our specific report on this area notes that not only is educational provision expected to recognise specific needs and act in response to these to create equal opportunities for all students, but that treatment should be unequal where this is necessary, and should be directed at striving for equal outcomes (Lambrechts *et al*, 2009, p 5). In Ireland the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 (replacing the Anti-discrimination (Pay) Act 1974 and the Employment Equality Act 1977) outlaws discrimination and allows employers to take positive action measures to promote equality in certain cases (women, people over the age of 50, people with disabilities and members of the Traveller community) (Moreau *et al*, 2008, p 9).

In other areas, we can detect three broad groups of initiatives – providing 'second chance' opportunities part way through the educational cycle, the provision of additional learning support for specific groups, and targeting with specific funding.

Much 'second chance' provision is designed to allow particular disadvantaged groups to 'catch up', so that the final educational outcome can be equal. This is sometimes achieved by manipulating entry into later stages of education to allow access to tertiary and further education, or higher education, on a 'level playing field' basis. Thus the Belgian (Flanders) 'Positive Action'

programme has specifically targeted staff and students in Initial Teacher Education to convey such messages of accelerating or easing access to further stages of education. A particular programme in the same country, Diverse lecturers, diverse students is a transition system allowing second chance schooling: this is targeted at groups failing to achieve in mainstream schools. Similarly, in Denmark the Mentorprojekt provides folk high school (boarding school) education with specific mentor support, that allows young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to take a break from everyday routines, and provide opportunities for reflection and orientation towards further education. In Malta, there are special schemes to assist students of compulsory school leaving age who live in deprived areas in finding employment. These include the Youth Outreach Programme Job Clubs, a programme of 'school to work transition' talks and support for students aged 15 to 16. There are similar programmes in Spain: for example, the Occupational Training and Job Placement scheme for young school leavers provides a personalised programme with four phases: 'information, orientation, training, and insertion' (Dooly et al, 2007b). In the United Kingdom, the 16-24 Job Ready initiative established mentoring partnerships between young people and either employers or education institutions, with the aim of increasing access to and knowledge of the labour market, and to generally help prepare school-leavers in finding a job or moving into further or higher education. This programme was specifically directed to address the under-representation of minority ethnic groups in employment, education and civic life. Second Chance Schools in Greece are innovative institutions for individuals over the age of 18 who have not completed the ten-year compulsory education programme. Without completing their education, they are at risk of social exclusion and marginalisation, so this programme gives the opportunity to acquire the Secondary School Leaving Certificate and to smoothly integrate in the social, financial and professional structures (Spinthourakis *et al* 2008b, p 13). 'Why not me?' is a programme in France to support less favoured pupils to support their recruitment into the Grandes Écoles through special training, recognising that real equality requires giving the same chances to everybody to enter the Grandes Écoles. And finally, an example from Luxembourg: the ICYA is a welcoming class for young people recently arrived in the country, which offers a basic training in French that is intended to give access to technical secondary education or self-advocacy and self-sufficiency.

Extra learning support for specific groups can be designed to achieve equality of outcomes. We found a number of relatively small-scale examples of this, with carefully targeted groups, and organised by a wide range of social actors, including voluntary bodies. Examples of these approaches include the Let us compare our languages teaching project in France, which is based on active learning through a comparison between the foreign languages spoken in classes for newcomers, presented in a DVD. The Kerteminde programme in Denmark offers educational support to children in families with drug abuse or mental illness, in particular by developing and implementing methods inspired by coping theories; and in the implantation in France of the Comenius EVLANG project offers didactics tools for primary school pupils in language acquisition. Another language support activity for minority language students is seen in the Swedish Language Development and Technology programme, which builds on previous knowledge and experiences of those who have newly arrived in the country, and provides an introduction to the Swedish school system and society and a good start in Swedish. The intention is to directly intervene to promote individual learning and thus participation in school and social activities. Organised by Malmo University, each individual has the programme adapted so they can take part in the mainstream primary education. A similar example of provision in the Czech Republic is a Support Centre provided by the University of Hradec Králové, for students in Special Educational Needs, that supports an equality approach to university studies. Also in the Czech Republic, the Ophthalmic Classroom is provided by a private charity funded by a commercial company. This project bought and maintained equipment to facilitate children with visual impairments to integrate and manage everyday situations in educational activities in a school and its catchment area. Another charitable provision is the KMS, an initiative of the Flemish section of the Belgian Bishops Conference. This network, established in 2004, provided support systems for different target groups

at risk (children of refugees, victims of racism, discrimination of religious minorities) to develop a sense of humanity, and positive and practical attitudes. Not all activities are so localised: the Greek Language learning programme in Cyprus, for example, is provided in many school units to provide for extra Greek language courses in the afternoons for foreign and repatriated children.

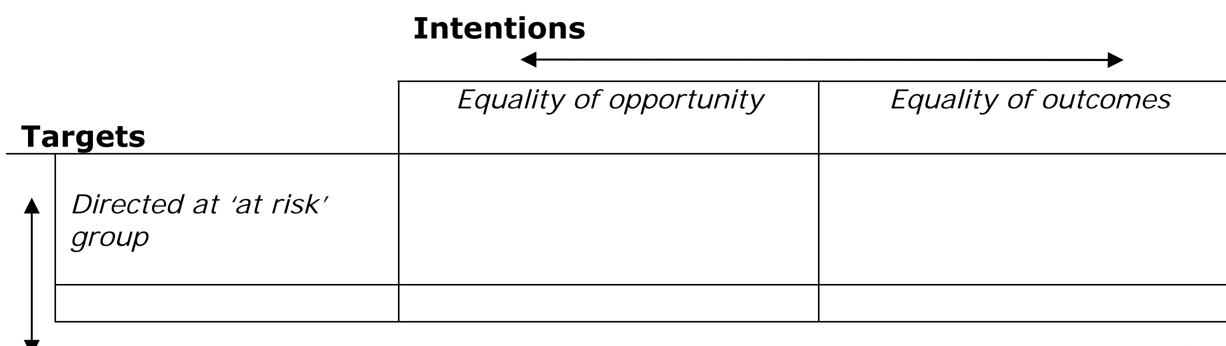
Many specific targeted funding approaches also aimed at equalising outcomes in terms of socio-economic deprivation. In Luxembourg, the Kannernascht targeted school age children of different nationalities in the Eich and Weimerskirch (working class and socio-economically deprived) districts of the capital, offering school support and leisure activities, with education based on close contact with parents and teachers. In the United Kingdom, the Educational Maintenance Allowance is a means tested small grant available to young people aged 16-19 if they continue in full time education (Leathwood *et al*, 2008, p 12), again targeted at those with socio-economic deprivation. The Swedish Storstadssatsningen programme is provided by the Commission on Metropolitan Areas in cooperation with local authorities and organisations to support students in socially disadvantaged townships and suburbs in the three major Swedish metropolitan areas of Greater Stockholm-Södertälje, Gothenburg and Malmö. An example of an initiative taken by a minority group is seen in the IQRA, organised by the Federation of Moroccan Associations in Antwerp. From 2004, a small group of pupils between 10 and 13 years old taking additional lessons after school for four days a week. These were children specifically failing at school: after a year, 87% were succeeding, and in their second year they carried on with one evening lesson a week. The local authority gave a full time teacher for the project. In the Spanish region of Extramadura, the low rate of academic success, together with a high unemployment rate among young people, was contributing to an exodus towards menial jobs in other regions. The Extramadura ICT policy was a strategic response to incorporate the region's educational system into the information society, and thus to slow emigration and improve living standards in a rural area.

