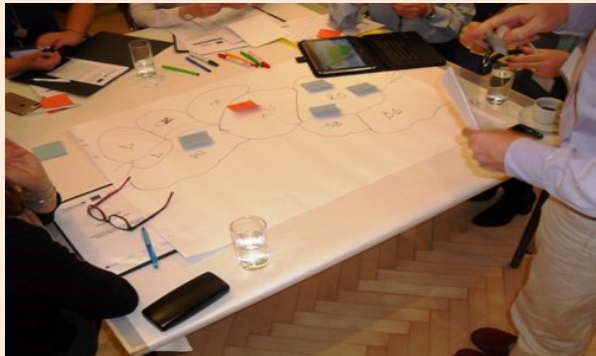**EUSDR-Workshop: NEETs / Early School Leavers**
17/18 December 2018, Vienna

REPORT

Sonja Gruber, 19.12.2018

1. IMPORTANT OUTCOMES OF THE FIRST DAY

1.1 Introduction – Who is here today?

"Background" of the participants– Who is here?

- People from 13 of the 14 countries of the Danube Region
- 9 people from ministries
- 15 people from NGO´s
- 2 people from Universities
- 4 people from other organizations

"Interviews" and "mapping" of the participants home country

1.2 Keynote Speech

Julia Szalai and Agnes Kende from the Central European University spoke about the situation of ESL in Hungary:

- mostly young Roma people
- ethnicized inequalities in education – the institutional framework creates huge differences and the young people have to face multiple disadvantages; bad schools and teachers in regions, where mostly Roma people live; cumulative discrimination – school, labour market

Presentation of the **„Tanoda" Study Hall**– a project, that is an answer to the dysfunction of mainstream education. Principles of the Tanoda study halls are:

- Non-formal pedagogical methodologies, children feel like at home in the family/familiar surrounding
- Teachers from school don´t work at Tanoda study halls – different pedagogical staff
- There is also a training program for Tanoda-teachers – nevertheless there is a lack of specialized teachers, because Tanoda study halls are often in remote areas.

1.3 "Mapping" of the different countries

- **Current numbers on NEETs and ESL – Diversity of data collection:** Methodology of data collection is very different in the different countries – So it is not easy to compare the data of the countries. Sometimes there is also no data available and data is not always recognized as strategic issue.
- In the countries themselves there are also often **big differences from region to region.** In some regions there is no problem with ESL, in others there are many ESL. That´s the reason why you mostly don't find nationwide programs, but rather initiatives on a local level. **Key challenges and positive developments:** different from country to country

Austria:

- Statistik Austria: ESL (18 – 24) – 2017: 7,4 % (51.600 young people), trend is going down. NEETs (15 – 24) – 2017: 6.5% (62.600 young people)
- Individual barriers: language, social barriers, cultural barriers, motivation, parents…Systematic barriers: selective school systems, not inclusive; image of vocational education – „it´s not very attractive to young people to do vocational education"; quality of (vocational) education, integration of migrants/refugees (government shortens programs). Young choose the same education as their parents.
- Positive: Youth guarantee – measures (youth coaching – very individualized measure), production schools, other measures.

Bosnia & Herzegovina:

- 2016 est. 23 % NEETs, 2011 est. 3 % ESL
- No studies/research on (relevant) topics, topics not recognized as strategic issue, complexity of implementation/design educational reform, lack of CSOs services targeting directly NEETs/ESL
- Positive: Laws on adult education as institutional ground.

Bulgaria:

- NEETs: 22 % of all aged 15 – 24. Around 170.000 persons (UNICEF, 2015)
- Lack of targeted local policies on NEETs. Unfavourable educational structure in small settlements, lack of motivation among young people to go to school, to find a job. No sufficient information.
- Positive changes: more actors are getting involved, Roma mediators, VET Centres (vocational training centres)

Czech Republic:

- ESL (people older than 15) mostly Roma, migrants, refugees, disabled 6,7 %
- Social excluded localities and endangered groups. Different composition of the population in the regions, different methodological school management. Still a lot of frontal teaching at secondary schools. Increasing age gap between pupils and teachers. Social Benefits & Motivation to accept work.
- Positive: Safe arrival project – First identifying endangered students, then intervention of teachers, then support inclusive environment. Karlsbad: Project for motivating students – work with teachers, parents and pupils – class conferences, adaptation stays for pupils, establishment of regional centre for families, supervision for teachers (Balint), memory training, tutoring, visits of successful graduates

Croatia:

- NEETs: 20 % (19 – 29), 350.000 population finished grades/elementary school. 3,1 % ESL. Percentage is going down.
- Poor social/material condition, new curricula introduces, lack of motivation and interest, social deployment, absence of systematic data. Young people are leaving Croatia. 175.000 young people in 2 years

- Challenge: business sector has shown interest (also financially) – cooperation on co-financing a part of students – pilot projects (STEM – technology), co-financing books/school materials & transport for elementary and high school.

