

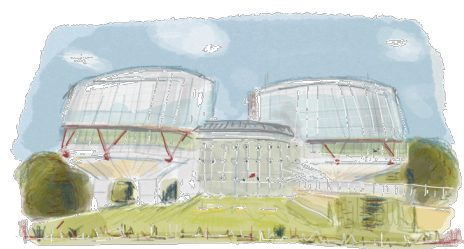
Evaluation of the European Union & Council of Europe Joint Project – Inclusive Schools: Making a Difference for Roma Children (INSCHOOL)

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bl & meyer
& sanz



European value(s)

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List of abbreviations

BG	Bulgaria
CoE	Council of Europe
CZ	Czech Republic
EU	European Union
HU	Hungary
RO	Romania
SK	Slovak Republic
ToR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom

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Executive summary

1. The Roma and Travellers Team of the Council of Europe (CoE) contracted the firm Blomeyer & Sanz on 16 June 2021 to conduct the evaluation of the Joint Project of the European Union and the CoE 'Inclusive Schools: Making a Difference for Roma Children' (INSCHOOL) throughout the months June to September 2021. INSCHOOL aims at 'enhancing social inclusion of Roma by promoting inclusive education and training in selected national schools in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic'.
2. INSCHOOL has made an important contribution to promoting inclusion at practice and policy level in the three countries covered by this evaluation, and specifically with regard to making schools more inclusive. The project's contribution needs to be considered in the context of significant political challenges in promoting Roma inclusion. On the whole, the evaluation finds that the project has performed strongly in terms of the evaluation criteria of effectiveness and efficiency, with good prospects for sustainability as indicated by the development in the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia of a more supportive policy environment for inclusive education, and the availability of a wealth of practice-level illustrations of the success of inclusion as generated and disseminated by the project, and that policy makers can use to substantiate support for more inclusive approaches. It can thus be expected that the planned follow-up phase of INSCHOOL will ensure the full sustainability of outputs and outcomes.
3. The evaluation suggests a small number of recommendations for change for the follow-up phase of INSCHOOL:
 - Strengthen networking between participating schools within a country, but also between countries, ensuring that networking is institutionalized;
 - Establish a 'compendium' of successful inclusion practices, drawing on the many curricular and extra-curricular activities introduced by the participating schools;
 - Expose policy makers to school experiences by inviting relevant policy makers to visit schools to experience successful approaches to inclusion first-hand;
 - Produce information, data and research from the practice/school level;
 - Explore the possibilities and impact that the Index methodology has on addressing education and systemic inequalities and countering segregation practices;
 - Maintain, and if possible, further strengthen work with Roma and non-Roma parents;

- Prior to implementing INSCHOOL, carefully assess school capacities to ensure schools have not only the required commitment but also sufficient resources to implement key aspects of the Index;
- Create or further develop the cooperation and coordination under national policy coordination mechanisms, as in the case of the National Working Groups;
- Ensure systematic data collection on outcomes, including the setting of targets, and corresponding systematic data collection.

1 Introduction

1. This section introduces the evaluation report by briefly commenting on the evaluation scope and objectives (Section 1.1), the methodology, including constraints experienced in the course of the evaluation (1.2) and the structure of this report (1.3).

1.1 Evaluation scope and objectives

2. The Roma and Travellers Team of the Council of Europe (CoE) contracted the firm Blomeyer & Sanz on 16 June 2021 to conduct the evaluation of the Joint Project of the European Union and the CoE 'Inclusive Schools: Making a Difference for Roma Children' (INSCHOOL) throughout the months June to September 2021.
3. INSCHOOL aims at '*enhancing social inclusion of Roma by promoting inclusive education and training in selected national schools in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic*' (Terms of Reference, ToR). Whilst INSCHOOL activities, especially the INSCHOOL Pilot Phase, also covered Bulgaria (BG), Hungary (HU) and the United Kingdom (UK), according to the ToR this evaluation is limited to INSCHOOL interventions in the Czech Republic (CZ), Romania (RO) and the Slovak Republic (SK). This is explained with the 'withdrawal' of BG, HU and UK from INSCHOOL; the opportunity to evaluate the project in countries that participated in two phases of INSCHOOL; and limited resources for a more in-depth evaluation. The INSCHOOL Pilot Phase was implemented between May 2017 and July 2019, and INSCHOOL 2 between October 2019 and June 2021. During the Pilot Phase, the project was mostly implemented in 26 schools (CZ, HU, RO, SK, UK),¹ whilst INSCHOOL 2 has been implemented in 22 schools (CZ, RO, SK).² Plans for INSCHOOL 2 to add additional schools in CZ and in RO (the Description of Action (DoA) planned for 31 schools) did not materialise, and this is explained by constraints posed by COVID-19 restrictions, and the difficulty of delivering the INSCHOOL methodology within a reduced timeframe.³

¹ INSCHOOL Final Report, covering the period 15 May 2017 - 31 July 2019.

² INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020.

³ Ibid, page 8.

4. The ToR designed an evaluation with a dual summative and formative perspective, referring to the following overall evaluation objectives:
 - *To assess the overall effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the INSCHOOL Project's methodological approach and of its interventions at school and policy levels, as well as in contributing to the aims of the project as defined in the sections above;*
 - *To identify lessons and recommendations that the Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers Team, the European Commission, as well as other stakeholders of the Project should learn and take into consideration from its implementation.*

1.2 Methodology

5. The evaluation plan for this evaluation presented details on the methodology, a mostly qualitative question-based evaluation,⁴ focusing on the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Section 2.1.1 presents the theory of change that guided the evaluation, and Annex 1 notes the corresponding evaluation questions. Ten specific schools were selected for in-depth evaluation (desk research and interviews), whilst the remaining schools were covered by a survey. A total of 20 stakeholders were interviewed between 7 July and 20 August 2021 (see Annex 2), including school representatives, INSCHOOL Educational Advisers and Facilitators, national-level stakeholders (CZ, RO, SK) and CoE representatives. The survey covered representatives of 21 schools, namely, eight schools from SK, six schools from CZ and seven schools from RO (see Annex 3).⁵ The report also integrates CoE feedback on draft versions of this report.⁶
6. The evaluation experienced a series of important constraints. Data collection was originally scheduled to start in June 2021, following the sharing of first documentation on the project on 14 June and the kick-off meeting with the CoE on 15 June. However, data collection could only be launched in mid-July, following the approval of the evaluation plan on 6 July 2021, the sharing of contact details for the interviews and survey on 7 July and the transfer of the complete collection of documentation on the project on 15 July.⁷ Organising data collection at the start of the summer holidays in

⁴ Stufflebeam, D. (2002) 'Evaluation models' in *New Directions for Evaluation*, 7-9\8

⁵ The online survey was prepared and launched using SurveyMonkey. As of 23 August 2021, we received 19 replies in total with two replies missing from RO.

⁶ A first draft was submitted to the CoE on 7 September and the CoE provided comments on 21 September 2021; a second draft was submitted on 30 September and the CoE provided comments on 19 October 2021; a third draft was submitted on 29 October and the CoE provided comments on 23 November 2021.

⁷ Additional data on project outputs was shared on 19 October 2021.

the three countries covered by the evaluation (CZ, RO, SK) implied inefficiencies (limited availability of interviewees, interviewees not joining the meeting at the agreed time etc.) as interviews had to be organised over a longer period of time than originally anticipated and requiring additional resources. Moreover, at the start of the evaluation systematic monitoring data on outcomes was not readily available at an aggregated level (output and outcome data (including baseline data) was dispersed across over 100 individual school- / country-level documents; however, the Project team has identified this constraint and during the second phase aimed to develop “country reports” summarising the results of the project from the practice level contextualised within the policy education environment. The evaluator addressed these constraints by mobilising additional resources for desk research and interviews and flexible (re-) scheduling of meetings. Finally, it is important to note that whilst desk research suggests that most findings are valid for both, the Pilot Phase and INSCHOOL 2, the findings could only be fully validated for INSCHOOL.

1.3 Report structure

7. The report is organised in three main sections, namely:
 - this Introduction (section 1), including detail on the evaluation scope and objectives, methodology and report structure;
 - the Findings (section 2), presenting findings per evaluation criterion, i.e., effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability;
 - the Conclusions, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations (section 3).