Intentions and strategic targets

Education alone cannot provide the solutions to inequity. There will always be a wide range of other social factors involved, and a wide and multi-agency approach will be required to address all of these. Our analysis suggests that educational approaches need to be integrated with those of other agencies, and that all initiatives need to be conceptualised along two dimensions.

The first dimension concerns the intentions of the policy initiative: we suggest a spectrum, moving from the objective of providing equality of opportunity towards that of ensuring a full equality of outcome. Secondly, we suggest that there is a dimension about the target group: some programmes identify a specific minority target group, and work specifically directly with that group, while others recognise that at least part of the cause of a specific inequality may lie in the perceptions of the population as a whole – the dominant group's view of a traditionally underachieving 'outside' group, and sometimes that group's own self-perception and assumptions of powerlessness and lack of the possibility of agency.

Figure 4: Conceptualising Intentions and Targets



Directed universally		

To illustrate this framework, we have taken from a range of policies that are intended to achieve equality of outcomes two examples that are directed at a specific at risk group, and three other examples that are directed towards the population at large.

Examples of working with the at risk group by targeting resources to achieve equalities of outcome include the general French "affirmative action" policies, that require additional financial provision for schools in disadvantaged areas and in education Action Zones. Currently, some 25 per cent of the school population is targeted in this way, and some evaluations have suggested that this policy is being questioned as being directed at too large a proportion of the whole population (Étienne et al, 2008, p 11). A similar targeted response of creating and supporting Education Priority Zones has been adopted in Cyprus to address functional illiteracy and school failure, but is in an earlier stage than France: ZEPs were piloted in 2003-4 in two school complexes (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2008a, p 9) (ZEPs are now known as REPs).

In contrast to these are some programmes that attempt to move the expectations and attitudes of the whole population, based on analyses that suggest attainment is suffering in part through prejudice, discrimination, and a lowering of expectations. Working with all the population, and not just those considered to be at risk should help to eliminate (or at least challenge) discriminatory attitudes and promote the expectation of equality of outcome. Many social and cultural prejudices about educational expectations and attitudes are expressed through the language of 'normality', and are effectively prejudice against the minority group and its potential for educational success. Examples of challenging such attitudes are seen in the plan of the Spanish Ministry of Equality (the IV Plan for Equality of Opportunities between Women and Men 2003-2006/ *Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades entre Mujeres y Hombres*), which is based on the principles of promoting the defence of and guaranteeing the principles of equality in all activities and policies through mainstreaming and through cooperation (Dooly *et al*, 2008a, p 10). On a smaller scale, in Denmark a Copenhagen mothers day centre project (Mangfoldighed) focuses on just six townships. Bilingual children are offered language places in crèches or kindergartens with few bilingual children. Unilingual Danish-speaking children are offered places in *brobyggerinstitutione*r (bridge-building crèches or kindergartens) with many bilingual children. These institutions profile themselves to attract children by developing a multi-cultural pedagogy. Finally, a programme in the UK is designed to address attitudes towards Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) pupils (often educationally disadvantaged through peer and sometimes teacher harassment). The programme, called 'No outsiders', attempts to create an inclusive school environment through teachers developing strategies and materials that address lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality in their own primary schools (Leathwood *et al*, 2008, p 17). There is, therefore, some recognition that educational institutions and majority cultures need to change if institutionalised racism, sexism and other forms of discriminatory practices are to be seriously challenged, although many campaigners feel that this does not go far enough.

Taking the long-term view

Achieving social change through educational policies and practices is not quick. It takes ten to twelve years for a pupil to move through just the compulsory elements of education. Training teachers in new practices and approaches takes a number of years in initial training – and then up to forty more years as cohorts of teachers who have been trained in these new approaches work their way through the profession. Nevertheless, inequalities can be tackled by intervening at multiple stages in the educational process. But those responsible for planning educational initiatives need to

expect a long and sustained approach, and not to expect quickly achieved measurable and conclusive results. A number of the projects we examined appear to be premised on the assumption that a short and sharp programme would achieve permanent and continuing results, even when the programme ended. Many projects were not planned with any sense of sustainability or permanence.

Examples of programmes that were long term included the Swedish Storstadssatsningen programme, now in its tenth year. This aims 'to provide the foundations for sustainable growth in the metropolitan regions' and 'to stop social ethnic and discriminating segregation in the metropolitan regions, and to work for equal and comparable living conditions for people living in the cities'. In Spain, our Case Study 1 (the City Educational Project) (Dooly *et al*, 2007a), is a transversal programme to address educational inequalities through processes of participation and shared responsibility involving local administrations, schools, families, cultural organisations and recreational associations. This began in 1990, and funding and support structures are still being maintained.

Even with long-term funding, the results may be very slow to be identified. An example of this is the WISE (Women into Science, Engineering and Construction) programme to promote science, engineering and construction technology (SET) as suitable career choices among girls and women across the UK. This has operated since 1984, encompassing a number of schemes, many targeted at girls. One of these schemes (the Science and Engineering Ambassadors scheme) organises school visits for women working in the fields of science and engineering so that they can provide positive 'role models' for girls. But females are still under-represented in these fields, and progress is very slow, even after 25 years of activities.

Involvement of members of at risk groups in professional educational activity

One particular issue we noted in our analysis was that generally there are few members of the 'at risk' groups represented in the processes and practices of education or even in specific initiatives. This was found both in the specific planning and delivery of projects, and in more general programmes for an inclusive educational workforce. There were many examples of projects that targeted particular groups where there was little attempt to consult or work with members of the targeted group to identify issues and needs, plan appropriate activities, or to provide services. The widespread assumption that existing educational personnel constitute 'an authority' that can plan and provide for a group of 'others' needs to be challenged.

Even more significant is the absence of members of many of these groups in the education professions. Low expectations of achievement mean that many members of at-risk groups perceive themselves as effectively excluded and 'othered' from professional training in teaching and other forms of educational provision. The effect of this is that most children are socialised to view members of these groups as unable to hold positions of everyday authority, or inappropriate sources of knowledge. Ensuring that the educational workforce (at all levels) fully represents the diversity of society and its social and cultural groups will lead to all pupils recognising that members of these groups can and do fully participate in teaching, managing and leading young people.

This is not to suggest that teachers and other professionals recruited from these groups should work particularly or exclusively with pupils from these groups. This would effectively create employment ghettos, that would accentuate attitudes of 'othering'. Describing a specific, though as yet hypothetical, example will demonstrate this. There appear to be very few teachers, in any country in Europe, recruited from the Roma community. This means that pupils in schools do not see examples of Roma in any positions of educational authority, and this encourages and supports the development of racist attitudes where Roma people are seen of low educational and social attainment. Such attitudes contribute to Roma pupils' self-esteem in educational settings. If the

teaching population was representative of all groups in society, including the Roma, then there would be substantially more Roma teachers. A number of children – of all backgrounds - would be taught by, or otherwise meet in school, Roma teachers. Teachers are one of the most important authority figures that are encountered by most children – unlike members of other professions, they meet them regularly, frequently, and over a long period of time. It is important that children recognise that members of all social groups can achieve positions of social authority and power – including Roma people. More Roma teachers will, probably, increase Roma pupils' self-belief and attainment, and ensure that their culture is part of everyday school culture. So we would see two effects of such a policy: a general change in social attitudes to be more inclusive of the Roma, and a specific rise in the self-esteem and attainment of Roma pupils. However, to confine these Roma teachers to teaching only Roma pupils would achieve only the second of these effects. An inclusive recruitment policy in educational staffing should be seen as being towards a universal target, not simply directed at a specific group (see Figure 4, p 31 above).