Germany

- Report 2017 (strategy): in total 5.9% (2015) of school leavers, in the beginning of the strategy implementation: 8 %. Differences between north and south (HA: 11,3 %, MVP: 12, 6 %, BW: 6,3 %, BA: 7,9 %)
- Germany´s educational system very federalistic, all-day schools, social selectivity
- Positive: non-formal education – cooperation between NGO´s and schools. National level: „strengthening youth" initiatives (disabilities, migration); „opportunities for parents" (refugee support). Regional level: street children assistance (Stuttgart), EATA – transfer academy (Ellwangen).

Hungary:

- NEETs: 17,5%, ESL: 12,5 %
- no reliable statistics, not all factors measured, it would be tackled as a Roma problem only.
- Positive: Study hall projects („Tandora"), introduction of „early warning system" helping to prevent school drop outs, mandatory kindergarten from the age of 3.

Moldova:

- NEETs: 28 %, ESL: 18 % (age 14 – 29)
- Low nationality rates, 20 % youth in 10 years, migration, poor integrations system, old fashion education systems, children in general are not very excited about schools
- + 2 % school participation, new educational code, more attention to inclusion, more openness to learn (government and NGOs)

Montenegro:

- Eurostat-Data: 2017 – ESL 5,4%, NEETs 21,4 % (15 – 29)
- No strategic framework exclusively dedicated to ESL, high dropout rates RAE population , lack of policy targeting NEETs – „we are still in the process of mapping NEETs"
- Positive: increase the number of mediators and assistants in social inclusion (new qualifications within NQF), goal: prevention of early school leaving and integration, motivating the children/youth to go to school. A lot of activities – outreach activities

Romania:

- NEETs: 19,3 % (Eurostat 2017), ESL: 18.1% (aged 18 – 24, have not finalized compulsory education – 10 grades). Unemployment rate (age 15 – 24): 15 %. Employment Rate (age 15 – 24): 26 %-
- High rate of ESL in rural area, insufficient training of teachers, Outreaching NEETs – inclusion in PES programs (public employment). Matching education with needs of labour market offers. Raising awareness upon the available opportunities in education and labour market offers; raise awareness for labour market opportunities for young people (they are often not aware)

- Positive developments: Second Chance Programs (for those who have abandoned schools)- you can join the program whenever you want, program is very flexible). School vouchers for kindergarten to stimulate attendance to ESL. Intespo project, school supplies for primary and lower secondary school. C.R.E.D. project – teacher trainings. Youth guarantee implementation plan (professional scholarship, money for high school, apprenticeships, mobility)

Serbia:

- NEET (15 – 23): 2014: 20,4 %; 2015: 19,9 %; 2016: 17,7 %; 2017: 17,2 %; 2018: 16,3 %. Dropout rate (primary education) – early school leavers (18 – 24): 5,8 % (-0,3)
- Data collection methodology, coordination and cooperation between institutions, civil organizations, local authorities (regions), private sector. Early recognition of at risk groups, students of ESL. Education that can better answer to the labour market needs. Transition from work to employment.
- Positive: Project WB – inclusive preschool education. Developed Model – Prevention of early school leaving (Unicef), employment caravans, recognition and support to social entrepreneurs/governmental programs

Slovakia:

- ESL in Slovakia are significantly lower than EU average
- Problem with some parts in the East of Slovakia – avoid geographical differences regarding ESL concentration. Introduction of legislation on supporting educational chances for socially disadvantaged groups.
- Positive: 2015 act on VET (vocational education trainings) and novelisation 2018. Innovation of educational programs (special apprenticeship programs) offering more effective achievement of lower education. Pilot project – integration of mentally disabled into VET.