2 Findings

8. This section presents the evaluation findings. The presentation of findings is organised by evaluation criterion, i.e.:
- Effectiveness – or the extent to which INSCHOOL triggered immediate and medium-term changes (2.1);
 - Efficiency - focusing on discussing the factors explaining the achievement of objectives, and constraints (2.2);
 - and Sustainability – or the extent to which outputs and outcomes can be expected to last beyond the end of the project (2.3).

2.1 Effectiveness

2.1.1 Introducing the assessment of effectiveness

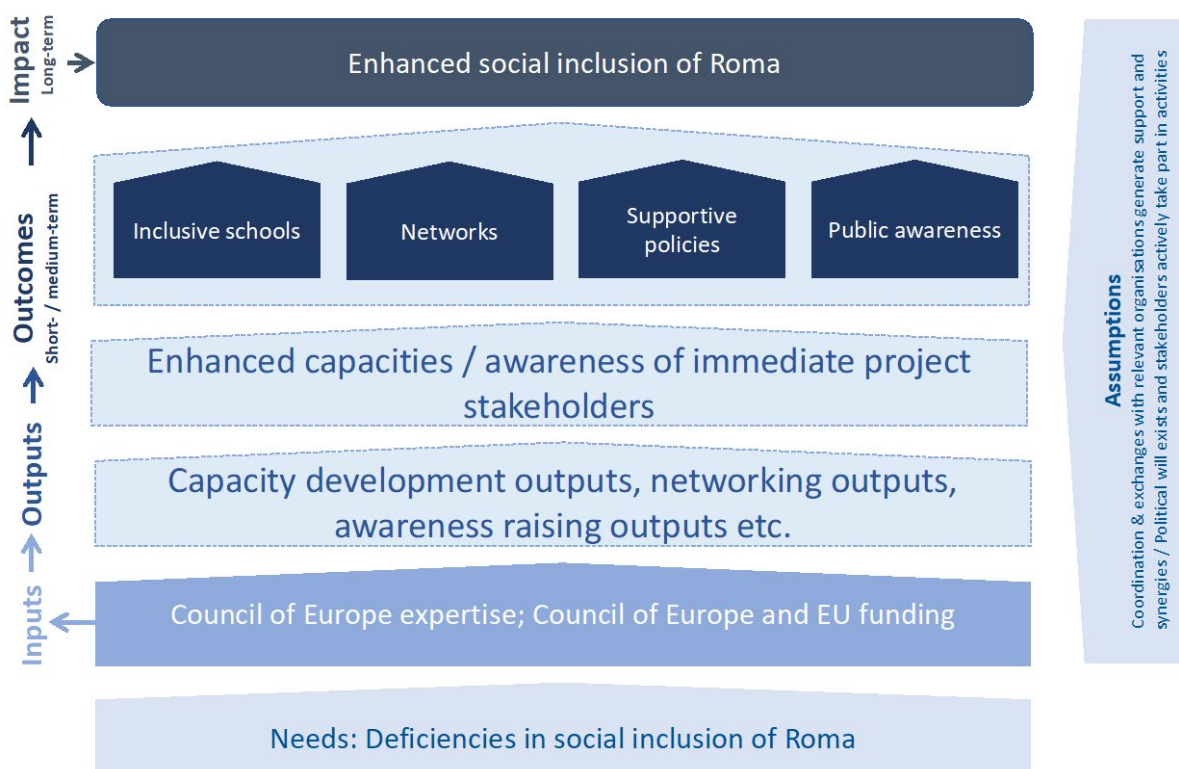
9. The evaluation criterion of effectiveness is interested in the achievement of outcomes, i.e., the extent to which objectives are being met. To set the context for the discussion of effectiveness, we briefly discuss the theory of change underlying this evaluation (as first presented in the evaluation plan and validated by this evaluation).
10. The objectives of INSCHOOL are noted in the DoA (2017) for the pilot phase of the project, and reiterated in the 'Grant Application Form' (2019) for the second phase. Drawing on the presentation of the objectives in these two documents, the following bullet points recount the theory of change of INSCHOOL.
- The CoE provides **inputs** in terms of expertise (on inclusive education / CoE standards on education / 'Index for Inclusion' methodology⁸), and the CoE and EU provide the corresponding funding.
 - At the level of the **outputs**, this allows for the generation of outputs such as support mechanisms and resources for schools, support for teachers (including training and other capacity development interventions), capacity development targeting parents, support for children, capacity development and technical support for the policy makers, networking charter, peer-to-peer exchanges, awareness raising materials etc.

⁸ Booth, T. and Ainscow, M. (2016) Index for Inclusion: a guide to school development led by inclusive values.

- In the short-term, these outputs contribute to **immediate outcomes**, most notably, enhanced capacities and awareness of relevant stakeholders.
- In the medium-term this generates a series of further more profound **intermediate outcomes**, namely, more inclusive schools, including enhanced access of Roma children to quality and inclusive education; strengthened networking between relevant stakeholders; policies more supportive of inclusive schooling; and increased awareness of the benefits of inclusive education.
- Finally, in the long-term (**impact**), these outcomes will help achieve the goal of social inclusion of Roma, in full alignment with the Paris Declaration of 17 March 2015 on promoting citizenship and the Council of Europe Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching.

11. The following figure presents the theory of change, as validated by this evaluation.

Figure 1 - Theory of change



12. Before presenting the findings on effectiveness, one important caveat is worth noting. The assessment of effectiveness is somewhat constrained by the absence of pre-defined quantified targets for the achievement of outcomes at the level of the project (there is a more systematic approach to using data in the context of assessing the situation at schools / selecting schools / tailoring support to schools depending on the assessment and data provided with the baseline and/or self-evaluation surveys). Indeed, the project documentation does not systematically quantify the intended outcomes of all the different activities, e.g., to what extent (measured in numbers / percentages) will activities contribute to objectives. For example, the DoA for the Pilot Phase does not quantify what is referred to as 'desired impact' or 'results',⁹ and neither does the logframe matrix. Indeed, whilst the logframe matrix defines indicators at the outcome level, e.g., 'Increased level of capacities and cooperation of authorities at national, regional and local levels and of school practitioners with regard to inclusive approaches in education and training', the quantification is limited to the output level, e.g., '648 coaching sessions delivered'.¹⁰ There are no baselines / targets / data on achievement at the project's outcome level. Reviewing the Final Report for the Pilot Phase, the section on achievements is largely limited to presenting processes, activities and the corresponding output data, however, outcomes are only discussed in generic terms, e.g. 'schools' atmosphere and relationships among stakeholders improved in a significant manner'¹¹ or 'improved relationship between parents, pupils and teachers'.¹² Similarly, the Grant Application Form and interim reporting for INSCHOOL 2 lacks any quantification of 'results'.¹³ However, 'standard' evaluation practice consists of comparing quantified targets for outputs and outcomes with the actual achievement. Therefore, in the context of this evaluation a qualitative approach was adopted, taking the form of systematic stock taking of outcomes as reported by stakeholders, and validated via triangulation of feedback between different sources.
13. The project made an attempt, more explicitly during the second cycle, for a systemic collection of data and information for the practical level of the interventions in the project and application of this knowledge towards more inclusive education activities and outcomes. The adaptation of the Index for development planning cycle has enabled the collection of data by tailoring the first step of the planning cycle (Phase 1: Getting started) and introducing baseline survey for each of participating schools, and consequently the adaptation of the last step of the planning methodological cycle (Phase 5: Reviewing development) by introducing the self-evaluation survey (quantitative and qualitative). Schools were involved in value-led development from

⁹ INSCHOOL, Description of the Action for the Pilot Phase, pages 13 and 17.

¹⁰ INSCHOOL, Inception Report for the Pilot Phase, Logframe.

¹¹ INSCHOOL, Final Report for the reporting period 15 May 2017 to 31 July 2019, page 21.

¹² Ibid, page 26.

¹³ INSCHOOL, Grant Application Form for INSCHOOL 2, page 18.

the start of their engagement with the Index for Inclusion methodology, and following the methodology schools were able to develop indicators that would help them resolve most pressing issues, connect actions to inclusive values, pedagogical principles, mobilise resources, and other issues of relevance to schools. The Index for Inclusion has provided a framework of 16 inclusive values, 20 principles, 70 indicators and around 2,000 questions that should guide school teams. The indicators were structured in three dimensions related to creating inclusive cultures, producing inclusive values, and evolving inclusive practices. Each participating school has then prepared a planning framework in the format of an Inclusive School Development Plan, defining indicators, values, and inclusive actions leading to desired changes in the school environment.

