RECOMMENDATIONS

Deliverable n.26

Contents

Objectives

With the project **FAS Fine at School**, the partnership intended to work on emotional competences for preventing ESL focusing on primary school and to concentrate the attention on pupils who live in areas at risk and / or who have disadvantage backgrounds so to improve the educational experience of all pupils in order to reduce the phenomenon of school dropouts.

To Fine at School's ends and aims, emotional intelligence is a cognitive ability specialized in processing "hot" information, for which it is stated that between emotions and emotional intelligence there is the same relationship as there is between intelligence classically understood and learning, memory, reasoning, thinking and all other "cold" cognitive processes. "In other words, emotional intelligence involves the ability to use the information that comes from our emotions in an" intelligent "way, and then to perceive, use, understand and functionally adjust them for adaptation to every situation and life context. " (Antonella D'Amico Emotional and meta-emotional intelligence, Ed. Mulino, 2018)

In **FAS** project-laboratory, didactic strategies and actions, evaluation methodologies and procedures able to 'work well' in educational contexts and situations were compared, to motivate learning and enhance the effectiveness of the training offer in synergy of intentions, in function of the raising of the levels of competence of the students and the reduction of the school dropout rate.

The aim is thus to consolidate the role played by all the educational actors and stakeholders by:

• promoting measures for fostering ESL prevention and addressing diversity in learning environment through a winning methodology which considers the differences among individual learning styles and pupils' emotional competences in school experience;

• building and systematizing European pedagogical practices and tools based on inclusive didactics and on diversity of learning styles, aimed at fostering integration of children with difficult backgrounds;

• improving pupils' emotional and social competences and create learning environment where diversity is valorized and nobody feels excluded;

• increasing of competences by primary and secondary junior schools' teachers for building new didactic paths to be embedded in school curricula for improving pupils' emotional and social competences and hence creating learning environment based on inclusive didactics;

• involving parents in promoting and implementing policies for the enhancement of emotional competences and social skills of their children so to foster integration and their access to good quality mainstream education;

- promoting a permanent platform for peer learning and mutual exchange among national authorities in charge of school education, so to adopt common policies, measures and practices for implementing ET2020 framework and objectives.

Social skills and emotional competences have to be considered key element in the world of education. Recognizing and valorizing them pushes towards a new model that includes the upskilling and reskilling of educators, the holistic skills growth of pupils and a strong awareness raising actions for parents and also communities.

FAS aims at involving pupils, parents, teachers in collaborative training pathways and educational experiences.

Goals of the document

The final document relates to recommendations and suggestions to the European Commission, authorities in charge of school, families, training providers, communities' stakeholders for a flexible mainstreaming of project outputs considering the specifics of different education systems which in turn will contribute to improvement of policy making in the field.

Specifically, the document supports:

- to mainstream the experimented models for early school leaving prevention with reference to students who live in areas at risk and / or who have disadvantage backgrounds, in cooperation with their parents and other actors at regional and local level, in other countries under the leadership of policy makers and in other regions of the participating countries;

- to embed the project approach and products in the strategic documents and programmes for decreasing ESL rate at national and regional level, also by defining particular actions in the annual action plans that are elaborated for achieving the strategic objectives.

The document has been defined on the basis of the results of the different activities of the FAS project (LCs, Forum of SHs; Training) and retrieves indications from the result of the discussions held during the **Stakeholders Forum** that has worked as a platform of collaboration and discussion for involving in the conclusions a large range of actors of the process.

From a general perspective, the project outcomes indicate that strategies and procedures which have been carried out in the orientation stage are substantial suitable and well accepted by target groups but the approach has to take root in the educational practices and for achieving this it is necessary to implement cycles of integrated actions (collaborative

training, workshops and laboratories) involving teachers, parents, pupils and experts from other education-related disciplines.

In particular the project results highlight that teachers and parents should be involved in integrated educational processes covering curricular and extra-curricular activities at same time supporting pupils through a holistic educational strategy.

The Project confirms the need to set up effective "educating Communities", not to be meant as an abstract model; according agreed plans with at the center the school, all the actors (involving also cultural associations, sports organisations, multicultural groups) have to design and implement coherent actions, sharing and valorising also informal and not formal learning

> *The school as a system is made up of numerous actors who interact with each other, each with their own wealth of diversity and experience: students, families, teachers, school managers, the socio-cultural context, the system of norms and rules governing the functioning of the school itself, the political choices of local and central administrators.*

practices, addressing specifically "emotional competences"

Moreover, the project Partnership assumes that pupils have to be involved pro-actively since the very beginning of the activities and educational actions not remaining mere beneficiaries of interventions coming from "adult world".