Slovenia:

- Formal number of school dropouts: 2.500. Approximately 16.000 (age 16 – 29) unemployed. Age 25 – 15 % unemployed population under 2.000.000), 16.000 young people unemployed.
- No common data base, many individual databases (personal data protection) – lack of cooperation between institution, they are not allowed to share the data. NEETs are a very diverse vulnerable group. How to reach NEETs? A lot of good projects for specific target groups for NEETs, but no connection between them.
- Positive: network of 17 guidance centres in Slovenia, network of 12 programs – project learning for young adults (age 15 – 26), one year program guided by SIAE and financed by Ministry for education. A lot of international and national projects (RISE, production schools, FINALLY, ERR, TIME…). Success rate of programs: the programs are good, it´s about motivating the young to come and join.

1.4 Discussion Inputs (on the Thematic Tables)

Legal framework:

Jugoslav Jevđić (BIH): Law on Adult Education

Gordana Cvetkovic (RS): Strategic and legal framework in Serbia

Boban Gledovic (MONT): Youth policies

Ioana Cirsta (ROM): CRED Project

Alexander Ludva (SK): Low-achievers in education

Research and monitoring:

Prof. Julia Szalai (HUN): FP7 project & Lora Sarkisyan (BG): Project EME

Projects and activities with the target group

Igor Stajic (RS): Integration of disabled people (Hotel)

Adina Ursulean (ROM): Integrated educational services in rural communities

Ruslan Stanga (MLD): Education plus model

Theresa Hasenhüttl (AT): Youth Coaching

Marketa Fisarova (CZ): Local Solutions of preventing ESL

1.5 What is needed on a systemic/legal level to deal with the situation of NEETs and ESL?

After the inputs about the legal situation in the countries, the following question was discussed on the 6 different tables:

What is needed on a systemic/legal level to deal with the situation of NEETs and ESL?

These were the main outcomes of the group discussions:

Group 1:
- Program to encourage families to send their children to school
- Schools should meet basic extensional student's needs (food for example)
- Approaching parents in order to prevent ESL – parents as school partners
- Integrated services for an effective policy implementation – "on stop shop" (health, housing, education, employment)
- Individual approach – intensive and individualized work with single youngsters
- Obligatory counseling system for parents with children at risk
- Secondary education should become mandatory!

Group 2:
- Institutional cooperation: sharing of data information, top-down & bottom up
- Compulsory pre-school: database, evaluation, national standards
- Transition measures: internships, school advisors & career guides, cooperation with parents & employers
- Dual education
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Group 3:
- Early intervention/prevention
- An inclusive school system: integrating community and parents, training teachers, strong infrastructure, extra support to classes

- Improved monitoring & evaluation

Group 4:
- Wider awareness that ESL is a problem – on a policy level, needs also a legal definition
- Integration of the data of the different agencies (schools, unemployment agencies, municipalities) – for access to the people of vulnerable groups it needs cooperation
- Address the reasons: poverty, low motivation, no physical access (wheelchair), rural areas…
- Trainings for teachers - how to motivate (perspectives for the future…)

Group 5:
- Registration of the target group (public services) intertwining public services in order to combine database to identify these people (legal?)
- Early identification & intervention of risk dropouts (municipality; health services/institutions; school, police, family, youth delinquency service)
- Systems of indicators of risks (systematical checklists)
- Tools for prevention – support, motivation (scholarships, pedagogical assistance, guidance counselors)
- Legally compulsory on the governmental level (A MUST)
- "case management"/"assistance" (after early identification) – more social workers for these type of issues precisely must be financed by the government/public money.
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Group 6:
- Prevention from early stage on (kindergarten, primary school…)
- Include whole surrounding of young people (parents, teachers, peers, institutions…)
- Awareness-raising among target groups/communities/leaders about importance of education
- Transition phase is very important (primary school > secondary school > work)

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE DISCUSSIONS:

AWARENESS RAISING	- among target groups & communities - wider awareness that ESL is a problem on a policy level
PREVENTION	- early intervention & prevention – kindergarten, primary school - early identification of risk drop outs - tools for prevention – scholarships, pedagogical assistance…
DATA	- institutional cooperation for sharing data and information - improved monitoring and evaluation
INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS	- integrating community and parents - include the whole surrounding of young people
COOPERATION	on an institutional level – school, unemployment agencies, municipalities; for improved monitoring & evaluation
TRANSITION MEASURES	- kindergarten – school – work life… - internship, school advisors, career guides, cooperation with parents & employers…
ADRESS THE REASONS FOR EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING	- poverty - low motivation – How to motivate young people? - no physical access, no public transport (rural areas)
OBLIGATION	- compulsory pre-school - obligatory counselling system for parents with children at risk - compulsory on the governmental level – A MUST - free of charge

1.6 What is important to do research and monitoring on in this field and how? How to measure success in this field of ELS and NEETs? How to deal with the tension between quantity and quality?