2.1.2 To what extent has INSCHOOL strengthened the capacities of schools in terms of inclusive education?

14. INSCHOOL has made a very strong contribution to strengthening the capacities of the participating schools. Important outputs and outcomes in terms of more inclusive education include the following:

- Under the Pilot Phase of INSCHOOL, 25 **Inclusive School Development Plans** were developed,¹⁴ and INSCHOOL 2 saw the development of 20 Inclusive School Development Plans.¹⁵ This in itself implies that school staff and teachers familiarised themselves with the concept of inclusion and translated the concept of inclusion as promoted by the Index for Inclusion methodology to the practice of their schools. The development of the Inclusive School Development Plans also saw the adoption of more participatory approaches, involving the schools' senior leadership and teachers working together instead of simply the principal developing the School Development Plans. The Inclusive School Development Plans are reflective of the diverse school communities and their vision about future changes in values, culture and practices that schools wish to see promoted with set of indicators corresponding with the Index guidebook, and specific activities aimed at enabling those changes. In some instances, as in the case of Romania, the Inclusive School Development Plans are multiyear strategic documents which are endorsed by teachers' councils, school boards and/or education authorities.
- The Pilot Phase of INSCHOOL saw some 606 capacity development interventions at schools.¹⁶ Similarly, INSCHOOL 2 counted 780 capacity development interventions at schools by Facilitators and Educational Advisors (CZ, HU, RO, SK).¹⁷ **Teachers**

¹⁴ INSCHOOL, Final Report for the reporting period 15 May 2017 to 31 July 2019, page 23.

¹⁵ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 16.

¹⁶ INSCHOOL, Final Report for the reporting period 15 May 2017 to 31 July 2019, page 21.

¹⁷ Data shared with the evaluators on 19 October 2021.

have thus benefited from training on inclusion and other issues (e.g., innovative inclusive education methodologies, working with parents, Roma culture), coaching and peer-to-peer exchanges, and the development of training resources.¹⁸ Indeed CoE feedback on a draft version of this report notes that over 683 teachers took part in one or more INSCHOOL 2 trainings (t). Thus, teachers developed a better understanding of the concept of inclusion and corresponding teaching methods, and this was particularly true for schools participating for the first time in a project promoting inclusion. For example, before engaging with INSCHOOL, some teachers associated inclusion with exclusively investing in infrastructure.

- As an example, the Secondary School “Professor Ion Visoiu” from Chitila, Ilfov Country in Romania, as part of its Inclusive School Development Plan has focused on issues related to *Evolving inclusive practices* with a specific focus on Orchestrating learning, more specifically Dimension C, Indicator C2 from the Index for Inclusion. The activity organised under this indicator included “Digital skills development “face to face” and online training” for kindergarten and primary school teachers. The training events raised the competences of 15 teachers about online education tools (Google Classroom, Kahoot, Google Docs, etc.) and supported them to adapt their teaching methods and curriculum to the online format. As a result of the increased IT competences and knowledge about education tools, teachers have organised follow-up events with students and parents from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to raise their awareness of the accessibility of education tools and facilitate their regular access to education activities during the sanitary crises.
- Moreover, **parents** have benefited from support throughout both phases of INSCHOOL. Commenting on INSCHOOL 2, interviewees specifically highlighted their appreciation of support in terms of dealing with COVID-19 implications for schooling. Schools also created physical spaces to make parents feel welcome at school, and to motivate parents to visit schools. Moreover, parents also actively participated in ‘school coordination groups’ responsible for the development and implementation of the above-mentioned Inclusive School Development Plans. For INSCHOOL 2, and looking specifically at the 15 schools for which data was available at the time of writing, nearly 400 parents were involved in various activities organised within the school grant implementation alone.¹⁹ Activities included: extracurricular and awareness raising activities, workshops, digital skills development and covid-response related activities.²⁰ Parents have thus developed a better understanding of inclusion and the uniqueness of each child.

¹⁸ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 17.

¹⁹ The Final Report for the Pilot Phase does not quantify the number of parents involved. See Final Report for the reporting period 15 May 2017 to 31 July 2019, page 26.

²⁰ Data shared with the evaluators on 19 October 2021.

- Similarly, **children** benefited from support activities. For INSCHOOL 2, and again for the 15 schools for which data was available at the time of writing, nearly 2,500 children in total took part in the activities ranging from remedial and extracurricular activities, awareness raising events or digital access skills among others.²¹ Schools developed a better understanding of the needs of children, e.g., the reasons for absenteeism, such as lack of school meals or other concurring family duties. Schools introduced new activities such as 'morning circles', i.e., gatherings of all teachers and school children before the start of the classes to exchange on different topics. The enhanced understanding of the concept of inclusion led to the introduction of educational plans tailored to the specific needs of the individual student (for all students with an 'educational risk'). Schools refocused their educational content on promoting the specific talents of each individual student instead of focusing on addressing deficiencies. Schools established spaces for children to engage in extracurricular activities after the end of regular school time. Schools bought 'equipment' to help Roma children to engage in school activities, including glasses for a child with a visual impairment; shoes for sports activities; costumes for theatre classes; IT equipment for remote learning etc. Schools organised school excursions to sites of cultural / historical interest. With the use of the small-grants scheme only, over 400 students, 120 Teachers and 300 parents received psycho-social, IT skills or other support. Moreover, children benefited from support related to the impact of COVID-19 on schooling. This support was implemented in four schools in RO, via the small grants scheme, offered to all schools at the immediate outbreak of the pandemic, but only implemented in RO.

- The Inclusive School Development Plan of the Primary School Graficka from Prague, Czech Republic has focused on some of the following aspects: increasing the participation of parents at school activities/events; building stronger positive relationships among parents, and between Roma and Russian speaking parents; and supporting the transition of Roma children from primary to secondary school. As part of the inclusive education activities organised under the INSCHOOL Grant, the school focused much of its resources on facilitating and improving the relationship among Roma and Russian speaking parents by organising diverse educational activities. As part of the indicator A1.8 from the Index for Inclusion focusing on "The School Encourages an Understanding of the Interconnections Between People Around the World", the school organised a trip to Terezin Museum a memorial site associated with the persecutions and genocidal policies of the Second World War. The educational visit involved 33 participants (students, teachers, parents, both Roma and Russian speaking) enabled participants to learn about the sufferings from the Second World War and in particular about the Roma Genocide. Students and parents then jointly discussed and reflected on the different experience's communities have had and shared their experiences with today's

²¹ Ibid.

racism and xenophobia. By learning about the common past and existing racist and discriminatory practices, participants were able to reflect on some of their personal stereotypes of each-other and got to know each-other better.

- Turning to the survey results, this clearly confirms that diverse learning needs have been well accommodated in the schools involved in the INSCHOOL project. 52.6% of respondents across all countries strongly agreed and 47.4% of respondents agreed with the statement that diverse learning needs have been accommodated in their school. Moreover, 57.9% of respondents agreed and some 31.6% strongly agreed that new teaching methods have been used in their school.

2.1.3 To what extent has INSCHOOL strengthened the awareness of policy makers regarding inclusive education?

15. Whilst there is evidence of INSCHOOL having strengthened the awareness of policy makers, there are notable differences between the different countries.

16. The dialogue with Ministries in charge of education was organised via participation in a National Working Group (HU, SK), other existing working groups (RO), and in bilateral format (CZ),²² with political reasons justifying the adoption of a country-specific approach (instead of the initial plan of establishing National Working Groups in all countries). This more 'organic' process was noted 'to yield better results in the current complexity of circumstances'.²³ Important examples of outcomes at the policy level included:

- In CZ, INSCHOOL 'coincided' with national strategy development, e.g., the development of the education strategy, and the strategy on Roma inclusion. In this context, policy makers appreciated the insights that INSCHOOL generated in terms of the practical application of inclusion at the participating schools and policy makers noted the strong potential of the experiences of the INSCHOOL participating schools in terms of 'convincing' other schools to adopt similar approaches in terms of the INSCHOOL methodology. However, and unrelated to the presence of INSCHOOL, the participating schools noted their general perception of a reduction of government financial support, e.g., budget allocations for hiring teachers with specific qualifications ('special teachers'), and budget allocations for 'simplified projects', thus reducing the possibilities for the schools to, inter alia, develop specific support and extracurricular activities. According to the schools, policy makers have not been in contact with participating schools to exchange on lessons learnt, and schools only witnessed an involvement of policy makers at the project's final event. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport confirmed the absence of

²² INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 22.