Partners have experimented set of instruments aiming at the discovery and enhancement of social and emotional skills, considering them as an inner potential. In this context, school system has a responsibility for pupils' educational success but it is required a joined participatory effort by families and communities' stakeholders.

FAS – Fine at School methodology

> "*As well as social complexity advances, forcing the school to impose increasingly difficult contents, so the teacher must be the intermediary of the same complexity, proposing didactic and methodological strategies that are mediated to bring this complexity back to the essential, recover the sense of teaching understood as "meaningful communication". In order for this to happen, it is partly essential to abandon those old technicalities that submit the person to the goal to be achieved* "(Marco Vinicio Masoni, Ragazzi si Cambia, Ed. UNICOPLI, Milan, 1999, p. 191)

In the areas listed below, sections of the potential actions in favor of the emotional competences' valorisation / early school leaving reduction are outlined according shared commitment's pathways. The Partnership has involved stakeholders, communities' groups, in an ongoing education process, in order to embed new ideas, enriching the discussion and

relaunching study and experimentation. The work approach, tested successfully in previous initiatives includes:

- FIELD RESEARCH ON PUPILS' WELLNESS AT SCHOOL
- PEDAGOGIC MODEL BASED ON LIFE SKILLS AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCES
- TRAINING COURSE FOR TEACHERS
- TRAINING PATHS FOR PARENTS
- FINAL PEDAGOGICAL MODEL AND RELATED TOOLS
- LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND STUDY CIRCLES
- STAKEHOLDER FORUM

The **Learning Community** and **ShF forum** are supporting Partners in expanding and reinforcing networks of actors committed in implementing experimentations and approaches to develop social and emotional skills of pupils and fighting ESL causes and factors. A reference material is the set of qualitative autobiographical questionnaires on perception of learning environment, emotional competences, life skills, learning styles, conflicts and discrimination in the classroom.

In particular, through **Study Circles** Partners have involved school teachers and trainers in an educational path aimed at sharing experiences, opinions and thoughts with reference to European Pedagogical Model, its practices and tools developed by FAS partnership. The participating teachers adapted the practices and tools to their school environment, innovating educational didactic paths, caring for embedding new approaches in school curricula for improving pupils' emotional and social competences and create learning environment based on inclusive didactics.

This action has complementary to the non-formal training paths that targeted parents, giving them the opportunity to observe and follow the project activities, as well as to learn more about the reference didactic tools and how to propose them at home.

Then, through an on-line learning community, participants have been able to interact among themselves on a supportive and friendly platform.

The activity of the **Study Circles** is quite relevant because they acts as "educational garrison" with a prevention approach and function. In fact, There are forms of early school leaving that do not materialize in abandoning educational facilities, but in remaining in school even if completely disengaged and unmotivated (Weis, Farrar & Petrie, 1989). For these students, the school is no longer an elective environment for growth: its motivational value is cracked, since it is no longer an object of investment; physiological expectations of personal success and achievement are thus translated into extra-curricular fields (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991).

In these cases, the school represents a sort of container that continues to have importance on an affective-relational level and for its social repercussions, albeit depleted of its significant

value within the life project.

Areas of impact

The risk factors associated with school discomfort and drop out are therefore numerous, interdependent and can range from socio-economic-cultural factors to family, personal, educational and school factors (Besozzi, 1990). Their study and their interpretation of the many facts is of fundamental importance for planning and experimenting interventions of contrast and prevention.

In the framework of an ongoing multidisciplinary activities and on the basis of previous experiences Partners have agreed to articulate recommendations in four areas according a complementary and integrative model with other consolidated projects and initiative.

FAS Partners have the strong awareness that school dropout / ESL is a phenomenon that needs an important preventive intervention, avoiding to observe it and therefore suffer it when it occurs. The disadvantage, in any form, social rather than cultural or economic, must not affect the training of growing pupils and prevent their development. Anticipating the emergency and enhancing the characteristics of empowerment are fundamental needs of the school regardless of the order of grade.

A.   Biographic approach

Biographical approach is furthermore strategic in the context of social and emotional competences. This strategy requires for multidisciplinary instruments of investigation and analysis, accompanying educational pathways according a shadowing technique, beyond the classroom's environment, with particular attention to the range of age of the pupils-target group.

