

1. What are, in your view, the main obstacles for children and young people to succeed in school education in your country

- Parents' socio-economic, cultural and educational background
- Lack of individualized support by the school when necessary
- Lack of well-trained special support educators

We have chosen three characteristics that in our opinion should in any case be addressed. Evidence shows that the parents' background plays a role in achieving school success and that furthermore and that individualized support is needed as every pupil's situation is different and calls for a different approach. Given that incompleteness of secondary education is often caused by a multitude of challenges that compound one another, well-trained educators are crucial for addressing the situation and disentangling the challenges pupils face.

Having said that, because pupils face many challenges at once, it is particularly difficult to choose the three most important obstacles. We believe all aspects listed are important and that they are often related. Many of these factors go hand in hand and together compound the difficulties that pupils experience. We would therefore like to see the proposal address all obstacles, and moreover, we would like to see the proposal address them in a holistic manner. We believe that this is necessary for establishing a solid foundation for school success.

2a. What is the impact of the Covid crisis on the ability of the school education system to provide quality education in your country?

- In general: negative
- For pupils belonging to more vulnerable groups: negative

2b: Which of the following factors may create particular problems in your country, in particular for more vulnerable pupils?

- Lack of contacts with peers
- Lack of parental support
- Stress, depression, lack of motivation

We believe that it is important to recognize the impact that the Covid crisis has had on pupils from the most vulnerable groups. The Netherlands has also attempted to address its impact on these pupils' learning process, for example by providing them with digital devices necessary for distance learning. However, we do believe that it is important that the basis for the proposal is formed by the ongoing challenges pupils face, and that the purpose of the proposal therefore is to address the fundamental issues that the pupils deal with- not only during times of crisis, but also under normal circumstances. We look forward to durable recommendations that can be applied and be valuable under all circumstances.

3a: Which of the following elements should be given priority to ensure that all children and young people can succeed at school?

- Ensuring access for all children to high-quality, affordable and adequately staffed early childhood education and care (nurseries, kindergarten, etc., indicative age 0 to 6)
- Investing in training of educational staff to address early leaving from education and training as well as underachievement
- Developing targeted measures to address the needs of more vulnerable pupils

We believe that a culture of inclusion and accessibility are crucial elements of education in all of Europe. The proposal should however not specify how for example the culture of inclusion is achieved, as this is determined by schools.

In addition, we would not welcome the inclusion of recommendations on repetition of years, early tracking or the use of language in schools as we believe these are specific to each national system and it would not be befitting to the Commission to make recommendations on elements that are specific parts of national policy.

At school level:

- Providing effective and individualised support to pupils
- Promoting a 'whole school approach' to school success for all, in which all members of the school community (school leaders, middle management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, parents and families) feel responsible and play an active role

We believe that the recommendations on the school level should express key attitudes that schools should engage in, but should refrain from advocating specific measures, as schools are autonomous and are the ones who determine which specific measures to take. The development of developing calm and stimulating learning spaces for children is something we do look favourably upon, but a recommendation on this could be too specific coming from the European Commission and Council. We would be able to welcome this recommendation if it would be worded in more general terms.

- Supporting mutual learning between countries: very important
- Collecting data and providing analyses: quite important
- Helping disseminate good practices: very important
- Providing policy guidance: not important
- Developing common EU tools and on-line resources (e.g. the European Toolkit for Schools): quite important
- Strengthening financial support through the Erasmus+ programme and other EU funds: very important
- Providing tailor-made support for specific reforms/actions in Member States: not important
- Providing platforms for cooperation such as eTwinning, Epale: quite important
- Supporting schools to build their regional and international networks : not important