The most substantial activity that we saw in this area was in the UK, where a programme to increase the number of teachers recruited from the minority ethnic population was launched in 1997 (see p 27 above, and also (Leathwood *et al*, 2008, p 8). This has resulted in a current recruitment rate into initial teacher education that is now nearly equivalent to the distribution of the minority ethnic groups in the population (of young adults) as a whole, and almost three times the rate in the early 1990s. The teaching profession is now beginning to match the cultural variety of the population as a whole. However, in terms of achieving a fully representative profession, it will still take up to forty years before minority ethnic teachers are fully represented across the age range of the entire profession, and at all grades of teaching.

Long-term strategies are needed to achieve this. Teacher education institutions will point to the lack of suitable applications from members of these groups, or even of members of these groups aspiring to be teachers. Some examples of first steps in the process would be the involvement of parents from the groups in question in their children's education, and the development of aspirations to participate. Such participation might be in some cases through employment in non-teaching posts, while in others it might be to encourage the parents to develop their own education. An example is seen in Sweden, where the Romani Chib involves parents in mother tongue teaching, with teachers agreeing that the multicultural nature of the school population should be regarded as a valuable resource, and that pupils should feel that their mother tongue is a valuable resource. The school in question now has started a developmental work in cooperation with Borås University College. The next stage in such a process would be the development of specific access courses into teacher education, targeting community members and preparing them to join mainstream courses. Beyond that, trained teachers from these groups will almost certainly need sustained support to be given positions in schools, and to be supported in their professional work, as they will almost certainly encounter some prejudicial attitudes from some colleagues and from parents.

There are a number of risks to not addressing the issues, and to not tackling educational inequalities. There will be increased educational disadvantage, with minority communities further isolated. These communities will encounter difficulties in achieving economic self-sufficiency. The lack of cultural recognition of their identities will undermine the concept of a Europe of Diversity. Despite all of this, there is still evidence that sometimes some of the issues are being evaded. We now turn to address these evasions.

5 Evading the Issues

Although all countries in the European Union have a commitment to achieving equality of educational provision, and of implementing policies to minimise inequalities between groups, we became aware over the course of our analysis that there were a number of ways in which the policy discourse on equality and inequality was on some occasions being used to evade particular issues. As we pointed out in the opening chapter (p 4), such institutional inequality does not have to be conscious for it to have deleterious effects, and it is quite possible for an institution to be committed to the elimination of inequality, but to nevertheless unwittingly maintain or develop practices and policies that undermine this.

In this chapter we have identified four significant kinds of policies that, we believe, act to undermine and evade the achievement of equality of educational outcomes. These include

- firstly, sometimes denying the existence of a group or groups within society, members of which may be suffering from some form of educational disadvantage;
- secondly, a confusion over categories, and particular over intersectionality, where there are multiple social and cultural aspects contributing to inequity, and /or confusion over statistical data in this respect;
- thirdly, the way in which other national policy agendas may compete or conflict with the equality agenda; and
- finally, the way in which some 'equality policies' may lead to an evasion of addressing the underlying objectives.

Denial of disadvantaged groups

We found examples of two different kinds of tendencies in different countries.

In some countries, perhaps particularly some of those countries that were still very conscious of having had to assert their own national identity, there was a reluctance to recognise that their populations were not homogeneous, and that in their countries there were groups that were perceived (by themselves, and/or by the majority population) as being in some way 'different', and not achieving in terms of educational outputs or markers the same general level of attainment as the majority. In some countries, arguments of individual difference were used to justify inequality towards groups, and suggestions that there might be structural or systematic inequalities were denied.

In those countries where recent immigration has had an important impact, the homogeneity of the country has been effectively challenged. Many European countries have a substantial earlier history of emigration, in the 19th and first part of the 20th centuries. Some of this emigration effectively removed or greatly reduced substantial minority groups, so that countries became largely monocultural. We note in our report on minority ethnic disadvantage (Williams *et al*, 2009, p 9) that previously homogenous societies, such as Ireland and Greece, have moved from being emigration to reception countries (see also Moreau *et al*., 2008, 7; and Spinthourakis *et al*., 2008b). Immigrants to these countries may be seen as presenting a challenge, to both the educational infrastructure and the national identity, and also can raise questions about who can 'be' a citizen. Each national government exercises a role in policing the boundaries of citizenship and defining who is 'national' and who is 'alien' (Mac an Ghaill, 1999, p86). Some of the countries that acceded to the Union in 2004, while not having, as yet, issues of in-migration, also are sometimes reluctant to admit to difference and differentiation within their population. These policies make it hard to identify accurately where inequalities occur in education, or their extent.

A second example of denial is found in some longer established nations. In particular, the concept of all citizens being equally incorporated into a republican society militates against the recognition of minorities, or of any form of difference. This, we suggest, confuses the equal incorporation of all citizens into the political sphere with their potentially unequal incorporation into social, cultural and economic spheres. Pragmatically, minorities assert their identities and to that extent, at least, exist, and we suggest that to minimise educational inequalities policy makers need to address the reality, rather than national rhetoric.

The term 'minority ethnic group' in particular is used differentially between countries. One issue is that the concept of ethnicity, as developed by anthropologists, is a self-defined (and therefore, contingent) category, and this challenges those who wish only to employ essentialist and unambiguous categories. Another issue is that the term ethnicity is used in some countries to categorise groups that other countries would see as indigenous. For example, the Roma are classified as ethnic minorities in some states, such as Denmark (Cederberg *et al*, 2008a, p 10). Greece only officially recognises one minority group, the Muslims of Thrace (Spinthourakis *et al*.,2008b), and Malta there is official silence about the existence of certain minority groups (Vallejo and Dooly, 2008, p 8). However, in practical terms in Greece there are policies to address disadvantages suffered by newer immigrants and the Roma, which suggests pragmatic recognition a int the policy level, if not at constitutional level (see Williams *et al*, 2009, p 4). In some states the use of the term ethnicity itself is contested, such as France and Luxembourg, both of which do not collect data by ethnicity and officially refuse to recognise ethnic difference (Étienne *et al*, 2008; Tozzi *et al*, 2008). Despite its multicultural population, Luxembourg expressly prohibits data collection about ethnicity and restricts the recording of information to nationality.

Some groups are more generally unrecognised. A European-wide analysis of school bullying of pupils who are lesbian and gay found 53 per cent of respondents reporting being bullied, and 43 per cent asserting prejudice or discriminative elements in the school curriculum (Takács, 2006). The European Commission has encouraged Member States to take measures to combat discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2009, p 5).