In these area factors at the individual level are considered. These are the psychological characteristics of students, the presence of any learning difficulties and disabilities, refusals and resistance to school, disengagement, self-perception of inadequacy, failures (such as academic performance in first grades). All these factors appear closely related to early school leaving (Dalton, Gennie & Ingels, 2009).

From FAS activities the importance role of the sense of self-efficacy emerges according studies and researches. Students with a better perception of their abilities and greater self-esteem have greater motivation to study and less likely to drop out (Alibernini, Lucidi, 2011; Batini, 2014). Learning difficulties and special educational needs are more likely to drop out (Batini, ed., 2015).

Moreover, in FAS family factors are considered. The relationship between early school leaving and parents with a low level of education continues to be significant (Lundetrae, 2011). The culturally disadvantaged background would lead to low expectations of school and academic

success.

B.   Active role of the Local communities

Socio-economic factors affect pupils' relation with school and studying. Many international researches and surveys that have highlighted the correlations between the socio-economic conditions of the family, school performance and the overall duration of the course of study. Groups of economically disadvantaged children are more at risk of dropping out of school, also due to the pressure (explicit or implicit) they receive to become economically independent as soon as possible or in any case to alleviate the expenses of the family of origin (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011).

The focus on social and emotional skills makes evident that the operational and equal role of families, civil society organizations and communities is crucial. The school certainly has a propulsive role, but the context in which it is possible to fight effectively early school leaving, to identify and correctly interpret the "faint signals" and, in a positive and perspective vision, develop the emotional and social potential of pupils, has to be a multidisciplinary effort.

C.   Active learning and educational environments

Also internal school's factors and dynamics matter. The way in which teaching and teaching are organized and developed, the interpersonal relationships that are established at school, aspects related to the organization and school functioning) with respect to the phenomenon of early school leaving. On the one hand, the relevance of the teacher-student relationship emerges (Trinchero & Tordini, 2011), on the other the role of school failure: there is a strong correlation, for example, between failures and dropouts (Batini, Bartolucci, Bellucci, Toti 2015). Schools with very large classes appear to have a negative effect on students' academic performance (Balfanz & Legters, 2005).

Working on emotional and social skills implies also a transformation of the learning environments, which, by pivoting on the school classroom as an aggregative, functional place for pupils, naturally expand to other contexts of life, in which it is necessary to identify educational collaborative and supervision's functions and roles. Information technologies and the spread of social media imply the definition of other contexts and environments of interaction.

In the presentation of the FAS activities, in the research-action delivered by working groups and in the consequent educational experimentation in the school context, the emotions resulted to be strongly connected with the learning processes; present in school life and beyond, constituting the building blocks of the longlife educational framework. However, until recently, there was no need to bring out these aspects, nor the question did arise on the need for a role of the school in the formation of an emotional competence (A. Pellai, "Emotional education" , Fabbri Ed.2016).

D.   Social and emotional skills

Early school leaving is an existential defeat and profoundly affects the emotional and social capacity of the pupils. Considering also that the emotional and social factors develop with particular force outside the school and then in the classroom they can be amplified by other dynamics, all the actors and above all the school, the families and the groups in the

> *Early school leaving constitutes a real "defeat" of the whole training system, the origin of which can be traced back to the synergistic action of multiple factors: the individual characteristics of pupils who are lost during normal schooling, their personal goals and values that guide their behaviours, environmental factors, such as the characteristics of the social, economic and cultural*

communities, must share a framework reference of skills to be enhanced and specific problems to be addressed.

A. Biographical approach for social and emotional skills

Introduction

In the FAS context, the methodology of the biographical approach has to be multidisciplinary and involve multiple contexts of actions. In consideration of the institutional role in education and the professional expertise, the school has for sure a central and coordinating role for this action / work phase, but the involvement of families and civil society actors must be active and defined.

Recommendations

In particular, for primary school students, the biographical approach must be developed with the support of scientific and educational psychological skills and in a context open to cultural and social contributions. In this way, it is improved the possibility for the early identification of both favorable aspects and social, emotional and creative attitudes and abilities.

