



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Report of the seminar of the European Network of Education Councils,

Brussels, 23 – 24 May 2013

with the support of the European Commission

DG Education and Culture



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www.eunec.eu

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INTRODUCTION

EUNEC is the **European Network of Education Councils**. Its members advise the governments of their countries on education and training. EUNEC aims to discuss the findings and recommendations of all European projects in education and training, to determine standpoints and to formulate statements on these issues. EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-actively towards the European Commission, relevant DGs and other actors at European level, and to promote action by EUNEC's members and participants at national level. EUNEC also has the objective that the councils should put internationalization and mobility high on the national agenda, that they should recommend and support a European policy in education and training towards all relevant stakeholders: ministry of education (and employment), sectoral and branch organizations, providers and other actors.

From 2008 on EUNEC has been **subsidized** as **European Association acting at European level in the field of education** (Jean Monnet programme). This seminar is organized with the support of the grant.

CENTRAL THEME OF THE SEMINAR

The concept

The central theme for this seminar is the embeddedness of schools in the local society and communities. In some countries networking activities of schools are described as "community schools", "broad schools" (brede scholen).

A community school invests in networking and cooperation with relevant partners in and outside the school in order to broaden the scope of learning, to enlarge the educational time and raise the quality of the educational offer, in order to improve performances of all pupils.
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In the definition we can distinguish two main features : networking and raising the quality of learning.

Quality of learning

The community school is an active partner in a broad range of community building activities, but the scope is always improving the learning and competences of youngsters. Both "traditional" learning outcomes such as languages, mathematics, history, geography, learning to learn, interaction, as transversal skills, soft skills and the whole personality of the pupils are at stake. In that sense a community school is more than a multifunctional schoolbuilding being used by different actors and for different purposes (effectiveness).

A community school is not a unique model set forward for all schools and all networks. Because every local community is different, because the learning needs of pupils differ, because local sensibilities and partners are different, every school needs to set forward objectives based on an analysis of the local situation, the profile of pupils and parents and the strength of local networks. Enhancing the quality of learning has different features and characteristics depending from school to school.

Networking

A community school is based on partnerships between the school, the family and the neighbourhood and other sectors involved such as the cultural sector, welfare, neighbourhood development and sport, with the objective to offer maximal development opportunities for all children and youngsters. This works in two directions: schools offer services to the environment, or, the other way around, schools benefit from opportunities offered by the environment.

Community schools seek to enhance their involvement and networking with the social environment of youngsters (informal learning platforms, youth work), with the parents organisations, with the welfare services, with the social and economic partners. Depending on the main objectives the school sets forward, the characteristics and the partners involved in the network will change. The setting of a multicultural big city is different from the one at the country side.

Depending of the context the focus can be on collaboration

- with organizations and services concerned with health and wellbeing of children,
- with formal and informal learning environments stimulating different talents of youngsters (general development, cognitive activity, creative activity, technical activity, sports activity, language activity,...)
- with parents groups, social and welfare organizations and services integrating children coming from vulnerable social environments (equal opportunities),
- with social and economic partners in order to enhance the sustainable integration of youngsters in labour market and social life

Links with former EUNEC seminars and conferences

In that sense it is a concept linking excellence in education with many other pedagogic and social challenges such as equal opportunities, social cohesion, informal learning opportunities, parental involvement in schools. The debate has also many links with the debate on the policy making capacity of local schools.

In Budapest, in 2011, EUNEC has discussed the theme of 'Bildung in a lifelong learning perspective', exploring the broad aim of education to contribute to

the development of the whole human being¹. In Amsterdam, in 2012, EUNEC has discussed the theme of 'Excellence in education' and insisted on the objective of education to enhance the conditions to raise quality of learning for every pupil².

The attention that EUNEC will be paying to community schools during this seminar is related to both discussions.

The concept of the community school is an open concept that allows different perspectives and features. Depending on the perspective, the community school will have other priorities and concrete scopes.

Preparation of the seminar

In order to enrich the discussions that took place during the seminar, all EUNEC members have been asked to prepare answers to a set of questions concerning the two following fields:

Improving the relationship between school – local community and networking platforms

Is the theme part of the policy debate in your country ? Is the definition set forward by EUNEC relevant? Are there any essential elements missing? Do you recognize the differentiation between community schools and multifunctional schools? From which perspective is the issue raised?