We would very much welcome mutual learning between countries and the dissemination of good practices. We believe the Erasmus+ Programme and other EU funds could play a role in facilitating this. We are unsure if additional policy guidance and support for reforms and actions are needed as long as mutual learning and dissemination of good practices are facilitated, as we believe that these practices are already a form of policy guidance and support. In addition, we would not necessarily support the development of new platforms for cooperation and of tools and online resources, but would welcome the further development and improvement of existing platforms and tools. Furthermore, when it comes to data gathering and analyses, we believe the Commission should distinguish the areas in which data are lacking, and in which further data gathering would be useful, from areas in which a great number of data is already readily available. We believe that schools could benefit from regional and international networks, but we are unsure if they will be able to establish and maintain these. Any recommendations based on school networks should take into consideration the capacity that schools have. Larger VET institutions would for example be more likely to engage in international networks than small primary schools.

3c) Well-being at school: In addition to the areas identified above, which of the following elements, should be given priority to build a positive learning environment for all in school?

- Training educational staff on well-being at school, diversity and inclusion, gender equality, bullying and mental health
- Strengthening social and emotional learning to help pupils feel and show empathy for others and establish and maintain supportive relationships
- Developing actions to promote positive relations at school, cooperation and teamwork

We have chosen the elements above because we believe that these concrete actions are necessary to establish an open and inclusive culture. That having been said, we believe that a general culture

and attitude that welcome diversity and inclusion are also important and that the general culture and attitude and the concrete actions above serve to strengthen one another.

With regard to the concrete measures, we would like to emphasize that it is important that the proposal clearly distinguishes between measures that member states can take and actions that schools can take. We for example believe that it is important that schools have effective anti-bullying strategies, but would like to clearly state that these strategies should be developed by schools and not the governments of the member states. Governments can however support and facilitate. Therefore, we would welcome a clear division of roles and tasks between schools and the government in the proposal.

Moreover, we would like to stress the importance of inclusion and diversity in schools. We would particularly welcome due attention to diversity in gender, gender identity and sexual orientation. In addition, we would welcome guidance on how to help those new to our country succeed in school.

4. In addition to the elements identified in previous questions, which of the following specific monitoring and prevention measures should be given priority to ensure school success for all children and young people?

- Early detection of pupils at risk and assessment of their needs (personal, social, economic, family related, etc.) and related intervention measures
- Early warning systems (e.g. based on frequent absenteeism, low grades and other indicators)
- Extra resources to schools with high concentration of vulnerable pupil

We believe that monitoring is an important part of helping pupils succeed in school. However, we ask the Commission to carefully assess the effectiveness of each monitoring measure, especially weighed against the costs that it entails, before including it in the proposal. If additional data and insights are uncovered we would highly encourage the European Commission to share these with all member states.

5. In addition to the elements identified in previous questions, which of the following specific intervention measures, should be given priority to ensure school success for all children and young people?

- Individualised and qualified mentoring and tutoring and personalised learning approaches
- Multi-disciplinary approaches and cooperation in and around the school (school staff, psychologists, social services and health professionals, cultural mediators etc.)
- Support to educational staff working with disadvantaged children (e.g. extra resources)

We believe that the indicated elements are valuable, but as stated in response to question 3c, we believe the proposal should clearly distinguish between the role of the government and that of the schools in establishing these measures.

6. In addition to the elements identified in previous question, which of the following specific compensation measures, should be given priority to ensure school success for all children and young people?

- Providing pathways to help early leavers from education and training to go back to mainstream education
- Providing targeted individual support in mainstream settings, which integrates social, financial, educational and psychological support for young people in difficulties

The Dutch policy with regard to compensation for early school leaving is based on special pathways that allow early school leavers to re-enter conventional education. These pathways are not meant to be full-degree programmes, but are temporary schemes (for example leading to a certificate) that allow early school leavers to become reacquainted with and re-accustomed to education before they embark on a new journey, leading to a full degree, within the conventional education system.

The pathways should be seen as a stepping stone and not as a final destination, and conventional education should remain the standard to be achieved. The Netherlands would like the upcoming recommendations to be formulated such that they allow room for the continuation of the Dutch system for re-entry into conventional education by early school leavers.