The recognition of a disadvantaged group has generally come about through identifying inequality of outcomes, and from this examining whether these may result from inequalities of opportunities. This has led at different times to the identification and definition of groups that may not previously have been recognised or conscious of themselves as groups. There is a discernable sequence in the identification of groups that suffer some form of educational disadvantage. Members of the group may begin by discussing between themselves various evidence of educational underachievement, and may, over time, suggest that institutional processes may account for these. Policy makers are likely to suggest that evidence of inequalities in practice, and of underachievement, needs to be provided. Research (official, academic research or other) will be undertaken to demonstrate any such disadvantage: this may present issues concerning identification of members of the group, not all of whom may recognise the issues involved, or necessarily be willing to identify themselves. If evidence can be collected, it will usually take time for professional bodies to be convinced. Attempts will need to be made to quantify the extent of the disadvantage. Steps may then to be taken to modify or adapt professional practice and institutional policy, possibly through the allocation of resources targeted to address the inequality - though how this is done may depend on the currently accepted 'explanations' for the causes of the inequality. Monitoring measures will be needed to evaluate the success or otherwise of the targeted approach on unequal social provision or outcome.

Confusing categories

There is a tendency for many policy makers to subsume all inequalities under the general category of the (socio-) economic. Clearly, family poverty does have a strong impact on educational attainment and participation. But there are other inequalities that may compound the simple explanatory power of poverty. Different categories intersect with each other. Sometimes, for example, ethnic minority categorisation conceals socio-economic disadvantage. Social class, as an analytic concept, is not now common in official use with reference to educational disadvantage (it may be seen as politically undesirable) (Cederberg *et al*, 2009, p 8). Class is sometimes seen as an individual set of attributes, rather than as structural relationships of power and inequalities (as is gender and ethnicity) (Moreau *et al*, 2008). But there is much research showing how social class positions affect school career: for example, Jackson, 1968; Willis, 1977; and Skeggs, 1997. It may be simpler for governments to attribute inequalities to poverty than to acknowledge more complex patterns of discriminatory behaviour towards disadvantaged groups.

Some groups in particular are disadvantaged because their members appear to be 'invisible'. One of our Country Reports observes:

> …most official and public texts that deal with disadvantage (eg legal norms, administrative texts, media news, academic production) tend to relate it to 'visible' differences (Actis 1997; Pereda *et al.* 1997) – eg physical or ethnic characteristics - thus putting some groups, such as immigrants or the physically or mentally disabled, in the public eye while 'erasing' other groups whose conditions do not derive from evident, physical features (eg lower socio-economic classes or indigenous, historic linguistic minorities). Moreover, difference is often conceptualised as equal to *deficit*, according to this "different/deficient" scale (Pereda *et al.* 1997).
>
> (Dooly, *et al*, 2008b, p 7).

In Malta, the official discourse of social and educational disadvantage is in terms of "students with special learning needs" (usually not specifying which disadvantages): this discourse enhances the government's commitment to inclusive education for all. But it can also be argued that the use of the term 'special needs' subsumes other groups and draws attention away from the specific needs of each group (Vallejo and Dooly, 2008, p 5). In Ireland, educational disadvantage has till very recently been largely constructed in socio-economic terms (Moreau *et al*, 2008, p 10). As Lodge and Lynch (2004) point out, "although vital for the promotion of equality generally, the focus on socioeconomic status has overshadowed the impact of other differences" (p 1).

The language and terms used in descriptions of disability and special educational need are particularly interesting. The vocabulary is changing: terms such as 'defective', common in the early 20th century in western Europe (and much later in eastern Europe) have now been discredited. But different national policies use different vocabularies, and the nuances attached to these continue to convey important attitudes towards issues of 'normality' and 'homogeneity', in effect pathologising individuals and groups who underachieve or fail to meet the norm. In Sweden, Kärfve (2000) asserted, with supported from some professionals, that neuropsychiatric research systematically rejects or ignore alternative explanations on children's hyperactivity and concentration problems (Hartsmar, 2008, p 22). The move in several countries from using the term 'children *with* special needs' to 'children *in* special needs' emphasises that the problems children faced might not be due to qualities within the child, but rather a mark of their relationship with the surrounding society.

Also within this general heading of category confusion we should mention the way that inter-country tables of achievement are sometimes used. Surveys and analyses such as OECD and PISA (eg OECD, 2007, Haar *et al*, 2005; Stanat *et al*, 2007) are sometimes used in a way that masks

intra-country variations and the levels of attainment of different groups. Our Thematic Report on the socio-economic area (Cederberg *et al*, 2009, p 5) points to the criticisms of the methodology used in PISA, and in particular how the standardised design for all countries makes the content of the instruments context-less with respect to the diversity of national educational cultures and curricula (Wester, 2007). While the analysis of the context should take account of each country's reading culture and mathematical culture, the tasks are the same for pupils in all countries, so that the results do not reflect the context (Cederberg *et al*, 2008a, p 7).

Statistics are also sometimes used in a rather bland way to mask aspects of girls' educational achievement (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2009, p 5, 7). For example, the 'boys' underachievement debate "… masks the continuing problems faced by girls in schools; …reinforces male privilege by justifying a greater focus and expenditure on meeting boys' needs (at the expense of girls); and …deflects attention from the larger achievement gaps according to 'race' and social class" (Francis 2006, p 188). The attention now being placed on boys' underachievement (see Epstein *et al*. 1998) detracts attention away from the disadvantages girls' experience in education, particularly over subject choice, and masks "the fact that large numbers of girls are also low attainers" (DfES 2007, p 5).

Competing policy agendas

There are occasions where some equality policies may find themselves competing with other social and educational policies. This may lead to interference with the operation of the equalities policies. As Fraser (1997) observes, affirmative action policies may not address deeper structures of inequalities, and inequalities will then persist.

Examples of these include the restructuring of educational provision. For example, where schooling provision is reorganised, this may sometimes lead to intensifying the divisions between different types of schools, or between schools within the same category. The development of an audit culture in education, where schools and teachers are rated according to the successful outcomes of their pupils, may lead to unintended or perverse outcomes. If schools are ranked by performance in public examination results, there will be an inevitable pressure on schools to favour the admittance of those pupils who are judged likely to perform well in such examinations – and to attempt to minimise the recruitment of pupils less likely to achieve. In a context where particular groups are seen, as a whole, to perform less well, it is very possible that such practices will discriminate against the admission of whole groups. Such pupils will be admitted to some school, of course, but schools that are seen to 'perform well' in league tables, or the equivalent, may be less likely to admit children from such groups.

Another example of a perverse outcome can be the setting of standards of achievement. If schools or teachers are judged by the proportion of pupils achieving a particular standard, then they will be tempted to concentrate attention and resources on those pupils who are most likely to move through the threshold to achieve the standard. They will thus focus on particular pupils in a narrow ability band just below the threshold, and relatively neglect both those pupils who have already reached the required level, and those who are judged to have no chance of attaining the standard. This is the educational equivalent to medical triage: focussing resources on those most likely to survive/attain.

The provision of specialist resources themselves may have unintended consequences for the achievement of equality. Concentrating provision by bringing together pupils with particular needs can very easily create stereotypes of expectation and performance. For example, creating 'special classes' for children whose mother tongue is not the mainstream may create what are seen as ghettos of under-performance, separating and creating a group who are perceived as 'different' and in some way inferior (Dooly *et al*, 2009).

Policies designed to move unemployed parents into work may also sometimes militate against the educational achievement of their children. Whilst it is clear that family income (socio-economic status) is linked to educational inequalities (Cederberg *et al*, 2009), programmes that focus on long-term unemployed parents (particularly in one-parent families) to provide training and employment access may take parents into relatively low-paid positions with long working hours, leaving them less able to effectively engage in supporting their children's education. Focussing additional adult literacy and life-long learning programmes on more 'vulnerable' adults – who are often mostly mothers or women in general – runs the risk of reifying the 'nurturing' role of women as mothers or caretakers, as the only ones in charge of supporting their child's studies. This may be an unexpected and negative outcome of such policies (Vallejo and Dooly, 2008, p 11).