- debate on equal opportunities,
- raising levels and standards of learning
- integration formal and informal learning
- multifunctionality of school buildings
- other

How does your council consider the debate on the embeddedness and the partnership of schools with the local community? Do you have any relevant recommendations on this theme?

The concept of community schools

- School level

Is the concept of the community school known in your country ? Or is it used with another name? Are there schools in your country working with this concept? What priorities have they chosen? What are their experiences of difficulties?

- Central policy making level

Is the concept integrated at a central policy level? What is the role of the central government, of the community and of the school ?

¹ [EUNEC statements on 'Bildung in a lifelong learning perspective', Budapest, 2011](#)

² [EUNEC statements on 'Excellence in education', Amsterdam, 2012](#)

PROGRAMME

Thursday 23 May 2013

Chair of the day	Adrie van der Rest , EUNEC president
9.00 – 9.15 h	Welcome by Adrie van der Rest , EUNEC president, and by Mia Douterlungne , secretary general of the Flemish Education Council and of EUNEC
9.15 – 10.15 h	Key note by professor Alan Dyson , Centre for Equity in Education, University of Manchester
10.15 – 10.45 h	Questions and debate
10.45 – 11.15 h	Coffee break
11.15 – 12.15 h	Presentation of good policy practice: the Netherlands. 'Collaboration, a matter of search, utilize and intensify?' Job Van Velsen , project leader of the 'Landelijk Steunpunt Brede Scholen'
12.30 – 13.00 h	General Assembly meeting (only for general assembly members)
13.00 – 14.00 h	Lunch at the Vlor
14.00 – 15.00 h	Presentation of good policy practice: The Community Focused Schools initiative in Wales. Sue Rivers , Deputy Chairperson of GTCW, General Teaching Council Wales
15.00 – 16.00 h	Presentation of good policy practice: Community Schools Policy Initiatives in Romania. Magdalena Balica , senior researcher at the Institute of Educational Sciences, Bucharest
16.00 – 16.15 h	Coffee break
16.15 – 17.00 h	Conclusions and lessons learnt

Friday 24 May 2013

The link with the workfloor: school visit.

Chair of the day	Mia Douterlungne , EUNEC secretary general
09.00 – 10.00 h	Community schools in Brussels The Brussels context. Piet Vervaecke , director 'Onderwijscentrum Brussel' Community schools in Brussels. Vision and objectives. An Claeys , community schools coordinator Community schools in Brussels. Framework and implementation. Piet Vervaecke , director 'Onderwijscentrum Brussel'
10.30 – 12.30 h	School visit at Sint-Joost-aan-Zee, Brussels. Presentation of the school. Svens Moens , director. Exchange with director, community schools coordinator, partner, parent, teacher. Guided visit of the school.

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Opening Session

Adrie van der Rest

Adrie van der Rest is president of EUNEC and secretary director of the Dutch Education Council



The president warmly welcomes the participants to this EUNEC seminar on community schools, and offers a special welcome to the guests who will be helping the participants to kick-start the thought processes on this important topic with an introductory presentation. A warm welcome to Alan Dyson, Job van Velsen, Sue Rivers and Magdalena Balica.

Why are we discussing community schools? A short quote from a collection of learning biographies entitled "Learning means living", which was published a number of years ago by the Dutch Education Council:

"On the Friday that I turned 15, I cycled to the job centre to get the card you needed as an early school-leaver. Then I rode to the iron foundry where my father worked to ask if they needed anyone. That's how I became an apprentice hand moulder. It was hard work, but I didn't mind, as long as I didn't have to go back to school."

This is not a random quote. It is taken from the learning biography of Harry Crielaars, the former managing director of Greenpeace Netherlands. To use his words, he found the curriculum of lower vocational education to be as "dull as dishwater". He preferred to go to the library where he could read newspapers and magazines.

A good illustration of something we all know: learning is something you do all the time and everywhere. Schools do not have a monopoly on knowledge and knowledge transfer.

Back to the learning career of Harry Crielaars of Greenpeace. At one point in the interview, he said:

"The only good thing that I learned at school that I still benefit from is my touch typing skill. ... But I wanted to know about the things going on in the world, and in that sense the school had little to offer me".

This raises the question: do schools really matter? The answer is a resounding yes. Can schools manage alone? No.