²³ Ibid, page 22.

networking with participating schools, noting that contacts with schools were limited to sporadic consultations and conferences organised by the Ministry.

- In RO, stakeholders reported a new Ministerial Order by the Ministry of Education and Research (31 December 2019) adopting the Methodology on School Segregation in pre-university education. The development of the Order was supported by the INSCHOOL Educational Advisor. The implementation of the Order was launched in spring 2020 with training of school inspectorates on the methodology. INSCHOOL also contributed inputs to meetings of an informal national-level group of stakeholders developing resources for teachers (via the platform 'digital.educd.ro'). Moreover, a Memorandum of Understanding between the CoE and the Ministry of Education and Research has been put in place to support new initiatives promoting inclusion, e.g., the replication of the INSCHOOL Grant Scheme, the mapping of priority intervention areas and schools in RO etc.²⁴ INSCHOOL has provided inputs for the new education strategy 'Educated Romania'. The increased awareness of policy makers in RO is associated with the intensive nature of the engagement of INSCHOOL with relevant policy makers at the national level. Finally, stakeholders confirmed strong potential for impact of INSCHOOL and explained this with the project's ability to draw on practical experiences from schools.
- In SK, the INSCHOOL coordinator is a member of Ministry of Education working group on definition of school segregation methodology and developing procedures for desegregation of Roma students.²⁵ This is credited to INSCHOOL as a result of the positive cooperation with the Ministry. At the request of INSCHOOL, the Ministry accepted and recognised the expertise among the project team and secured a place within the working group on segregation. In addition, the Ministry recognised INSCHOOL's positive experience from the work in RO on supporting the development of the methodology for monitoring segregation. Moreover, the Ministry appointed the person in charge of developing the National Inclusive Education Strategy as the contact person for INSCHOOL. Reports on the activities of INSCHOOL participating schools were shared with the National Working Group and reviewed during meetings of the working group. Rather than offering new insights, the reports confirmed existing insights on the benefits of inclusion and provided the corresponding evidence. Policy makers confirmed that the experiences of the INSCHOOL participating schools have strong potential in terms of 'convincing' other schools to adopt similar approaches. INSCHOOL facilitated exchanges between the Ministry of Education and schools, and the latter noted that in the context of their communication with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry was paying more attention to Roma issues. A different school confirmed a change in awareness but

²⁴ Ibid, page 22-23.

²⁵ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 24.

found that this had not been translated into actual changes in policy towards inclusion. Several schools noted that their engagement with 'policy makers' focused mostly on the municipal level, e.g., cooperation with social workers.

2.1.4 To what extent are schools more inclusive?

17. There is substantial evidence that participating schools are more inclusive. For example:

- The INSCHOOL Project promotes the "*Index for Inclusion: a guide to school development led by inclusive values*" by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow as the main methodology and tool for the implementation of actions at the school level. Inclusion and inclusive school development are largely defined by the set of (16) inclusive values, principles, indicators, and other set of material promoted within the guidebook. Therefore, the context of inclusion is seen as putting inclusive values into action, inclusive value-led development involves connecting a shared framework of values to everything that happens in, and around, the school setting.
- All participating schools have adopted and applied the Index for Inclusion methodology with the support of the INSCHOOL Education Advisors and Facilitators, school management, INSCHOOL Coordinating groups, etc. To showcase some of the participatory structures established, the development or review of the Inclusive School Development Plans has been done in cooperation or with the support of INSCHOOL Coordination Groups which consist of teachers, school administration, parents, and other community stakeholders (NGOs, etc.). It is to be noted that the composition of the coordinating groups is quite heterogeneous and depended on the local and community dynamics. In some instances, the composition of the groups varies between 4 and 6 people, and in other, between 8 and 12 people, with general conclusion that the participation of Roma women parents is almost always present within the work of the groups. The coordinating groups have also made a large contribution in defining the school priorities as part of the ISDPs and Grant Applications, this conclusion can be taken in general terms, as the legal and financial responsibilities falls within the responsibilities of the School Principals.
- Activities conducted within the framework of the INSCHOOL Grants have been aligned with specific indicators from the Index for Inclusion. The INSCHOOL Project Team has provided quality assurance about the consistency of proposed specific objectives and school activities, ensuring a consistency in terms of educational process, outreach, and balance.
- Schools have introduced innovative activities at schools, bringing Roma, non-Roma, other minorities, disabled, SEN and other children together. Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, online activities have maintained the same principle and sense of intercultural exchange and learning among the different categories of children. Schools have also directly addressed issues of stereotypes, prejudices and racism against Roma and have aimed to develop education and awareness raising

activities within the school environment e.g., by organising joint activities between Roma and non-Roma children, in some cases activities that demonstrate the equality among children organising specific educational workshops on anti-racism, Roma culture, etc. . Schools have introduced new activities aiming to promote the individual student's talents and self-confidence, e.g., in RO, a school has introduced a photography competition focusing on the student's individual existence and experiences, with all participants awarded a prize. A different school organised a fishing competition; participation in the competition was dependent on regular school attendance; the competition met with an enthusiastic response by students. Schools have also integrated new academic 'contents' in their regular curriculum, e.g., the teaching about Roma culture and history, the Roma Genocide, and the effectiveness of this is underlined by positive feedback and engagement by Roma children. A large part of intervention has also focused on improving educational competences of children by organising peer-to-peer tutoring, mentorship programme, remedial classes as a result of the negative impact of the pandemic, professional and career orientations for senior level students, etc. Similarly, there is more emphasis placed on learning through practical experience. These activities implied that Roma children felt more accepted at their schools; and this was substantiated by increasing attendance rates, mostly reported by participating schools in RO. Survey results confirm this finding. Regarding the statement 'in our school Roma children feel more accepted', respondents across countries mostly agreed with this statement (68.4%), some of them strongly agreed (26.3%) and only a few disagreed (5.3%). Regarding increased participation of Roma children, some 63.2% of respondents across all countries agreed with this statement. The rest of the replies varied between 'strongly agree' (21.1%), 'disagree' (5.3%) and 'don't know' (10.5%).

- Moreover, schools have established regular **non-formal meetings with teachers, students and parents** to jointly discuss educational needs, and more generally enhanced 'internal' communication.
- Schools are engaging more systematically with parents; including through study visits; and through facilitating exchanges between parents. Schools in SK have also engaged with parents by organising 'Open Days' - this allowed for exchanges between parents, and contributed to reversing the trend of non-Roma parents moving their children to schools with no or fewer Roma children. Open Days with a similar purpose were also organised by participating schools in RO. INSCHOOL activities have led to increased participation by parents. Indeed, survey respondents mostly agreed (57.9%) or strongly agreed (15.8%) (15.8% disagree and 10.5% don't know).
- Schools have established physical spaces to facilitate the involvement of students in extracurricular activities. Note that infrastructure investments were exceptionally approved upon solid justification by the schools. There was a concentrated effort by the project team to ensure that each approved infrastructure investment was

accompanied with sound educational objectives and methodology benefiting children, the school community, parents, etc.

- Survey results clearly confirm the effectiveness of INSCHOOL in terms of making school more inclusive. Almost 60% of respondents across all countries agreed and some 26% strongly agreed with the statement of schools having adopted new practices for social inclusion. Similarly, regarding the statement 'we have adopted new practices for educational inclusion of Roma children', around 47% of respondents across all countries strongly agreed and 42% agreed with this statement. On new practices for social inclusion of non-Roma children, more than half of all respondents agreed (52.6%), some 31% strongly agreed and 5.3% disagreed with this statement; and on educational inclusion of vulnerable (non-Roma children), around 52% agreed and 42% strongly agreed with this statement.

2.1.5 To what extent are networks stronger?

18. Networking focused on the national level (between participating schools in one country) and the international level (between participating schools in different countries). Interview feedback suggested that networking activities were among the project activities most strongly affected by COVID-19. Some international networking was more prominent under the Pilot Phase, e.g., a study visit to the UK, whereas during the second phase of the project the focus remained at in-country exchanges and capacity building among schools and teachers. The online training course on inclusive and quality education was the sole international activity bringing the schools together to learn more about education methodologies and develop solutions/strategies on the basis of diverse experiences coming from teachers from SK, CZ and RO.

