

STAY TUNED – CITY IMPLEMENTATION CASE EXAMPLE 2

Summary

Exploring at risk students' and teachers' perspectives about the school climate - Aveiro Case Example Summary (6 lines max.)

School approaches to reduce failure and ESL must adopt an inclusive vision or learner-centred education perspective. In order to facilitate closeness and a listening attitude in schools, and to involve teachers and students in reflection practices considering their experiences and relations in schools, questions or conversation topics to be discussed with students were selected and a reflection tool on characteristics of an inclusive school was conceived/adapted. Self-reflections, focus group and individualized conversations took place, engaging students and teachers.

Solutions offered by the case example (1 line)

Self-reflections, focus group and individualized conversations, engaging students and teachers.

The CHALLENGE (4 lines)

How do we engage teachers and students in these conversations? How to get them interested and committed? Most teachers in schools are demotivated and they feel tired. Students may feel suspicious, not confident, about being asked about their impressions and opinions.

How was the above challenge overcome? (6 lines)

Near teachers/tutors, joint decisions were made in order to have conversations with students during some tutoring sessions focused on “people’s experiences” rather than curriculum contents. In some cases, due the nature of the questions (more intimate) individualized meetings took place following the focus group. School psychologists were also involved. Attitudes of empathy, trust and mutual respect facilitated the process of getting in touch.

The reflection made by teachers about their school, stimulated by the reflection tool, was facilitated by the fact that the instrument was simple and meaningful, considering the reality experienced by teachers.

What difference has this approach made? (10 lines max.)

Gathering important information of at-risk students' perspectives concerning school experiences (eg. what make them like or dislike school? What do they like happening in school that would make a difference? Identification of good and bad episodes experienced at school, etc.) permitted to know better their reality and based on this to think on some possible actions (involving, for instance other services from the community, like sport or art clubs, professional experiences in local enterprises, etc.). Possibilities of changes and desirable initiatives were identified (its concretization is another story...). Being noticed and listening to induced feelings of mutual respect and confidence that increased well-being and quality relationships. Joint reflections on what is needed to have a more inclusive school were important and valuable for its own. Most teachers focus the need to have multidisciplinary professionals working with schools. In the following months, initiatives concerning monthly meetings in school, engaging different professionals (from the municipality, the social security sector, etc.), to discuss cases of students in need of extra support took place.

What lessons might other EU cities take from this Case Example? (10 lines max.)

Despite the good short-term results obtained, they need to be viewed as contextual results. Interventions need to be tailored to each situation on an ongoing basis. Anyway, a practice of engaging students and teachers, school psychologists, the school board and other professionals in the discussion of things that matter to them is of high value. The definition of concrete initiatives to overcome or deal better with some challenges needs to be more emphasized. Changing practices takes time. It's a step by step process requiring persistence, investment and support from local stakeholders. The shift from implementing isolated ESL measures to introducing integrated, comprehensive actions, involving different stakeholders keeps being an ongoing challenge to be faced.

Key Facts and Figures:

Start and end dates of case example – November to May 2019

Date of preparation of this case example – June/July 2019

Who prepared the case example? - Municipality of Aveiro + University of Aveiro + two schools of Aveiro

Budget – 166,50€

Extra information and hyperlinks

Annex