In addition to this, developments in society mean that education has to change, too. Consider, for example, increasing individualization with an emphasis on individual choices and self-development. Consider, for example, informatization with eroding formal power relationships, more casual codes of behaviour and a culture of negotiation. And both these trends are strengthened by informatization. Finally, consider also the advances in internationalization: Europe with its open marketplace and multicultural population.

It goes without saying that all these developments have an impact on the knowledge and learning needs of people, and therefore also have an impact on the learning facilities needed. This forces us to rethink the concept of schools, placing pupils at centre-stage, with teachers as professional leaders or facilitators, and schools as support organizations, themselves in turn supported by other actors.

To utilize the great variety of learning opportunities in education we need to ensure that learning that takes place in different places and at different times is harmonious. A number of strategies to achieve this can be identified. Two possible strategies are interweaving and linking.

→ Interweaving

Characteristics and aspects of learning outside of school are incorporated in the school's learning package. Examples include introducing real-life issues into the classroom, such as mini enterprises in vocational education or allowing pupils to make the preparations for a school gala.

→ Linking

It may be effective and efficient to have elements of a learning pathway run through different contexts (within the school and outside of the school). The outside school contexts can complement and sometimes even replace classroom-based learning. Think of physical education lessons provided by sports clubs, or cultural and creative activities provide by cultural organisations. This is what a community school is: a network of care and education which aims to increase the development opportunities of children. Education works together with welfare services, child protection services and other community organizations.

Community schools: What we know from international experience and evidence

Alan Dyson



Alan Dyson is Professor of Education in the University of Manchester where he co-directs the Centre for Equity in Education³ (with Mel Ainscow) and leads work on education in urban contexts. He was formerly Professor of Special Needs Education and Director of the Special Needs Research Centre at the University of Newcastle. He has worked in universities since 1988. Prior to that, he spent 13 years as a teacher, mainly in urban comprehensive schools.

³ Centre for Equity in Education,
<http://www.education.manchester.ac.uk/research/centres/cee/>

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Professor Dyson gives an overview of what is known from international experience and evidence, mainly based on two sources:

- The literature on community schools that is accessible. Most of the literature is in English (from UK and US), but not exclusively.
- A series of developments in England related to what is called 'extended schools', a concept that is comparable to the 'brede school' in the Netherlands and in Flanders, and to the 'community schools' from Wales.

This means that the conclusions presented might offer a very particular view on community schools, maybe very different from the view on community schools in other countries. It is thus necessary that the insights from this presentation are complemented with insights from other presentations during the seminar and with reactions from the audience. This kind of exchange is very useful.

The presentation is built around four important issues:

- The purposes of community schools
The number of community schools is growing across the world. People are convinced of the fact that community schools are a good idea, but there is no agreement on what community schools are supposed to achieve.
- The evidence for the impacts and effectiveness
There is a large international database on what community schools can achieve. But at the same time this database faces some problems. It focuses on certain types of community schools, not on others. And it suffers from a quality problem: can we really prove achievements or do we invest money without really knowing if there are any achievements?
- Approaches to evaluation
Evaluation is difficult because community schools initiatives are complex. But we have to consider ways of evaluating.
- New directions
It seems that the movement of community schools is developing over time. The concept might change.

Purposes of community schools

International literature shows two phenomena:

- Every country, every administration has more or less its own idea on community schools. The reality is that we don't agree on what these schools are meant for. It is hard to find two countries that work in the same direction.

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- Every single community school does different things, in spite of the fact that they all respond to government initiatives that laid down some rules on the features of community schools.

However, it is crucial that schools and administrations that are setting up schools know what exactly they are trying to achieve. If they don't know, the effect is a 'roman candle' effect, with firework going in different directions.

Often, community schools are impressive, lead by very enthusiastic, very committed and hard working directors and staff. But, if one asks 'Why are you doing this?', the answer remains vague. 'Because we got the opportunity..', 'Because it seems a good idea..'. But, do all the activities reinforce each other in order to achieve a certain purpose? It is not sure.

Being enthusiastic, taking an opportunity might be a good way to start a community school, but it is not a good way to make a community school effective in the long term. In order to make such a school effective, there is a need for clear purposes, for a clear strategy.

An analysis of the documents produced by the last English government, that was very committed to the development of extended schools, shows that there is no 'single purpose' of a community schools. The analysis lead to a list of 26 different possible purposes. It is thus no surprise that the schools themselves are confused.