After the input session about different projects and activities, the above - mentioned questions were discussed on 6 different tables. The discussion outcomes were the following:

What is important to do research and monitoring on in this field and how?

- More research on the reasons why young people leave school is needed – motivations, conditions, deeper information.
- More Research on non-formal education and its role is needed.
- Qualified and well measured statistic data is needed – and not only about the educational system.

How to measure success in the field of ESL and NEETs? How to deal with the tension between quantity and quality?

Criteria for success in the field of ESL and NEETs and factors of quality are:

- a good and personal relationship with the young person
- to show young people the possibilities they have – this gives them motivation
- to strengthen the community on a local level
- and to change society through the projects
- not to focus on the educational system only and look at all areas of social exclusion
- to focus on the long-term-outcome of the problem-solving engagement
- and it is also important to collect (quantitative, statistic) data and measure well – for example through questionnaires… - statistic data as basis for the development of measures, evaluation, (international) comparison…
- **It needs a holistic gaze on young people´s life!**

2. IMPORTANT OUTCOMES OF THE SECOND DAY

### 2.1 Individual Reflections: What could be possible topics for co-operation projects?

- ➤ Building networks
- ➤ Cooperation formal and non-formal education
- ➤ Research on specific topics
- ➤ Capacity building for young people and grown ups
- ➤ Monitoring & Coaching
- ➤ Promotion Activities
- ➤ Mapping already existing activities
- ➤ Exchange
- ➤ Methodical-Approach-Models
- ➤ Community engagement
- ➤ Tool Boxes

BUILDING NETWORKS:	• Danube Youth Network (Iryna) • local level cooperation (Gordana)
COOPERATION FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION:	• NEETs outreach (Milica) • regional project on integrative education models for at risk children (Daniela) • cooperation between formal and non-formal institutions
RESEARCH ON SPECIFIC TOPICS:	• on relation education – NGOs • collecting data • orphanages • facts and factors on NEETs on a local level
CAPACITY BUILDING:	• prevention of ESL of Roma population

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	- training for teachers about inclusion and the work with marginalized groups - networking of young people from different groups - trainings for young people for tolerance
PROMOTION ACTIVITIES:	learning social inclusion through hospitability
MAPPING EXISTING ACITIVITES:	- support for transition - good practice exchange - how to build motivation
EXCHANGE:	- Professionals exchange – of teachers working with pupils at risk - Also exchange of young people - Use mobility programs - traineeships
METHODICAL APPROACHES – MODELS:	create models for identification of danger of dropping out
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:	- family – school – community: integrated support - community: active role in school
TOOL BOXES:	- tools for identification for ESL - establish a system - toolbox for solving the problem

2.2 Suggested cooperation projects
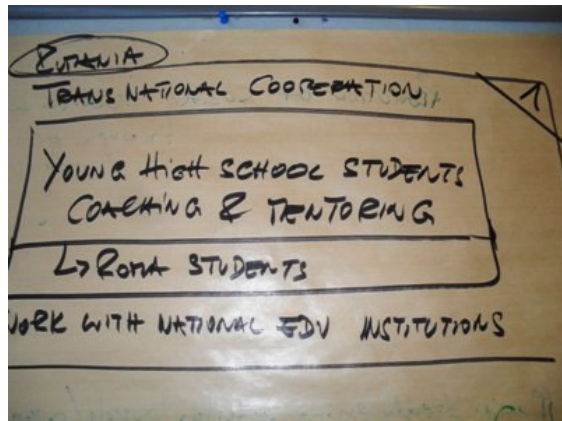
Romania: MENTORING & (PEER) ROLE MODELS (training)

- young (Roma) high school students – coaching & tutoring to become role models so that they provide mentoring to young people from disadvantaged groups
- work together with national EDV institutions
- existing project that wants to extend – transnational cooperation
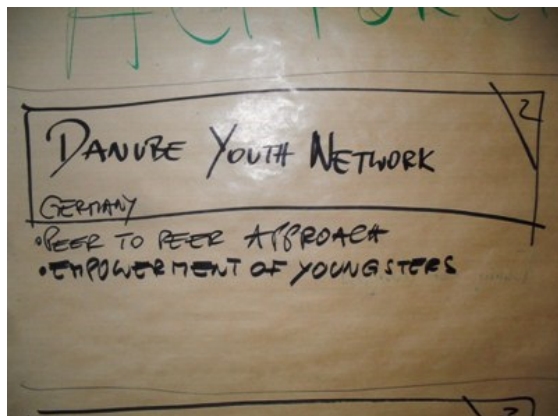
**Germany: "DANUBE YOUTH NETWORK"** –
Iryna Gumenchuk (exchange)