Policies that do not address equality of outcome

There are a number of instances where policies that have the intention of addressing inequality are, in effect, misdirected. It is common to focus resources and attention on members of a specific underachieving group, without considering the wider social and teacher expectations that may be leading to underachievement. It is common to shift the responsibility for successful outcomes to the individual, and to assume that all that is necessary is to provide 'equality of opportunity', and to stigmatise individuals who fail to take advantage of such 'opportunity'. This section considers several kinds of such policies.

We found many instances where there was a very prevalent assumption – not just by educational professionals and policy makers, but in society at large – that particular groups of people were expected to perform less well in educational performance and participation. There are quite prevalent assumptions that certain ethnic groups, some indigenous minorities, members of particular social classes, those with certain disabilities, those who had minority languages as their home language, and members of some faith groups would not be able to attain higher level educational qualifications, or take up opportunities for post-compulsory education. There are equally widespread assumptions about social and economic roles, that shape curricular options – not just for the above groups (who may be directed to more vocationally-orientated curricular options), but also to girls and women, who are presumed to be less able to follow particular academic subjects (or less interested in them), and to require fewer or more limited employment opportunities. The consequences of such attitudes may be realised, in terms of educational policy and provision, in the form of lower levels of resources, a limited curriculum, and low teacher expectations. Studies demonstrating the effect of teacher expectation on performance have been conducted in every decade - Merton, 1948, Rosenthal and Jacobs, 1968, Brophy *et al*, 1974, Good, 1987, Brophy, 1998 and Ferguson, 1998. According to Rogers (1991) over 400 studies had been reported between the early 1980s and 1991 and almost all of them found evidence of the 'Pygmalion' Effect.

We found many examples of teacher expectations of particular categories: among ethnic minorities (Lambrechts *et al*, 2008, p 8; Williams, 2009), linguistic minorities (Tozzi *et al*, 2008), children in special needs (Moreau *et al*, 2008, p 13), and Roma children (Vrabcova *et al* 2008a, p 12; 2008b, p 8). This criticism should not be seen as blaming or castigating teachers or educational authorities: they are merely reflecting widespread social discrimination against these groups. The effects are to lower levels of performance: members of these groups themselves feel that they are unable to achieve. The social stigmatisation becomes self-fulfilling.

A prime policy objective, therefore, should be to take steps to raise expectations: to encourage teachers and others to explicitly expect similar outcomes, to encourage members of the groups

themselves to expect to attain higher outcomes, and to change general levels of social expectations and confound prevalent stereotypes.

Other associated policies also do not effectively contribute to equality of outcomes. For example, shifting responsibility to communities to find solutions themselves fails to address the wider social context of stereotyping and prejudice in which members of the groups find themselves embedded. While we argue elsewhere that communities must not be disempowered and denied any agency in finding solutions, the responsibility for tackling discrimination lies with those who are exercising the discrimination, not those who are its targets. This is particularly so when such discrimination is structurally embedded in policies.

The most widespread issue inhibiting the achievement of equality of outcome, we conclude, is a neo-liberal reliance on policies of equality of opportunity. These seem to be very often used as an excuse to avoid action: it shifts responsibility for underachievement to the individual (often using such language as "*we* made the opportunities available, *they* failed to take advantage of them"). The rhetoric of offering choice and empowerment is unreal in such circumstances. In this neo-liberal discourse the full responsibility to be self-supporting is on the individual (Fraser 1997). While assumptions about the responsibility of the individual for the self are dominant (but not necessarily explicit), they act against policies and arguments that the school system (and other social structures) should compensate for structural and individual disadvantages (Cederberg *et al*, 2009, p 9).

As the UK Country report observes:

> The "individualisation of social risks" where "social problems are increasingly perceived in terms of psychological dispositions: as personal inadequacies" that Beck identified as part of the new modernity is evident (Beck 1992, p. 100) in policy discourse. There is insufficient recognition of the ways in which the structures, cultures and practices of the education system, including relatively recent developments in the name of competition, choice and diversity, reinforce and reconstruct inequalities.
>
> (Leathwood *et al*, 2008, pp 18-19).

The foregoing is not to deny that there has in recent years been much greater attention given to equality of outcomes, and to general notions of interculturality and the social realities of students. Equality is beginning to be more widely understood not only as equal access, but also as equality of outcomes. Yet equality of outcomes in official and legal rhetoric is not clearly defined and may, in part, lead to a lack of clear agency and responsibility about how to ensure equal provision of educational opportunities (see Dooly *et al*, 2008a, p 7).

6 Strategies that may Work

Introduction: starting points

So: what works? We begin with three critical starting points, and move from these to establish a set of principles. Our starting points are that firstly, identifying disadvantaged groups will be difficult and probably imprecise; secondly, that the causal relationships between action and remedy will be complex and call for multiple and parallel programmes; and thirdly, that activities need to be directed towards both the disadvantaged and the advantaged.

The ***identification of educational disadvantage*** and inequality of outcomes and of opportunities has not always been easy or straightforward. The recognition of a disadvantaged group has generally come about through identifying inequality of outcomes, and from this examining whether these may result from inequalities of opportunities. This has led at different times to the identification and definition of groups that may not previously have been recognised or conscious of themselves as groups. The evolution of a particular discourse of educational inequality would thus move from:

- individuals and groups recognising some form of discriminatory or unequal social provision or outcome; to
- some form of enquiry (official, academic research or other) demonstrating inequalities of outcomes arising from inequalities of opportunities;
- attempts to quantify the extent (geographic, categoric, etc) of the disadvantage;
- eventually the possible allocation of resources targeted to address the inequality, although how this is done may depend on the currently accepted 'explanations' for the causes of the inequality (see below); and
- some measures to evaluate the success or otherwise of this targeted approach.

But data collection to demonstrate inequalities will not be easy, particularly if there are issues in identifying members of a particular group. For example, some groups may have concerns and fears about being identified. It may be important, therefore, to also use qualitative evidence of inequity. Other areas may be difficult to quantify or categorise: for example, social exclusion in educational institutions through harassment and bullying.

The Swedish practice, where there is a single Ombudsman against all forms of discrimination, may be a useful model. The ombudsman takes the initiative on identifying and contact groups that he or she suspects my be disadvantaged in some way, and explains and emphasises to them their rights. They are helped to describe their situation, and from this the ombudsman can advise government and other authorities, or take cases to court (Ombudsmannen, 2008).

It also seems critical to understand in all approaches that there will be no simple monocausal ***relationships between inequalities and programmes***. It is very probable that no single programme will remedy *all* instances of a particular form of inequality; at the same time, almost every programme will successfully address *some* instances of inequality. To systematically address inequity, with the aspiration of leaving no individuals left behind, multiple programmes of action will be needed.

In many cases of forms of disadvantage, there is a strong case to work with the non-disadvantaged community as well as the disadvantaged. Tackling underachievement means ***raising expectations*** of success, and this involves everyone's expectations, not just the expectations of the lower achieving groups. The assumptions of all professionals, policy makers, community groups and the public at large should be that all groups will achieve educational success.