It is of course not necessary that all the schools do exactly the same thing in order to achieve exactly the same purposes, but, at least, a framework for thinking about purposes and focus is needed.

In the scheme at the following page purposes are presented as lying along two dimensions.

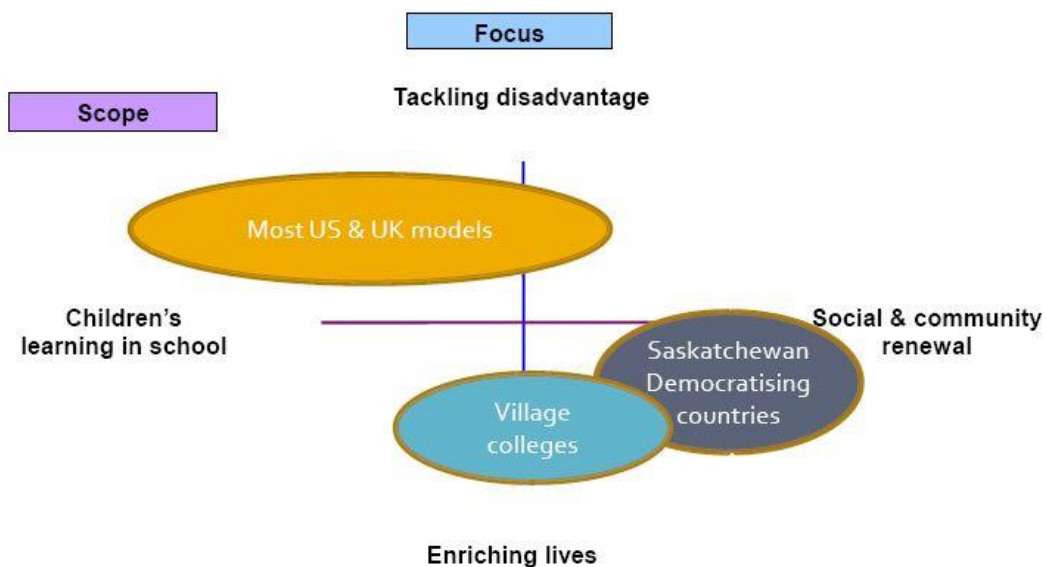
- Along the vertical dimension: the focus. What is the school trying to achieve?
- Along the horizontal dimension: the scope. How broad is the scope? How ambitious is the school?

At the one hand of the focus dimension, there is the community school that focuses on tackling disadvantage. For many community schools, especially in poor areas, this focus is the reason of being. This community school is often part of an overarching strategy tackling disadvantage and trying to compensate for disadvantaged children. At the other hand of the focus dimension, there is the school that not only wants to tackle disadvantage, but wants to enrich the lives of the children, offering opportunities and creating facilities that make every child's life richer.

For the scope dimension, there is the same continuum. At the one hand of the scope dimension, there is the community school that wants to improve the learning of the pupils in the classroom, by offering a range of 'community activities'. At the other hand of the scope dimension, there is the school that

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considers itself as a social community institution, which is a resource for the whole community. The school is not only concerned with the pupils and how they learn, but also with their families, their communities, the society they live in. This scope is very ambitious. It is reasonable to believe that a community school can achieve more than just another school, but is it reasonable to believe that a community school can change society?



Most UK and US models are located at the upper left quarter of the scheme. They have a principal focus on tackling disadvantage, and want pupils to learn better, to do better at school. The 'village colleges' (the earliest ones came up in England in 1920, and they still exist) are at the lower half of the scheme. Those schools were created in rural areas, where villages were losing their populations. In order to stop this, more resources and facilities were offered to the villages. The schools did not focus on tackling disadvantage, but wanted to contribute to a richer set of resources for the village, hosting for instance a village library, providing meeting places...

Schools in Saskatchewan (Canada) work on creating and supporting a particular type of society, a democratic and inclusive one. They want to include different ethnic groups, people with special needs, and they want those people to have a say in how the school works. Those schools are situated at the lower right part of the scheme.

Professor Dyson believes that, across Europe as well, there are similar models of community schools, taking different positions along the two axes. These models cannot be classified as being the right or wrong ones, but it is very important that every community school reflects on its purposes. This scheme can offer a good framework.