- peer to peer approach to empower young people, multiplayers, people under 30 from vulnerable groups, scholarships for exchange with other countries/regions (already happened so: Baden-Württemberg, Zagreb, Bucharest)
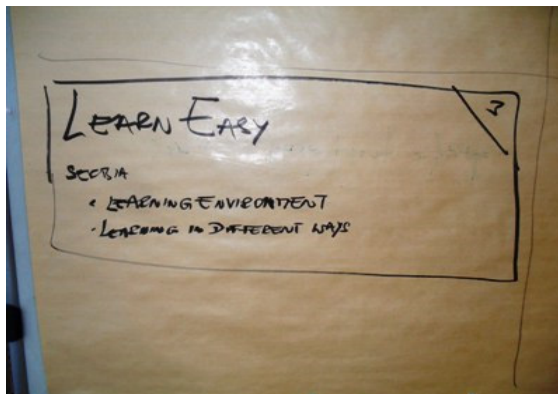
3. Serbia: "LEARN EASY" –
Igor Stajic (capacity building)

- Portal that connects learners and learned
- For 5 – 8 grade students, teachers, parents
- "Gamified" learning process – technology & innovation
- uses popular and contemporary art with learning techniques and IST technologies
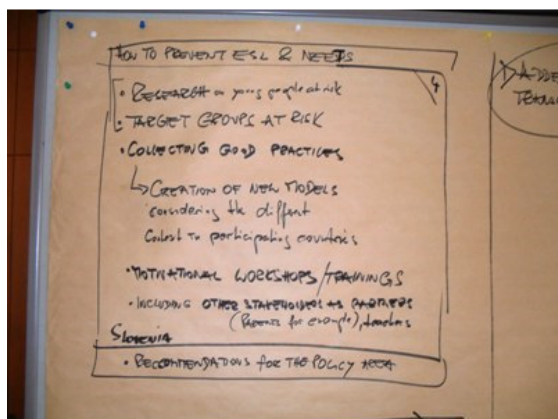
4. Slovenia: HOW TO PREVENT ESL & NEETs –
Agnieszka Natalia Mravinec (prevention)

- new project: how to prevent ESL & NEETs
- target group: young people at risk
- 1. Collect good practice examples (for framework)
- 2. Find what we already have
- 3. Workshops for students & parents, motivational trainings, develop social skills
- 4. Recommendations for policy makers
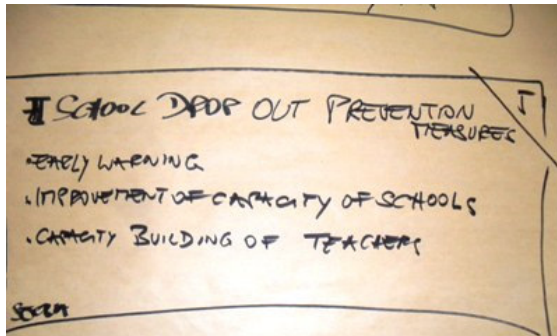
5. Serbia: "SCHOOL DROP-OUT PREVENTION MEASURES –
Gordana Cvetkovic (prevention)

- Innovative approaches in school drop-out prevention measures: improvement of capacity of schools, early warning capacity building for teachers
- Project already finished

Summary:

The interesting topics and concrete suggestions for possible cooperation projects mainly focus on:

- **Coaching and capacity building for young people:** to become peer role models (Romanian project), peer to peer approach and youth exchange and scholarships to empower young people (German "Danube youth Network").
- **Building networks and cooperation's:** transnational cooperation's f. e. among DTP-countries (Austrian project), transfer activities, to share successful projects & good practice models for example on platforms or in cooperation projects – mapping already existing activities
- **Cooperation formal and non-formal education as well as "other ways of learning":** young people as peer role models, peer to peer, but also gamified learning processes – technology & innovation
- **Prevention measures:** innovative approaches in school drop-out prevention measures, coaching for teachers (as well as parents & the community...) how to see the signs of early warning and how to deal with it (Serbian project)

2.3 Feedback