Twelve general principles for action

Figure 5

Principles for Action

Involve the communities

1. Involve the disadvantaged community in planning, delivery and evaluation

Strategies

2. Aim to permanently change the attitudes and expectations of everyone
3. Institutionalise programmes so they support all practitioners
4. Take a long term view of success and change
5. Work with a range of agencies, at a range of levels, in a range of areas
6. The best investment is in multilateral approaches, which will reach the whole population
7. Bring members of minority groups into the education professions

Tactics

8. Set clear targets for who will be worked with, and what should be achieved
9. Measure real outcomes, not proxies
10. Collect statistical and qualitative data on all aspects of the programme
11. Evaluate, learn from success, modify
12. Resource educational systems to make successful programmes standard good practice

1. Involve the disadvantaged community in planning, delivery and evaluation

Where communities are involved in identifying and defining issues, in the planning and management of programmes, and in the evaluation of programmes, the chances of success seem to be higher. It is important not merely to recognise the knowledge and experience that disadvantaged groups will have, and to respond in ways that are culturally sympathetic, but also to deliberately empower communities, and give them as sense of agency, power and direction over their futures. This will enhance individuals' self esteem, and help develop programmes that are carefully attuned to need (see Cummins, 1996; Henley, 2006).

2. Aim to permanently change the attitudes and expectations of everyone

Low expectations of success – whether by members of the under-performing group, or by the educational professionals or administrators, or by the population as a whole – leads to underperformance in, a self-fulfilling cycle. A principal strategic aim must be to raise the attitudes and expectations of everyone, and to devise programmes that have elements that are variously addressed to a much wider range of people than just the underperforming group themselves.

3. Institutionalise programmes so they support all practitioners

Programmes that segment and offer highly differentiated and targeted programmes can lead to potentially isolated specialists – and to most practitioners feeling that particular pupils are 'different' and can only be supported by specialist teachers, in specialist structures. This further isolates the group that is being targeted. Most initiatives should try to inform and support all educational practitioners work with disadvantaged pupils within their everyday work. This makes diversity mainstream.

4. Take a long term view of success and change

Educational processes take time. It takes many years to educate a child, and many years to change the whole teaching workforce. Programmes – and expectations of their full results – should be planned with this in mind.

5. Work with a range of agencies, at a range of levels, in a range of areas

Activities need to be organised so that they are delivered by a range of different agencies, and be delivered at national, regional and local level. Multi-agency working is more likely to produced coordinated action that reaches more pupils at risk, and approaches them with a variety support strategies. As well as support from official agencies, community and voluntary groups also need to be engaged in framing and delivering programmes.

6. The best investment is in multilateral approaches to the whole population

Just as no single programme will remedy all instances of a particular, so many programmes will successfully address some inequalities. Fixing on a single programme, even the most cost-effective, will leave some pupils outside the range of the programme. To have an effective reach, a range of approaches will be necessary.

7. Bring members of the minority groups into the education professions

It is very noticeable that there are few members of disadvantaged groups represented in the educational professions. As we have suggested, increasing the number of teachers and other professionals drawn from these groups will help raise the aspirations and ambitions of these groups, and convey to the larger population (and in particular to children) that members of such groups are entitled to the same respect, rights and authority as the general population.

8. Set clear targets for who will be worked with, and what should be achieved

Targets in some cases that we examined seemed to have been imprecise, leading to confusion and sometimes frustration amongst the educational professionals. Identifying not simply the group that is to be supported, but also the nature of what the difficulties are, the areas that are to be particularly addressed, and the anticipated outcomes, will all help focus activity.

9. Measure real outcomes, not proxies

As far as possible, policy should be based on measures of achievement, take-up and need, rather than on other measures that are taken to stand for these items. This will mean that attention is focussed on achieving real outputs, rather than on targets that only stand as proxies for them.

10. Collect statistical and qualitative data on all aspects

Greater attention needs to be given, at national and European levels, to the collection of statistics on disadvantaged groups. There may be difficulties about the degree of precision that is possible, but we would urge a pragmatic response, rather than no response. Good qualitative data will help illustrate statistical data, and will be useful where quantitative data is difficult to obtain. A good data base will help identify the existence of, and the extent of, inequalities; it will be of great practical use in helping determine the distribution of resources and programmes; and will also be necessary to help evaluate the success or otherwise of any interventions.

11. Evaluate, learn from success, modify

Every programme and project should have planned within it – from the very earliest stages – a mechanism to evaluate the activity. These evaluations should be both internal (every member of the team contributing to reflection and analysis as a contributing and iterative activity) and external (with a supportive but critical focus). We found a substantial proportion of projects where analysis was missing, post hoc or cursory. Sometimes the findings of evaluations were not fed back into the project management, or were ignored. It should be borne in mind that much can be learned from failure, but we noticed an unwillingness to acknowledge less successful programmes. As a matter of good practice, evaluations should be made public.

12. Make successful programmes standard good practice

Where evaluation of an initial programme shows that there have been positive effects, mechanisms need to be in place to roll the programme out on a larger scale. Resources need to be available to reallocate to allow this to happen. The principle suggested by John Rawls above (p 23) should be borne in mind: resources should not be allotted on the basis of economic returns, but "according to their worth in enriching the personal and social life of citizens, including the less favoured" (Rawls, 1971, p 107). However, simple transfer of successful good practice must always be tempered with an understanding of context-dependent factors.

Recommendations

We conclude that the general principals we have identified above should inform all educational initiatives that are designed to address social inequity.

In addition, we are making specific recommendations for different levels of responsibility within the education system. These are followed with summaries of the recommendations for each thematic area.

Recommendations for the European Commission

The Commission should initiate more detailed research and monitoring this area.

Institutions at all levels should be encouraged by the Commission to adequately resource practices that are based on the research evidence base (see for example the Primary National Strategy in the UK).

Data definitions should be brought together in different countries, so that evidence is comparable, and the Commission should take a lead in initiating this (see Williams *et al*, 2009).

As part of this, the Commission should introduce and support a cross-national monitoring programme to evaluate change and progress. This could include a series of longitudinal studies that

would track changes, supported for at least 10 years to monitor developments that will inevitably be long-term in nature.

Statistics at European level need to reflect intersectionality between differently disadvantaged groups. This is not often acknowledged, and more nuanced statistics would allow greater complexity to be reflected in subsequent analysis. Currently, many different labels are used in different analyses.

The Commission should establish and support networks of researchers, policy-makers and practitioners who can promote learning from and about particular educational equality issues (see Étienne *et al*, 2009).

The Commission should encourage research that will support 'bottom up' policies, using local knowledge and expertise (see Dooly *et al*, 2009).

The Commission could encourage individual countries to undertake projects at national level, offering to help coordinate and exchange information about policies and practice.

We suggest four specific areas of inequality where the Commission might take the initiative:

i. A focus on the Roma, with a cross-national approach, and working closely with members of the Roma community, to support and fund programmes that will raise participation in education (Vrabcova *et al*, 2009).

ii. An initiative on supporting the maintenance of minority languages with young children: it is necessary to first develop competence in Language 1 in order to ensure that learning in Language 2 can occur. The Commission needs to actively support Language 1 learning, at all levels (Dooly *et al*, 2009).

iii. Poverty and inequities in the distribution of wealth remain a very dominant issue, and Commission initiatives in addressing the impact of this on education could make a significant difference (Cederberg *et al*, 2009, p 6-7).

iv. The Commission could initiate research and encourage programmes that would address issues of sexuality and educational inequalities (Spinthourakis *et al*, 2009, p 5).