The evidence for the impacts and effectiveness

Impacts of community schools can be expected in four main fields⁴:

- Student learning
Community school students show significant and widely evident gains in academic achievement and in essential areas of non-academic development.
- Family engagement
Families of community school students show increased stability, communication with teachers and school involvement. Parents demonstrate a greater sense of responsibility for their children's learning success. It is possible to help families bring up their children in a more effective way.
- School effectiveness
Community schools enjoy stronger parent-teacher relationships, increased teacher satisfaction, a more positive school environment and greater community support. There are examples of very mistrusted schools becoming community schools and now being more effective.
- Community vitality
Community schools promote better use of school buildings, and their neighbourhoods enjoy increased security, heightened community pride, and better rapport among students and residents.

There is a lot of evidence that community schools do better, but it is not sure whether the community aspect is responsible for the improvement. Being a community school might create a set of conditions in which a school makes internal changes that become themselves responsible for improvement.

There is one exception though: in terms of the most disadvantaged children and families, there is a more direct impact. Here, community schools do make a big difference.

Professor Dyson concludes that we desperately need more evidence, especially from different types of community schools.

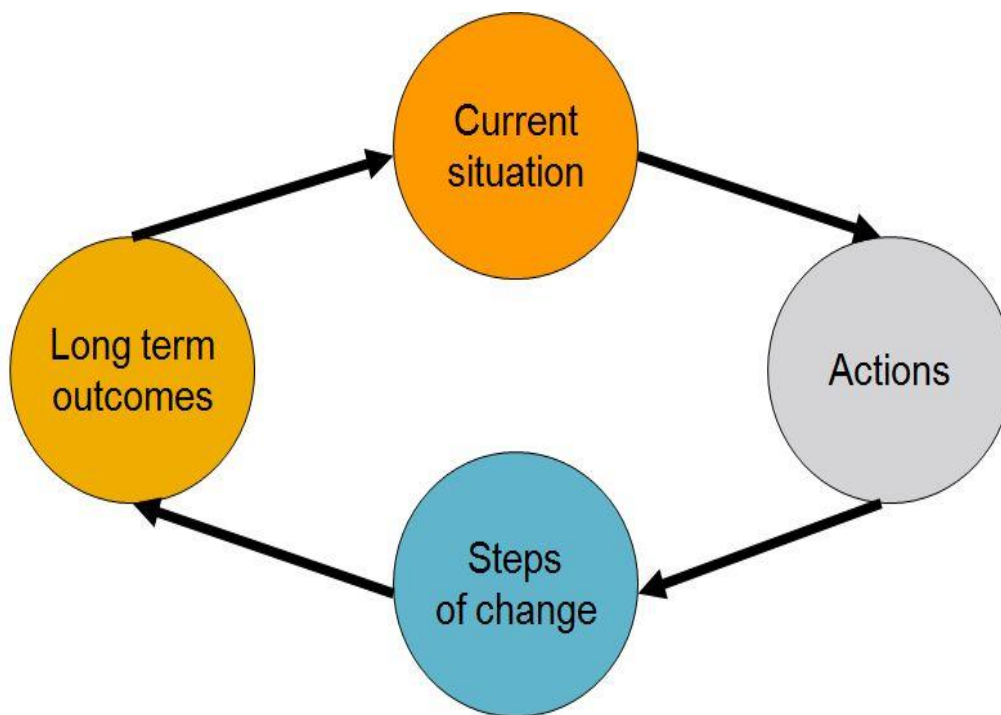
Approaches to evaluation

Most research on the achievement of community schools comes from English speaking countries. It focuses mainly on one particular type of community school: the one from the top left hand corner. There is a big need for research on the achievement of other models.

⁴ Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003

There are other problems with the evidence base. Evaluations are often short-term and underpowered; they face a lack of independence and criticality, because they are sometimes set up by the sponsoring organization. There are also important technical challenges that have to do with variations in rationale and modus operandi, with multi-strand initiatives, with complex and dynamic contexts, with multiple outcomes, with lack of outcome measures and with lack of clear comparators.

Evaluation is crucial, although. If there is no evidence of achievement, there will be eventually no more investments, in spite of the enthusiasm at the start. An alternative way would be to think about evaluation along a theory of change model.