- According to the Interim Report, the development of the INSCHOOL networking charter and label was still in development; regarding the peer-to-peer exchanges during INSCHOOL 2, one school in RO organised a visit to another school in June 2020; at the international level, some of the participating schools were invited to attend the CoE conference 'Competences in action - Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture: moving towards a competence-based approach to teaching and learning'.²⁶
- In CZ and SK, the project organised online meetings between all schools in SK and with schools in CZ. However, the networking was project-based and has not been 'institutionalised'. In RO, there were exchanges of experience between the participating schools; whilst this networking was not formally institutionalised, there are intentions to continue with these exchanges beyond the end of INSCHOOL. In

²⁶ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 21.

SK, there was limited cooperation between schools, and in case of exchanges, this was mostly limited to exchanges between school directors.

- Networking between CZ, SK and RO was mostly limited to the members of the INSCHOOL teams, though there is strong interest in networking between CZ, SK and RO schools and policy makers, e.g., on teaching in the Romani language.
- In general terms, networking between school in different countries was constrained by COVID-19 and language issues (referring to the use of the English language). One school in SK recommended a stronger emphasis on methods instead of outcomes, i.e., at the project's final event, the outcomes in different countries were presented, however, there was less information on the practical steps leading to the achievement of these outcomes. The INSCHOOL Pilot Phase allowed for a SK school to visit the UK.

2.1.6 To what extent are policies more supportive?

19. There is first evidence of more supportive policies - one of the expected outcomes of INSCHOOL. However, stakeholders acknowledged that more supportive policies will be mostly achieved in the medium term.

- In CZ, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has drawn on the INSCHOOL experience and strengthened its policies / programmes for supporting Roma students (in terms of promoting school meals, and more generally supporting Roma students to stay within the education system). The Ministry is willing to disseminate the INSCHOOL experience in the framework of the new 2030+ Education Policy Strategy. INSCHOOL experiences will be 'translated' into policy changes in the future; these experiences include capacity development for teachers with a specific focus on Roma inclusion and increasing human resources and enhancing physical infrastructure at schools.
- The Romanian strategy 'Educated Romania', under development in the course of the delivery of INSCHOOL, included a series of measures aimed at promoting inclusion, drawing on the INSCHOOL experience. Similarly, the 'National Resilience and Recovery Plan' integrates INSCHOOL approaches on inclusion, e.g., the Index for Inclusion methodology. Moreover, INSCHOOL initiated a partnership between the CoE, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, and this will facilitate the introduction of indicators to measure inclusion at the schools. Further examples of policy developments in RO include: the small grants initiative was scaled up in RO on the request of the Ministry to support additional 40 school located in economic disadvantaged locations; indicators for monitoring segregation were adopted to support the future process of monitoring of pre-university education in RO with indicators largely inspired by the Index methodology.
- In SK, policy changes towards the promotion of inclusion were launched prior to INSCHOOL (e.g., National Programme for the Development of Education for the

period 2018-2027), however, the INSCHOOL experiences reinforced these efforts (e.g., strengthening inclusion by allocating teacher assistants). Moreover, INSCHOOL coincided with the establishment of a new department on inclusive education within the Ministry. Indeed, the Ministry of Education is further developing its national inclusive education policy with a focus on promoting inclusion, however, for the policy to be effective, the schools first need to be prepared in terms of their understanding of the concept of inclusion and developing acceptance for the concept. Stakeholders noted limited evidence of genuine changes in education policy having been translated to the level of schools.

2.1.7 To what extent is public awareness of the need to strengthen social inclusion of Roma children enhanced, e.g., engagement of non-Roma parents with the INSCHOOL schools?

Whilst the participating schools were able to report changes in public awareness at their schools, it is understood that wider changes in public awareness will require further efforts beyond the INSCHOOL project.

- INSCHOOL undertook substantial efforts to disseminate project results, for example, via the publication 'Summary of Achievements and Infographics', via social media, and the project website etc.²⁷ However, there was a limited response to the INSCHOOL call for applications for the role of 'Ambassadors for inclusive schools', mostly explained by the constraints imposed by COVID-19,²⁸ though for SK, it can be assumed that the INSCHOOL Ambassador had a modest impact on public awareness considering that the Ambassador is also one of the leading education experts in the country and actively contributes to public debates.
- In all countries schools have reported reduced prejudices towards Roma children, and this was explained with non-Roma children having Roma classmates over extended periods of time.
- In RO, there is substantial existing public awareness, however, interviewees did not specifically link this to INSCHOOL, e.g., there are frequent television debates on the topic of inclusive education. Notwithstanding, the active role of INSCHOOL in terms of contributing to / facilitating public debates is likely to have played a role in strengthening awareness of the need for inclusive education. Moreover, INSCHOOL was able to influence public awareness by involving key actors in the public debate on inclusive education, e.g., the INSCHOOL Educational Advisor in RO has a well-established popular profile as promoter of inclusive education. Moreover, at the end of 2020 INSCHOOL supported the organisation of public debates on quality

²⁷ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 29.

²⁸ Ibid, page 28.

inclusive education at the national TV channel DIGI as part of the local election campaigning and this attracted a substantial number of viewers (1st debate: 04/11/20 – 177,600 viewers, 2nd debate 11/11/20 – 133,100 viewers, 3rd debate 18/11/20 – 50,200 viewers, 4th debate 25/11/20 – 54,600 viewers, 5th debate 03/12/20 – 17,800 views).²⁹

- Informal meetings between parents contributed to strengthened support for social inclusion and enhanced mutual understanding between Roma and non-Roma parents. However, there are continuing limitations in public awareness as indicated by non-Roma parents moving their children to schools with no or smaller numbers of Roma children.

2.2 Efficiency

2.2.1 What explains the achievement of outcomes and / or constraints in achieving outcomes?

20. Looking first at the factors explaining the achievement of outcomes, these included the tailoring of INSCHOOL support to needs, the different INSCHOOL instruments (Facilitators and Educational Advisors, Grants, Index of Inclusion), the supportive role of school leadership, the involvement of parents, allowing for direct personal experiences by children, the timing of the INSCHOOL project, and the dual intervention at both, practice and policy level. Note that the following factors are presented in the order of importance attached to these factors by interviewees.

- **INSCHOOL tailored support to the different requirements of the participating schools**, e.g., the establishment of different levels of 'intensity' of support for schools (full involvement including grant scheme versus methodological support) ensured that support was adapted to the schools' needs.³⁰ The INSCHOOL approach towards schools was enabled by two factors, the Index for Inclusion methodology and its flexible approach in relation to inclusive school development, and the number of resources provided by the INSCHOOL Project (Educational Advisors, Facilitators, in-country training, peer-exchanges, Grant support, communication with policy makers, etc.). As promoted by the Index methodology, each school is in a position to develop their own desired inclusive education

²⁹ Data shared with the evaluators on 19 October 2021.

³⁰ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 9. Methodological support is defined as '*reduced intervention in schools already involved in the pilot phase of the project, involvement in national events and networking activities, without disbursement of grants*'.

environment (vision) and pace of interventions under the guidance and expertise of the project support teams (EA, Fs and experts).

- Schools greatly appreciated the **presence of the INSCHOOL Facilitators and Educational Advisers**, e.g., in terms of the Facilitator providing guidance on INSCHOOL activities, and responding to emerging needs or the Educational Advisor adapting the Index to the needs of the participating schools etc. Interviews with some of the schools in CZ and SK pointed to the need of providing more detail on the role / functions of the facilitator. One school in CZ noted that it was beneficial for the facilitator to be able to work in a 'team' together with a designated project coordinator at the participating school. In more general terms, the involvement of 'national' experts helped INSCHOOL to tailor activities to meet national needs and fit into the schedule of national policy making. Survey results validated the important role of the INSCHOOL Facilitators and Educational Advisers. Regarding the Facilitators, most of the respondents across all countries (57.9%) agreed with the statement on the Facilitators contributing to the achievement of outcomes, followed by 31.6% that strongly agreed, 5.3% that disagreed and 5.3% that didn't know. Regarding the Educational Advisers, overall, some 42.1% of respondents strongly agreed, 36.8% agreed and 15.8% didn't know.
- The participating schools also noted the **INSCHOOL Grants** as an important factor explaining success. The Grants allowed the organisation of activities targeting inclusion, such as extracurricular activities for Roma children, activities allowing to prevent or limit absenteeism from schools, enhancing cooperation and links between Roma and non-Roma children and parents, raising awareness of the inclusive approaches and values among pupils, parents and teaching staff etc. Survey results confirmed the finding on the importance of the Grants. Respondents mostly agreed on the importance of the Grants (10.5% agree, 73.7% strongly agree, 15.8% don't know).
- The **Index of Inclusion** played an important role in bringing about an enhanced understanding of the concept of inclusion, and in developing the schools' own plans for inclusion. In this context, stakeholders appreciated the 'tailoring' of the Index to the specific needs of the different participating school. One school in CZ pointed to room for further improvement in the presentation of Index of Inclusion materials, most notably, by rendering the Index less 'academic' by integrating more practical examples. Due to language barriers and with the intention of making the Index as widely accessible in each national context, the INSCHOOL Project has supported the translation and publication of the Index in Czech and Romanian languages. Survey results confirmed the finding. Respondents mostly agreed on the importance of the Index (47.4% agree, 31.6% strongly agree, 5.3% disagree, 15.8% don't know).
- The **supportive role of the school director** or principal was considered particularly important - leading to the acceptance of the concept of inclusion by teachers and then parents (and participation in INSCHOOL). Similarly, counting with