Recommendations for policy makers at the National level

Governments and educational agencies should exercise caution in their use of language and rhetoric in policy to refer to groups as 'foreigners', 'citizens', 'outsiders', etc. More appropriate language should be used in the framing of policy, to show greater recognition of the fact that there has been substantial and permanent change in the population. This will ease 'othering', and support aspirations, ambitions and achievement of educational equalities. (see Dooly *et al*, 2007b, Dooly *et al* 2007c; the KMS project in Belgium.)

Initiatives and programmes are necessarily mediated by the ways in which they are implemented, and therefore need to sensitively address the cultural practices of the population or community being addresses, using contextually appropriate processes that recognise and identify issues and problems, rather than simply 'translating' them (Cederberg *et al*, 2009, p 16).

Governments and educational agencies should always seek to develop accessible policies through working with disadvantaged groups, including them in the negotiation of policies and their implementation (as with ONCE Foundation, in Spain).

Governments and educational agencies should identify, acknowledge and promote grass-roots projects, using copycat effects to disseminate practice that works. There need to be country-level policies to seek out, recognise, train and employ staff drawn from local communities. (see Bikes for everyone, in Spain; the Coeducation project, also Spain; and Working Together in Greece).

We found many national initiatives and projects that were not evaluated, or weakly evaluated, or the evaluation findings were not made known: governments should make public evaluation of all such initiatives part of routine practice.

Governments should carefully examine potential contradictions in policy, that may have perverse outcomes that accentuate on maintain disadvantage.

Recommendations for policy makers at regional level

Policy makers should identify and resource their own local and regional priorities, and not necessarily subsume all their activities under a national 'umbrella'. They should recognise that data and research may need to operate at the local and regional level, and that it is important to examine diversity within countries, not minimising or homogenising local variations (Etienne *et al*, 2009).

Regional and local policy makers are well placed to initiate and empower joint action between minority and majority groups (see Geurts *et al*, 2008 for examples of integrative activity). The Working Together project in Greece shows how include local democratic processes can be harnessed, and the Mangfoldighed project in Denmark exemplifies how a day care centre can give voice to minorities.

Regional in-service training for professionals in the area will prepare them to focus on specific local and regional needs (as exemplified by the French Education for Orientation programme). Another example of such needs, to lower exclusion rates and the marginalisation of those who are disadvantaged, is the Danish pilot project Inkluderende laeringsmiljoer.

Training and updating programmes are also possible through cooperation between local authorities and higher education providers (Cederberg *et al*, 2008a), possibly also involving 'Think Tank' organisations (Hartsmar, 2008) .

Recommendations for policy makers at the institutional and practitioner level

Educational institutions, teachers and other educational professions need to strive not to have low expectations of any particular group in society, and to work with parents and communities to increase ambitions and aspirations. We found a number of examples of good practice in the development of understanding at the local level. For example in Denmark a local programme of seminars for teachers about research on diversity issues (Cederberg *et al*, 2008b), also outlines in the report on socio-economic disadvantage Cederberg *et al*, 2009, p 14).

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Whole-school approaches to educational disadvantage are particularly recommended. We suggests that schools need to explicitly evaluate equality outcomes in their school, examining data and considering how they meet their equality duties (see Étienne *et al*, 2008, p 10). We found examples of good practice in the Coeducation project in Spain, where there was staff 'ownership' of the equality agenda, and a extended school in Albertslunf in Denmark, where the distribution and

attainment of all minority groups was analysed at the whole-school level, and programmes implemented to focus activity (the Rolling full-day school).

In Spain, one school level project addressed religious diversity in the area, looking at all world religions (the Religions in the world project), and in another school the Three cultures project developed curricular initiatives to address diversities. The Swedish Andraspråksutveckling (Language preparatory classes) show how at school level teachers of first and second languages and researchers can work together with newly-arrived children in Sweden to address minority language inequalities.

Summary of recommendations on socio-economic disadvantage

(see Cederberg *et al*, 2009)

EU policy makers:

- Relate general goals for economic growth and improvement in educational attainment to group-related goals, such as support for poorer disadvantaged groups in education. These strategies may coincide.
- Encourage further targeted economic resources for educational to address socio-economic disadvantaged groups in education.
- Promote examples of good practice across national and local contexts.

Education policy makers (national, regional and local):

- Balance compensatory measures, anti-discriminatory measures, and integrated social and pedagogic frameworks, where existing strategies may not always coincide.
- Balance overall educational outcomes with support for disadvantaged groups. There may be a need to emphasise financial support to protect the rights of disadvantaged groups.
- Include support to evaluate all projects, from the planning stage on.
- Promote examples of good practice that address varying local, school and class contexts.
- Involve disadvantaged groups and communities in the design, management and delivery of projects.

Research:

- Further research is needed on socioeconomic disadvantage in relation to education. This should include studies of how poverty affects children's school life, and how schools meet these children's needs. International studies that consideration different contexts would be useful.
- *Teachers and other involved professional persons:*
- Encouraged teachers to engage in action research activities on development practice with socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- Local decision-making on educational priorities that address inequities, at school level and agreed between heads and teachers, will focus practice and resources.

Summary of recommendations on linguistic minority disadvantage

(see Dooly *et al*, 2009)

EU policy-makers:

- Encourage policy-makers at European level to raise public awareness on issues of linguistic minorities. Forge Europe-wide and accessible policies, through negotiation with all the major stakeholders including minority language groups, for educational institutions to value linguistic maintenance and diversity.
- Promote European-wide research of bi-lingual and multilingual language learning as a redress to minority language inequalities,
- Encourage all players at the European level to resource the implementation of sound practice in the maintenance of minority language education. This could include European-wide strategies to support and strengthen publishing in minority languages.

National and regional education policy-makers:

- Provide continued in-service training to support teachers in working entho-linguistically diverse contexts, and promote multidisciplinary teaching and workgroups at national and regional levels. Provide and support specific training in language and literacy development in cross-disciplinary areas.
- Support minority language education in the school curriculum.
- Consider whether assessment strategies and practices support linguistic minority children.
- Encourage innovative teaching approaches for minority language groups.

Local administration (heads of schools, local education authorities, etc.):

- Support investment in supporting linguistic minorities (money, time, space, resources, teacher support). Provide space for school-wide reflection on traditional practice.
- Encourage multidisciplinary work teams in both school and locality contexts.
- Disseminate examples of good practice at the local level.

Teacher training institutions:

- Integrate positive attitudes towards the attainment of linguistic minorities in all teacher training courses (not just for specialist teachers).
- Use multidisciplinary approaches to integrate aptitudes and knowledge in dealing with diversity.
- Prepare teachers to successfully use the resources of minority language students in the classroom.

Teachers and other educational practitioners:

- Understand how language diversity supports individual development. Recognise the individual developmental stages of pupils.
- Accept all languages in the classroom, whether ‘prestige’ or ‘non-prestige’ languages.
- Legitimise the presence and use of multiple languages, and accept language-switching.
- Avoid focusing on the prescriptive and formalised use of languages.
- Correct errors effectively and non-judgementally: in particular, recognise learners’ use of inter-linguistic strategies and do not label them as ‘errors’ or ‘deficient’.
- Integrate peer tutoring into teaching approaches.