Starting from an analysis of the current situation, a school or a government can try to define the long term outcomes that it is wanting to achieve. Starting from these long term outcomes, actions can be defined; all those actions (about 20 or 30) come together in two or three broad strategic strands. It is crucial to explain how exactly, step by step, each of these actions will impact on the children, on the community, leading in the end to the long term outcomes.

This 'theory of change' is very powerful for three reasons:

- It is a very powerful way of checking if a school has a strategy.
- Although it is important to define outcomes on the long term (10-20 years), you don't have to wait ten or twenty years before having a view on the impact and on the outcomes. Very soon, you can already get an idea whether things run as you intended. Thanks to a continuous feedback, actions can be adapted and optimized. Moreover, schools can do this evaluation for themselves.
- There is the important issue of attribution: it will be more easy to trace which actions had which specific impact.

New directions

Currently, community schools mainly face two problems:

- This school lead model is trying to tackle school-overarching challenges. How to overcome that limitation?
- Schools start from their own agenda; they look at the community from their own perspective, the perspective of education professionals. How to broaden this perspective?

Professor Dyson suggests the model of the internationally renowned Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) developed in New York. Harlem is extremely disadvantaged. A traditional response would be to organize community schools. In Harlem, the answer has been broader: community schools are not sufficient, there is a need to link the community school with the whole area, and to involve all local stakeholders. HCZ have been developed by an independent organization, focusing on getting children's lives better, not only their educational achievement. The model is interesting, because school is part of the initiative, but don't own it.

HCZ is of particular interest because it is doubly holistic. First, HCZ links efforts to improve schools with efforts to tackle family and community issues that make it difficult for children to do well. Second, it sustains these efforts across the childhood years, providing 'cradle-to-career' support as the child grows into an adult. There is already good evidence that HCZ is improving some important outcomes for children, and good reason to believe that they may be capable of achieving even more powerful effect. Moreover, HCZ shows that ambitious strategies can be developed in ways which are not entirely confined to existing public service structures or funding, can mobilize additional resources, and can involve schools without being dominated by their concerns or imposing impossible burdens upon them.⁵

⁵ From 'Developing children's zones for England', Aland Dyson, Kirstin Kerr, Carlo Raffo and Michael Wigelsworth, Centre for Equity in Education, University of Manchester, 2012.

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It is no use having good schools at just one level. The idea is to have a whole range of coherent and high quality provisions from the early years until employment. This range of interventions makes up HCZ's 'pipeline to success':



*"One of our core beliefs is that in poor communities where, literally, all of the institutions are failing children, you can't do one thing and expect you'll solve the issue of scale. I mean, you can save some children with an early intervention programme, and you can save some children if you work with addicted mothers, and you can save some children if you have after-school programs. But if you start talking about how you're going to save most of the children, you have to do all those things, and do them over the long term, and you have to make sure you count how many children actually received those services."*⁶

⁶ www.hcz.org/home

Presentation of good policy practices

COLLABORATION, A MATTER OF SEARCH, UTILIZE AND INTENSIFY?

Job Van Velsen, Landelijk Steunpunt Brede Scholen

Job van Velsen has been project leader for 'Landelijk Steunpunt Brede Scholen'⁷ since 2009. He is also manager/founder of Etuconsult, a consultancy firm in the field of innovative educational concepts (such as the brede school), which is located in Almere. Before that time, he was employed in education for 28 years.

Job has gained his ideas from practical experience. Together with his brother, designer Ton van Velsen, he developed in 2004 the innovative ideas of Etutorium, a centre of learning for 0 to 15-year-old children with the focus on cooperation. Parents, teachers, neighbourhood and organizations in the field of care, health care, sports and art are brought together under professional guidance. They surround the child in their collective



commitment. Together, they are building the children's future. Our future. It takes a village to raise a child, as the saying goes in Nigeria. It could be the motto of Etutorium .

These ideas led to the concept of the Brede School, a centre where development, education and meeting is the key issue. Outlines of these ideas were already applied at the Primary school De Hasselbraam, which Job set up in Almere, but did not become reality until 2004. In that year, Het Meesterwerk (the 'Masterpiece') in Almere started. A centre of learning for 0 to 12-year-old children. A number of important elements of Etutorium were put into practice here. Het Meesterwerk may be regarded as one of the first 'kindcentra' (Child Centers) in The Netherlands.