teachers committed to inclusion played an important role. In this context, in SK stakeholders emphasised the importance of establishing an 'Inclusion Team' (i.e., a group of school staff dedicated to coordinating, implementing and assessing inclusion-related activities) at schools, however, with sustainability of this function threatened by the short duration of the project. Defining the support of senior school leadership (School Principals) or relevant local authorities as a key selection criteria for participating schools proved to be instrumental in the pursuit and promotion of inclusion and inclusive school development.

- Stakeholders also noted the importance of **motivating Roma parents to engage with the school** by first offering 'incentives'. In RO, this took the form of involving Roma and non-Roma parents together in non-formal meetings. Survey findings also pointed to the importance of involving parents - most of the respondents strongly agreed (57.9%), 21.1% agreed and 21.1% didn't know.
- A further facilitating factor **were direct personal experiences of children**, e.g., in SK, children experiencing or learning about examples related to inclusion of Roma children; in CZ, children visiting the Roma Museum in Brno and inviting Roma university lecturers to talk about their educational paths. In this context, stakeholders also emphasised the importance of **inclusive education for all**, i.e., not excluding non-Roma children but working with all children irrespective of background (whilst focusing on those children most threatened by exclusion). The survey validated the importance of adopting more participatory approaches towards children (52.6 agreed, 42.1 strongly agreed, 5.3% didn't know).
- With regard to engagement with policy makers, the **timing of INSCHOOL** was a facilitating factor. For example, in SK, at the launch of INSCHOOL, there were no similar initiatives promoting the inclusion of Roma school children and the Ministry of Education welcomed the project. The same experience is valid for RO, where INSCHOOL coincided with national-level consultations regarding the reform of the strategy on education. Finally, policy makers also appreciated the provision of practical evidence-based examples of inclusion that the project was able to collect from the participating schools which can be used for the purpose of the ongoing and future policy-making. In this sense, stakeholders noted the **dual intervention at practice and policy level** as a key factor explaining achievements.

21. Turning to the factors that constrained the implementation of INSCHOOL, these included COVID-19, challenges in terms of changing attitudes of non-Roma and Roma parents, staff changes in policy-level counterparts, and a lack of political commitment (especially in BG and HU).

- **COVID-19** clearly affected INSCHOOL. INSCHOOL 2 effectively started on 1 January 2020, and (school-) lockdowns commenced as of mid-March 2020.³¹ This meant that the methodology for project implementation had to be redesigned to integrate online formats, and the new approach was operationalised as of May 2020, combining online with presential formats depending on the specific (and frequently changing) COVID-19 situation in the different locations. With regard to the practice level, the new approach meant a reduction in training, peer-to-peer activities, and meetings with parents / students, with more resources allocated to remedial actions. At policy level, the concept of 'National Working Groups' was substituted by bilateral meetings,³² though in SK the working group was reconvened and had its first meeting on 28 April. The working group then had informal exchanges with project partners and Roma civil society.
- The INSCHOOL Small Grant Scheme was launched further to a needs assessment conducted in April 2020, and comprised capacity development on the use of online formats for school staff and teachers; support for schools and teachers to engage online with parents and schools; emotional and psychological support for teachers, parents and students; support for students and teachers in the transition back to schools following the lifting of restrictions.³³ However, by the time of the submission of the grant applications by schools many governments had announced their own support, which the majority of schools opted for and it was only RO schools at the end using the Small Grant Scheme.
- A further important constraint related to the **attitudes of non-Roma parents**, e.g., participating schools in CZ and SK still experienced non-Roma parents moving their children to different schools with no or smaller numbers of Roma children; this also had a negative effect on teachers who saw their efforts at creating more inclusive schools frustrated. However, INSCHOOL also experienced challenges in terms of **involving Roma parents**, e.g. in CZ, participating schools noted the difficulty of changing the attitudes of Roma parents, i.e., to give priority to the education of their children. Survey respondents mostly disagreed with the statement on 'limited support by non-Roma parents' (57.9% disagreed, 5.3 strongly disagreed, 21.1% didn't know, 10.5% agreed, 5.3% strongly agreed). Survey feedback on 'limited support by Roma parents' was mixed - 47.4% disagreed, 31.6% agreed, 5.3% strongly agreed and 15.8% didn't know.
- Whilst this was not noted during interviews, survey feedback also pointed to **obstacles at the levels of some of the schools**. Indeed, the survey identified 'limited human resources at schools' as an obstacle (42.1% agreed, 10.5% strongly

³¹ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 4.

³² Ibid, page 8.

³³ Ibid, page 15.

agreed, 42.1% disagreed, 5.3% didn't know). Moreover, the survey identified the obstacle of 'limited financial resources at schools' (36.8% agreed, 21.1% strongly agreed).

- At the policy level, challenges included **staff changes** in the Slovak Ministry of Education following the elections in February 2020;³⁴ in HU, the contact point at the Ministry of Human Capacities' changed.³⁵ Moreover, stakeholders reported a **lack of coordination** between relevant policy makers (e.g., between different ministries dealing with Roma inclusion from different perspectives) - policy makers tend to compartmentalise, e.g., in CZ INSCHOOL was only associated with the Ministry of Education. Moreover, in CZ, the Ministry of Education also lacked internal coordination on inclusion, i.e., there was no designated focal point for inclusion. For RO it was noted that the centralised approach to education undermined tailoring educational content to different specific needs.
- Finally, in HU, INSCHOOL was 'suspended' in mid-2020 (following the selection of the schools). The suspension was requested by the Ministry of Human Capacities on behalf of the National Working Group and noting COVID-19 restrictions ('impossibility of third parties to intervene in face-to-face interventions in schools').³⁶ In the view of the evaluator it is more likely that the suspension was motivated by political reasons, i.e., a **lack of genuine political will** to promote Roma inclusion. Indeed, the mere presence of INSCHOOL in Hungary can be considered a success considering the political environment in this country. It is also worth noting that the suspension of activities in HU took place despite important INSCHOOL efforts to advocate for inclusive education, e.g., the 'Study on the School Desegregation process and Roma Inclusion in Kaposvar (May 2019). In BG, INSCHOOL was ended by a request of the Ministry of Education and Science dated February 2020.³⁷ One of the Slovak schools (Zilina Budatin) withdrew after the INSCHOOL Pilot Phase.³⁸

³⁴ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 25.

³⁵ Ibid, page 26.

³⁶ Ibid, page 12.

³⁷ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 12.

³⁸ Ibid, page 10.

2.3 Sustainability

2.3.1 To what extent are outcomes at practice-level and policy-level sustainable?

22. There was first evidence of outcomes at practice-level being sustainable. However, beyond references to ongoing policy development and recently adopted new policies, there was somewhat more limited concrete evidence of outcomes at policy-level being sustainable in the absence of further project support. Notwithstanding, there are strong opportunities for future sustainability offered by policy makers now being able to make use of the practice-level examples generated by the project.