Summary of recommendations on indigenous minority disadvantage

(see Vrabcova *et al*, 2009)

EU policy-makers:

- Raise public awareness of inequities that disadvantage indigenous minorities in Europe.
- Support research that focuses on the needs and aspirations of indigenous minorities across Europe.
- Bring the position of minorities into European political debates, education policies and school curricula across Europe. Support and evaluate policies and projects that address the educational needs of indigenous minorities.
- Develop an information network of data on the education of indigenous minorities in Europe.

National and regional education policy-makers:

- Raise positive public awareness about the unequal position of many indigenous minorities.
- Establish national research platforms that focus on indigenous minorities.
- Develop education policies and curricula that support indigenous minority achievement. Ensure that systemic evaluation of projects and strategies supports achievements of the indigenous minorities.
- |Develop curricula materials that support and respect indigenous minorities, and raise teachers' awareness and teaching skills.

Local administration (heads of schools, local education authorities, etc.):

- Ensure sufficient investment in money, time and effort.
- Systemic evaluate practice, identify and disseminate good practice.
- Support networks of data on supporting indigenous minorities' education.
- Encourage multidisciplinary work in and beyond the school context.

Institutions (NGOs, schools, municipalities, teacher training institutions, universities etc.)

- Systemically evaluate practice, initiatives and attainment. Participate in the dissemination of good practice.
- Use – and add to – the data that is available on the education of indigenous minorities.
- Support and participate in in-service education, projects and strategies designed to address the inequalities met by indigenous people.
- Develop and support positive attitudes in training courses for teachers, NGO workers, the public, and parents etc.
- Use multidisciplinary approaches to integrate knowledge and practice in dealing with diversity and the indigenous minorities in Europe.

Summary of recommendations on gender disadvantage

(see Spinthourakis *et al*, 2009)

EU level:

- Boys and girls should not be treated as homogenous groups, but as individuals, with initiatives that focus on the individual needs of the participants.
- Gender-related educational policy should be directly linked to employment practices, in order to ameliorate the pay gap between males and females.
- Issues of sexuality issues need to be given equal treatment and exposure.

National level:

- Gender equality training initiatives should not end with training, but should be followed through to appropriate placement, implementation and assessment of the trainees' effectiveness.
- Countries should work towards the inclusion of gender equality related courses in teacher training programmes and teacher accreditation.
- School curriculum reform should aim to eradicate gender stereotyping in school textbooks and other teaching materials.
- Increase funding for local initiatives that can demonstrate success.
- Collect and disseminate best practice in the effective implementation of sexuality and gender equality policies and strategies.

Local:

- Work with disadvantaged gender group stakeholders whether they are women, men, or LGBTs in planning, implementing, and monitoring projects identified as priorities by their communities.
- Link NGOs with individual groups to provide awareness raising of gender equality issues.
- Employ career counsellors trained in issues of gender equality, gender stereotyping and anti-discrimination practices since gender differences can partially be attributed to stereotypical subject choice of women.
- Participate in the development and monitoring of policies and curriculum development that promotes good practice in sexual equality.

School and Practitioner level:

- Develop policies that specifically reference to gender as a factor in inequality in the school environment.
- Develop policies that make specific reference to issues of sexuality.
- Discuss the planning, development and implementation of strategies to address gender inequalities with their stakeholders
- Practitioners should accommodate gender differences through gender-sensitive teaching by including tasks and activities that address the needs of different learning styles and preferences as well as avoiding stereotypes.
- Schools should foster parental involvement in gender related policies, strategies and activities.
- Schools should develop anti-bullying initiatives involving the curriculum, targeted group and intensive individual intervention.

Summary of recommendations on minority ethnic disadvantage

(see Williams *et al*, 2009)

EU policy:

- Encourage consistent and uniform definitions of minority ethnic groups, regarding immigrants as current migrants rather than including EU nationals whose parents were migrants. Do not use refugee status, cultural heritage, religion and home language as a proxy for minority ethnic status. Many minority ethnic groups in Europe have a long history in the country, share the majority language and religion and still face disadvantages which are missed in much cross-national research.
- Encourage and commission cross-national data that can be used by researchers and policy makers to assess educational experiences and outcomes for minority ethnic young people.

National

- Challenge low teacher expectations, racist bullying and unequal access to elite courses and institutions.
- Embed anti-racist practice as part of initial teacher training and continuing professional development.
- Increase resources for schools and districts to provide a good standard of support for students of all ethnicities.
- Be aware that parental school choice policies often result in increased ethnic segregation and social polarisation.
- Research whether changes in social heterogeneity have been reflected in the teaching workforce, and implement policies to redress the under representation of particular groups.
- Address the treatment of children and young people seeking asylum and their access to equal educational opportunities.

Local

- Increasing the focus on the evaluation of educational practices and initiatives designed to encourage equalities for minority ethnic groups. Develop information on the success or challenges which resulted from policy initiatives and interventions.
- Work with minority ethnic groups in designing and implementing projects: projects which work with both majority and minority populations play an important role in shifting debates in this area away from changing minority groups to communities working together to reduce inequality.

School and Practitioner level

- Schools and local education authorities should develop and implement race equality policies which set out clear guidelines for staff and students, in relation to staff recruitment, school admissions, discipline, curriculum, attainment.
- Schools take account of allegations of racist bullying and work to create a respectful and inclusive school environment.
- Examine assessment, ability groupings and outcomes in relation to ethnicity, to identify differences in group attainment and to implement strategies to raise attainment and to challenge teachers' perceptions.
- Schools should ensure practitioners have access to high-quality training in anti-racist practice.
- Schools should work with parents and all sections of the local community

Summary of recommendations on disability disadvantage

(see Lambrechts *et al*, 2009)

For EU policy:

- Promote the policy that inclusive education will require resources and support if it is to be of quality.
- Educational policy for specific educational needs require a framework for evaluation. Goals should be more specific, and it should be clear what effects the schools are expected to achieve.
- Further involvement of parents, especially of parents from children with specific educational needs is recommended.

For educational policymakers:

- Inclusive education cannot be an economic measure. Extra support provisions will be expensive, but without them qualitative education cannot be guaranteed.
- Although structural changes may seem good practice, countries should ensure that changes can be implemented properly in practice.
- External expertise should not only be used in working with the child, but especially for making school staff more apt to deal with the specific needs of the child and children with similar needs.
- Educational policies on specific educational needs require evaluation.
- Policy makers should involve parents, especially parents of children with specific educational needs, in all projects, policies, initiatives and evaluations. .

For local administration:

- Extra support provisions will be expensive, but without them qualitative education cannot be guaranteed.
- External expertise should not only be used in working with the child, but especially for helping school staff better able to deal with specific of children with similar needs.
- Educational policies needs to be evaluated.
- Isolated approaches to deal with unequal opportunities will not be enough: educators need to cooperate with other policy domains (welfare, equal opportunities, integration and culture).
- Parents of children with specific educational needs should be closely involves in local and school initiatives and policies.

For teacher training and/ or in service training:

- Teacher training must prepare students for inclusion in schools, and in service training must help teachers acquire further skills in dealing with the heterogeneity of classes.
- Equality of opportunity may not be enough. Teacher training should take Equality of outcomes into consideration as the goal.

For teaching strategies

- Ensure no excessive strains are put upon schools or classroom teachers.
- Further involvement of parents of children with specific educational needs.

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