Educational work involves a strong emotional investment, as well as cognitive and ethical and the success of educational action is closely linked to emotions, feelings and the ability to govern them. Emotional detachment and sentimental indifference can generate depersonalization of work, relational insecurity and discomfort and can contribute to raising the "affective filter" mentioned by Krashen (Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition, London, Prentice-Hall International, 1981), namely say those unfavourable emotional conditions - anxiety, fear, low self-esteem - that hinder learning. Success or failure in school depends not a little on the idea that the pupil has about their abilities, the sense of adequacy or inadequacy of oneself.

The policies should therefore:

-   stimulate the constitution of multidisciplinary groups (teachers, parents, experts in the psychological area, experts in creative disciplines etc.) for a more complete reconstruction of biographical aspects;

-   encourage the design and implementation of training activities involving actively the aforementioned groups in peer learning processes and the sharing of projects and programs;

-   promote, especially through raising awareness of the school system, the expansion of educational environments, building together with parents and local communities, places (in physical and relational sense) for the development of social and emotional skills beyond the boundaries of the school institution;

-   encourage shared projects with creative and cultural industries and with the world of sport;

-   capitalizing on the experiences already developed, develop projects that involve "expert students" or "role models" in peer learning educational activities;

- actively involve families in pro-active monitoring activities (not mere surveillance) to be implemented both off-line and on-line;

- implement actions (mentoring and tutoring included) caring for targeted support to pupils also for inner talents' discovery and valorisation of positive attitudes;

B – Active role of communities' groups and stakeholders

Introduction

Having acquired the need for the involvement of families and also considering that the same families need support from the point of view of up-skilling and raising awareness, it is also important to identify operationally areas of competence in which schools and parents act

> *Leaving the educational path should be read as a defensive isolation that allows the most fragile students not to feel invaded by the fear and pain of not knowing, not understanding and not being up to it, deeply connected to intimate aspects. the personality of the individual pupil and the emotional colouring typical of interactions at school (Blandino & Granieri B., 1995, 2002; Granieri B., 2008).*

jointly through agreed and planned educational strategy.

In this sense:

a) **family dimension:** it is important to reconstruct a family model where a person's social, emotional and cultural growth can effectively be promoted. Cultural and educational activities for parents should be developed paying particular attention to enhancement of their maieutic skills and abilities,

b) **personal dimension:** by continuing the activities focused on dyscalculia, dyslexia or dysortography and attention and behavioural disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), multidisciplinary groups should also pay attention to the enhancement of talents, emotional and social skills and positive aspects of neurodiversity;

c) **institutional dimension:** at school level, scientific educational collaboration with behavioural experts, sociologists, media experts and with cultural and sport organizations must be strengthened, according to models of non-occasional partnership and goal-oriented action.

In the FAS shared educational proposals, particular attention has been paid to "physical side". Since childhood, a priority role is destined to corporeality, "the lack of use of one's body, when it lasts too long, prevents developing self-control, understanding perceptions, experiencing the relationship with the other and therefore develop the social and relational skills necessary for a fulfilling social life "(p.15 Simone Digennaro, Body and emotions in primary school teaching, Erickson, 2019).

The sense of motor skills concerns not only specific skills but "the entire educational approach that is proposed in primary school, which must no longer be a place where one deals exclusively with minds, but must transform itself into a context in which and body are indissolubly intertwined. The change consists in trying to give substance to all knowledge, including those that are generally considered more abstract, such as mathematics (p.16-17,

Digennaro, 2019).

Recommendations:

Through structured multidisciplinary groups, periodic discussions and activities should be promoted, these activities should also involve pupils and the model to be implemented is that of a shared and collaborative education, focusing on different areas

- Area I: The multidisciplinary group as a permanent context of peer learning and mutual assistance;
- Area II: The family implementing its maieutical skills
- Area III: Periodical involvement of sectoral experts
- Area IV: Set up of an educational environment embedding school, home, life and social context
- Area V: Participation of pupils in programming activities
- Area VI: Developing of peer learning also among pupils

C. Active learning and educational environment

FAS confirms the area of emotional intelligence as a core educational challenge and moreover for the project target group (the pupils), considering its age range and the dynamic and evolutive characters of the emotional and social abilities of pupils.

Recommendations

A coordinated, multidisciplinary and inter-institutional action on social and emotional skills is essential, even more so for an age group in which the existential, psychological and cognitive dimension is developing. This action is a "community" responsibility and the school can play an important coordinating role, assuming the function of educational fulcrum and place of convergence of methods and valorisation of experiences.