- Inclusive School Development Plans which were developed and adopted by the schools in a participatory way, will allow to ensure, together with the awareness raised among the teaching staff and school principals, that the schools will continue implementing the inclusive education approaches. Moreover, most of the teachers at participating schools are permanent staff and will continue to apply the experience gained in the course of INSCHOOL.
- Whilst in general terms, most stakeholders noted the sustainability of activities targeting inclusion to be strongly dependent on further project or government support, there was first evidence of schools having secured budget for the continuation of project activities (e.g., extracurricular activities at schools). Schools intend to maintain some of the functions established in the course of the project, e.g., pedagogical and other assistants to support inclusion, capacity development for teachers, and some schools have secured budget for the continuation of capacity development for teachers. Schools also intend to maintain the Index. In RO, some of the participating schools might receive follow-up support via a national programme providing additional support to 'pilot schools'. Similarly, in CZ there are plans for the Index to be incorporated under support provided by the European Union's Structural and Investment Funds in the CZ.
- At the policy level, in RO, the Ministry of Education has established a department dedicated to promote inclusion in education, and this initiative is associated with the INSCHOOL project. Future sustainability is also indicated by the adoption of different strategy / policy documents promoting inclusion, e.g., in CZ, the new 2030+ Education Policy Strategy, and the strategy on Roma inclusion; in RO, the new Ministerial Order by the Ministry of Education and Research (31 December 2019) adopting the Methodology on School Segregation in pre-university education, the Memorandum of Understanding between the CoE and the Ministry of Education and Research to support new initiatives promoting inclusion, the new education strategy 'Educated Romania', and the 'National Resilience and Recovery Plan'; and in SK, the the National Inclusive Education Strategy and the National Programme for the Development of Education for the period 2018-2027.
- Finally, survey responses indicated the strong sustainability of some of the INSCHOOL 'tools', namely: maintaining the Index beyond the end of the project

(63.2% strongly agreed, 31.6% agreed, 5.3% didn't know); continuing capacity development for teachers (57.9% strongly agreed, 42.1% agreed); and maintaining structures for participation of Roma parents and children (57.9% strongly agreed, 42.1% agreed).

3 Conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations

23. This section presents a series of conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations.

3.1 Conclusions

24. Having noted the main evaluation findings and returning to the theory of change discussed above, this evaluation concludes that the project has made an important contribution to promoting inclusion at practice and policy level in the three countries covered by this evaluation, and specifically with regard to making schools more inclusive. The project's contribution needs to be considered in the context of significant political challenges in promoting Roma inclusion. On the whole, the evaluation finds that the project has performed strongly in terms of the evaluation criteria of effectiveness and efficiency, with good prospects for sustainability as indicated by the development in CZ, RO and SK of a more supportive policy environment for inclusive education, and the availability of a wealth of practice-level illustrations of the success of inclusion as generated and disseminated by the project, and that policy makers can use to substantiate support for more inclusive approaches. It can thus be expected that the planned follow-up phase of INSCHOOL will ensure the full sustainability of outputs and outcomes.

3.2 Lessons learnt

25. The evaluation findings point to a series of lessons learnt. Note that the following bullet points do not aim to provide an exhaustive listing of effective project approaches, but rather build on the importance attached by the interviewees (as validated by survey feedback) to very specific aspects of INSCHOOL:

- An important lesson learnt relates to the dual intervention, both at the level of individual schools and at policy level. Drawing on concrete evidence-based experiences at schools, the project facilitated a more focused dialogue based on real experiences that have informed policy debates. This is most relevant for the inclusive education policy discussion in the member states, and more specifically

for Roma inclusion and education issues. INSCHOOL's dual approach enabled to bring together policy authorities and education practitioners much closer in interaction on issues of relevance to the specific schools (education methodologies, school and teacher challenges, segregation practices, availability of resources, tools, etc). The dual approach has enabled a more diverse and participatory approach in policy dialogue with presence of teachers (school staff) and Roma representatives. Indeed, the availability of concrete practice-level illustrations of the effectiveness of inclusive education helped the CoE's advocacy for inclusive education, as policy makers were able to witness the success of inclusive education not at a theoretical level but as real experiences of the participating schools. In turn, policy makers now have a 'tool' to promote inclusive education reform with real evidence from the community of practitioners and proven methodologies (the Index for Inclusion) and participatory approaches (the INSCHOOL Project).

- The substantial efforts of specifically tailoring the INSCHOOL methodology to the different needs of the participating schools proved successful as this made the methodology more meaningful for the schools. Indeed, at the outset of INSCHOOL, all participating schools were at different stages of approaching inclusive education and had very different capacities to adopt the new methodology. The Index for Inclusion has had a tangible impact on schools (practice level) and their ability to utilize the methodology on their own and preferred pace. Most likely the most significant contribution of the INSCHOOL methodology was the ability to inform and shape the discussion among education practitioners about inclusion and inclusive education based on inclusive values and inclusive school development for all children and through the specific examples of Roma and other children with diverse educational needs. It noted by the project partners and beneficiaries that today they have a more genuine and expanded understanding of inclusion which counters the existing narratives and some negative educational practices. The INSCHOOL Facilitators and Educational Advisors played a key role in this as they ensured that INSCHOOL could benefit from country-specific and local insights into needs but also opportunities. The possibilities of INSCHOOL and the Index for Inclusion methodologies have proven to be inspirational for large policy reform processes, as in the case of RO and the methodology for monitoring segregation in pre-university education, and therefore this provides evidence that with sufficient political commitment the experiences from the INSCHOOL Project can be used to address systemic reforms and constructive policy solution.
- INSCHOOL experiences in schools highlight the added value of extra-curricular activities bringing together Roma and non-Roma children; in this context, activities focusing on the individual strengths of each child rather than deficiencies proved particularly successful. Note that this does not mean that other elements of the methodology of working towards inclusive education, e.g., working with parents, enhancing access to pre-school education etc. are of less value, however, interviewees at schools specifically emphasised the value of extra-curricular activities.

- Innovative educational methodologies paired with financial support, as in the case of the INSCHOOL Project (offering the Index methodology, educational expertise, and seed funding), has proven to be a good model for longer and sustainable positive change within educational settings and systems. The need of innovative inclusive education methodologies/tools and resources has been continuously expressed by teachers during the implementation of the project, and most notably during the Covid-19 pandemic, requiring access to innovative tools and resources (educational and financial) in order to better adapt to the increasing needs of children to overcome learning barriers. The Grant funding provided by the project has enabled schools to focus on learning and socialization of students, but most importantly has provided the opportunity to overcome some of the administrative, human and financial challenges with which schools are confronted on a regular basis.
- Counting with committed school leadership also proved particularly important. This ensured that the INSCHOOL philosophy was well communicated to teachers and parents, that barriers in the form of resistance to inclusive education by some of the teachers and parents were dismantled, and that relevant resources were assigned to implementation.
- One of the Romanian schools withdrew from the project following its selection.³⁹ This was explained with capacity constraints at the school. This can be considered a lesson learnt; i.e., the experience demonstrates the importance of assessing the participating schools' capacities in the context of the selection process.

3.3 Recommendations

26. INSCHOOL has performed strongly, and the evaluation findings only suggest a small number of recommendations for change for the follow-up phase of INSCHOOL, mainly speaking to the factors identified as obstacles to effectiveness (Section 2.2):

- Strengthen networking between participating schools within a country, but also between countries (and inviting new schools to join the networks), ensuring that networking is institutionalised (e.g., regular meetings, internet portal for exchange of information); Considering the absence of language barriers, there might be specific opportunities for strengthening networking between CZ and SK stakeholders; Consider the adoption of hybrid formats for networking, i.e., ideally, face-to-face meetings allowing for remote / online participation of stakeholders in remote locations / with travel constraints.

³⁹ INSCHOOL, Interim Report for the reporting period 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2020, page 9.

- Establish a 'compendium' of successful inclusion practices, drawing on the many curricular and extra-curricular activities introduced by the participating schools and ensure the translation of the compendium into the languages of the participating schools and dissemination, e.g., access to the compendium on the websites of relevant policy makers and the participating schools;
- Expose policy makers to school experiences by inviting relevant policy makers to visit schools to experience successful approaches to inclusion first-hand; alternatively, involve school representatives at meetings with policy makers; in this context, ensure that exchanges between policy makers and school representatives are institutionalised, e.g., by ensuring the participation of school representatives in relevant regional / national policy making working groups.
- Produce information, data and research from the practice/school level, as similarly done with the self-evaluation/country reports, by assessing the most pressing challenges and trends within education, and to offer those experiences to the relevant education authorities. INSCHOOL's accumulated experience in collecting feedback from stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, Roma, non-Roma, education authorities, etc.) could bring a qualitative impetus to the policy discussion about inclusive solutions on education and Roma integration.
- Explore the possibilities and impact of the Index methodology has on addressing education and systemic inequalities and countering segregation practices in education. The project has brought solid evidence of the potential to address issues of segregation and it will be of added value to further focus on this aspect of intervention.
- Maintain, and if possible, further strengthen work with Roma and non-Roma parents to overcome barriers experienced by some of the participating schools in terms of Roma parents not engaging with the schools and non-Roma parents moving their children to other schools with no or more reduced numbers of Roma children; existing INSCHOOL approaches, such as the 'school coordination groups' for the Inclusive School Development Plans have demonstrated their value, and consideration could be given to further intensifying the involvement of parents;
- Prior to implementing INSCHOOL, carefully assess school capacities to ensure schools have not only the required commitment but also sufficient resources (e.g., staff, physical facilities) to implement key aspects of the Index - indeed, especially the survey findings pointed to limited school resources (staff shortages and limited budgets);
- Create or further develop the cooperation and coordination under national policy coordination mechanisms, as in the case of the National Working Groups. To ensure that the evidence, research data and professional perspective of diverse stakeholders are articulated in timely and participatory manner in policy discussions.