An important as well as significant step was conceived by proposing to teachers to carry out a peer-to-peer activity, teaching-learning, reflection, professional development, community of practice. This approach is based on receiving and giving indications from expert colleagues, within a professional community in which objectives, purposes and methods of observation are shared, favouring the improvement of practices within the teaching-learning processes

The policies should include:

1. **Actions by the educational authorities** aimed at:

- validation of practices for the development of the social and emotional skills of pupils in which the role of families and social actors and communities are specifically considered crucial;

- consolidation of the multidisciplinary groups, recognizing their role and enhancing their activities and results also through social media;

- promoting the involvement of pupils in a proactive way by developing peer learning activities;

2. **Actions promoted by organizations responsible for teacher training and other training providers** aimed at:

- develop continuous training activities and multidisciplinary initiatives, according to collaborative education models;

- organizing peer-learning and peer review activities also at a transnational level;

- organizing sectoral activities (workshops, laboratories) by deepening specific themes and problems;

3. **Actions promoted directly by schools** aimed at:

- organizing activities that directly involve the pupils and make them protagonists of the decisions and developments on training actions, methodologies, the choice of tools;

- involving parents and teachers in learning paths with role exchange;

- developing actions and activities (training courses, seminars, workshops) that pay particular attention to multiculturalism and diversity.

- promoting the experiences of **Study Circles**, to address and enhance diversity in the classrooms and to tackle inter-cultural conflicts and discrimination, resolve conflicts, transmit fundamental values, enhance active citizenship, create a tolerant school environment where nobody feels excluded through a participatory methodology. Through the Study Circles will be possible:

• Sharing experiences, opinions and thoughts with reference to pedagogical models
• Adapting the practices and tools to the target group's specific school environment
• Building new didactic paths to be embedded in schools' curriculums.
- identifying a function of mediator / facilitator, leading the activities of the Study Circles to manage the process, not an "expert" or a "teacher" in the traditional sense, but an educational role able to create and develop collaborative learning processes that stimulates and encourages the participants to:
- actively look for knowledge:
- put the participants own development in focus and ask the right questions;
- emphasize the development of dialogue between the participants and encourage the participants to discuss solutions and ask questions among each other;
- develop the team spirit so the participants feel secure;
- strengthen the participants self-confidence;
- apply a common view on the process of knowledge which enable the participants to apply what they have learnt in everyday situations;
- encourage co-operation among the participants.

Particular attention has to be paid to the importance of "inclusive teacher" training, that is the need for a system action for sustainable education that interfaces with the old and new risks of educational poverty. The training process underlines the importance of guaranteeing not only social inclusion (among the Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs, of the 2030 Agenda) and the right to education for all, but also educational success in the perspective of the New Index for 'inclusion, indicating its fundamental tools: education and the school of equity; the observation and study of "human functioning" as well as actions to combat early school leaving

D. Life and social skills

According to Carugati and Selleri (2001), "*social interactions are at the origin of the construction of individual skills and [...] having individual skills of a certain complexity allows the individual to subsequently participate in increasingly complex social interactions*".

Recommendations

At level of educational model, that assumption about the social essence of human being leads to pay extreme attention to the principle of "meaningful relationship" (Rogers, 1969), originally applied at between the dynamics between teacher and student and which can contribute to make differences a value. FAS indicates how this relationship model must become multi-relational.

Among the indications coming from the delivered experiences:

- as to teacher's role development: without abdicating the role of educator, the teacher must enrich his or her own set of skills with multidisciplinary skills and in any case being able to organize the social and emotional growth pathway of their students according to a broader

> *The teacher, a "reflective professional", is able to look at practice and experience to enhance his future actions: the more the teacher reflects on the already implemented, the more he will be able to identify those crucial issues that can be strengthened through training. (The reflective practitioner. For a new epistemology of professional practice, Donald Alan Schön, 1999).*

vision, which involves other expertise;

- as to educational and training contents: it is extremely important to encourage creativity-based, art-based, sport-based educational practices and to embed talent-scouting methodologies while coping with school leaving attitudes and tendencies;
- as to overall approach: the aspect of the "meaningful relationship" must become the mainstreaming character of relationships within multidisciplinary groups (teachers, parents, external experts) as model and good practice to define, this must be developed not only as an educational content / teaching or training topics subject but also and above all as a transversal methodology and relational style; pupils have to be put at the centre of the multidisciplinary groups' actions.