- INSCHOOL's approach to assessing levels of inclusion at participating schools at the outset of implementing INSCHOOL in the schools can be considered exemplary (e.g., systematic use of baseline surveys / questionnaires). Whilst the performance of INSCHOOL can be assessed on the basis of qualitative methods, future monitoring and evaluation would benefit of complementary data via systematic quantification of outcomes, including the setting of targets, and corresponding systematic data collection.

Annex 1 – Evaluation questions

Annex 1 presents the evaluation questions.

Table 1 – Evaluation questions

	Evaluation question	Approach / indicator	Method				
			Desk research	Survey	Interviews		
					Schools	National partners	CoE, Facilitators and Educational Advisors
Effectiveness	1) Immediate outcomes: To what extent has INSCHOOL strengthened the capacities of schools in terms of inclusive education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of uptake of 'Index for Inclusion' methodology • School feedback on changes in their capacity (accommodate diverse learning needs / deploy new teaching methods) • Evidence of establishment of structures for participation / Increases in participation of Roma parents and children 	x	x	x		x

Evaluation question	Approach / indicator	Method				
		Desk research	Survey	Interviews		
				Schools	National partners	CoE, Facilitators and Educational Advisors
2) Immediate outcomes: To what extent has INSCHOOL strengthened the awareness of policy makers regarding inclusive education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of increased consideration by policy makers of experience of INSCHOOL schools Evidence of policy makers following up on requirements voiced by INSCHOOL schools 	x		x	x	x
3) Medium-term outcomes: To what extent are schools more inclusive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools reporting changes in practices implemented (social / educational inclusion of Roma children and other (vulnerable) children)) Evidence of changes in Roma children's perception of their acceptance 		x	x		x
4) Medium-term outcomes: To what extent are networks stronger?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of experiences with social inclusion of Roma children transferred / replicated within a country and / or between CZ, RO, SK 			x	x	x

Evaluation question	Approach / indicator	Method				
		Desk research	Survey	Interviews		
				Schools	National partners	CoE, Facilitators and Educational Advisors
5) Medium-term outcomes: To what extent are policies more supportive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of INSCHOOL experiences integrated in social / educational policy at local and / or national level - interviewees providing evidence of actual changes in policies relating to: desegregation in schools, other structural changes in education policy, coordination between relevant policy makers, other policies promoting equality and non-discrimination of Roma children etc. 			x	x	x
6) Medium-term outcomes: To what extent is public awareness of the need to strengthen social inclusion of Roma children enhanced, e.g., engagement of non-Roma parents with the INSCHOOL schools?		x		x	x	x

	Evaluation question	Approach / indicator	Method				
			Desk research	Survey	Interviews		
					Schools	National partners	CoE, Facilitators and Educational Advisors
Efficiency	7) What explains the achievement of outcomes and / or constraints in achieving outcomes? (focus on role of the 'Index for Inclusion' methodology, the role of Facilitators / Educational Advisers, and the INSCHOOL Grants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence in INSCHOOL reports, grantees reports, survey responses and / or qualitative feedback from interviewees identifying supporting factors / obstacles 	x	x	x	x	x
Sustainability	8) To what extent are outcomes at practice-level sustainable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of schools maintaining elements of the 'Index for Inclusion' methodology beyond the end of project support Evidence of a continuation of capacity development for teachers beyond the end of project support Evidence of a continuation of structures for participation 		x	x		x

Evaluation question	Approach / indicator	Method				
		Desk research	Survey	Interviews		
				Schools	National partners	CoE, Facilitators and Educational Advisors
9) To what extent are outcomes at policy-level sustainable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of a continuation of networking beyond the end of project support Evidence of maintenance / increase in financial / human resources dedicated to inclusive education 				x	x

Annex 2 - Consultations

Annex 2 lists the stakeholders interviewed (in chronological order).

Table 2 – Interviews

SURNAME	NAME	ORGANISATION / POSITION	DATE
Biro	Valentin	Nicolae Titulescu Secondary School, INSCHOOL participating school, Romania	7 July 2021
Petrita	Iulia	Pietrosani Secondary School, INSCHOOL participating school, Romania	7 July 2021
Lili	Berceanu	Contesti Secondary School, INSCHOOL participating school, Romania	9 July 2021
Ailincai	Aurora	former Deputy Head of Division Roma and Travellers Team, Council of Europe in Strasbourg	9 July 2021
Teriaki	Jana	Morkovice Primary School, INSCHOOL participating school, Czech Republic	12 July 2021
Kotman	Ján	Žilina Jarna Primary School, INSCHOOL participating school, Slovak Republic	12 July 2021
Malgotová	Hana	Žilina Jarna Primary School, INSCHOOL participating school, Slovak Republic	12 July 2021

SURNAME	NAME	ORGANISATION / POSITION	DATE
Ohrisková	Renata	Štefana Ďurovčíka Primary School in Palín, INSCHOOL participating school, Slovak Republic	14 July 2021
Jurdová	Alena	Hlohovec Primary School, INSCHOOL participating school, Slovak Republic	15 July 2021
Hero	Ján	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, Slovak Republic	16 July 2021
Durmish	Denis	INSCHOOL Project Officer, Council of Europe in Strasbourg	20 July 2021
Slenka	Miroslav	INSCHOOL Educational Facilitator, Slovak Republic	23 July 2021
Klempar	Miroslav	INSCHOOL Educational Advisor, Czech Republic	23 July 2021
Jedličková	Radmila	Graficka Primary School, INSCHOOL participating school, Czech Republic	26 July 2021
Mrázová	Michaela	Štefana Ďurovčíka Primary School in Palín, INSCHOOL participating school, Slovak Republic	27 July 2021
Barbu	Daniela	INSCHOOL Educational Advisor, Romania	28 July 2021
Husák	Jan	INSCHOOL policy consultant and member of the Roma Council in the Government Office, Czech Republic	28 July 2021
Duminica	Gelu	INSCHOOL Educational Advisor, Romania	29 July 2021
Faltýn	Jaroslav	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic	11 August 2021

SURNAME	NAME	ORGANISATION / POSITION	DATE
Fartusnic	Ciprian	Institute for Educational Research, Romania	20 August 2021

Annex 3 - Survey

Annex 3 lists the schools targeted by the survey.

Table 3 – Survey participants

Primary school Krnov – involved in INSCHOOL 1 and currently requires only methodological support, CZ

Elementary School Petrin (Bruntál, CZ)

Elementary school Prosetice (Teplice, CZ)

Primary school Poběžovice (Poběžovice, CZ)

Primary school Morkovice (Morkovice, Sližany, CZ)

Primary school Graficka (Prague 5, CZ)

Mitocu Dragomirnei Secondary School, RO

Școala Gimnazială Nr. 3 Bălăceanca-Cernica, RO

Secondary school Nicolae Titulescu, Buzău, RO

Luca Arbore” Secondary School, RO

Contesti Secondary School, RO

Secondary school “Prof. Ion Vișoiu” Chitila, Ilfov County, RO

Pietroșani Secondary School, RO

Primary school in Hlohovec (Vilko Šulek, SK)

Primary school in Raslavice (Prešov, SK)

Primary school in Liptovská Teplička (Prešov, SK)

Primary school in Budimir (Košice, SK)

Primary school in Spišský Štvrtok (Prešov, SK)

Primary School Žilina Jarna, SK

Žilina - Banova, SK

Štefana Ďurovčíka Primary School in Palín, SK