⁷ www.bredeschool.nl

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The title of the presentation 'Search, utilize and intensify' summarizes what is in the heart of the professionals in community schools:

- They search partners in the wider community
- They utilize the experience and the knowledge of those partners
- They intensify this knowledge and experience through exchanges between teachers, pupils, families, community institutions.

The Dutch 'National Coalition for Community Schools' was founded in 2009, with the help of the Ministry of education, culture and science, in order to support schools and local authorities in developing the community school. The goal is to advise and support community schools, municipalities and other organizations in building and developing the 'brede scholen' or so called 'community schools'. The Coalition provides professional support to develop community schools in primary and secondary education by uniting schools, opening up good practices and by spreading and sharing knowledge.

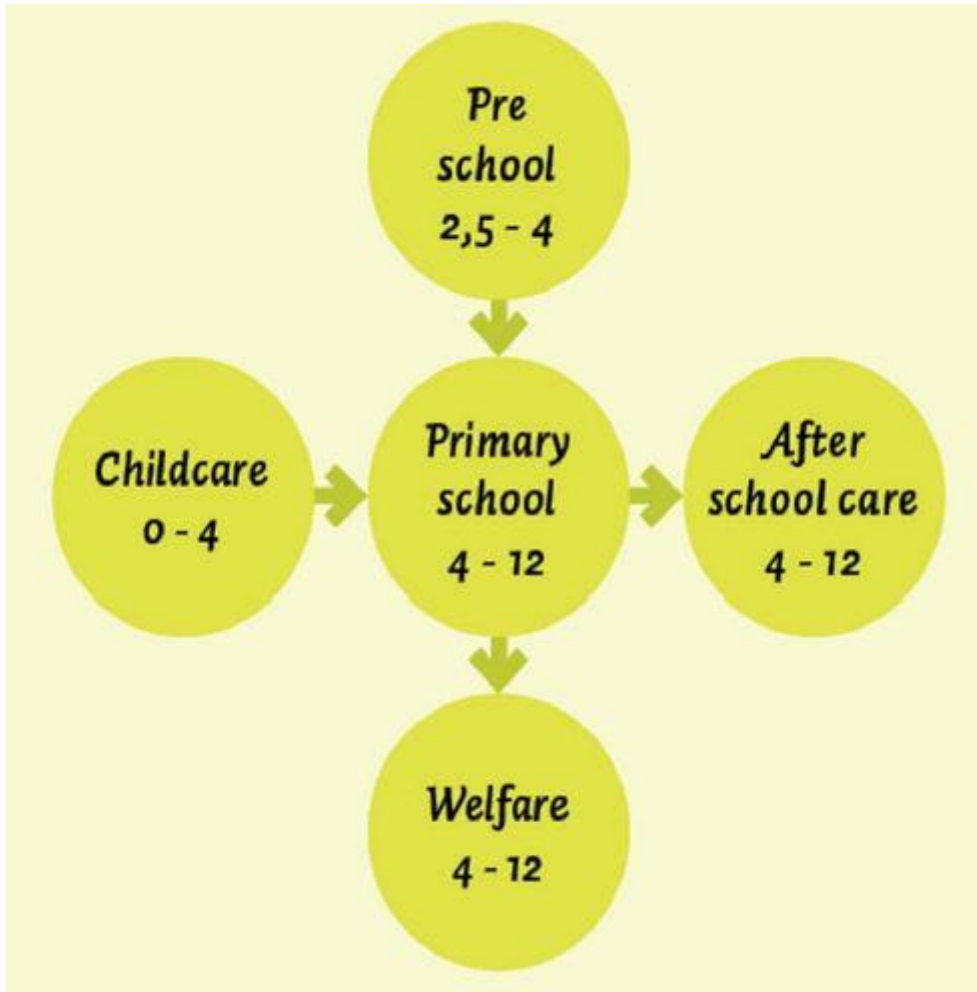
The Coalition is a centre of knowledge, working pro-actively and going in the field to help community schools starting up or getting further. Everyone in the Netherlands can simply call and ask for support. Amongst the tasks of the Coalition:

- Connect people, organizations, services
- Stimulate and help, show the good practices
- Publicize models, examples, news, researches and interesting knowledge
- Organize conference and seminars
- Advise the Ministry
- Mediate and solve problems
- Support pilots

Some history

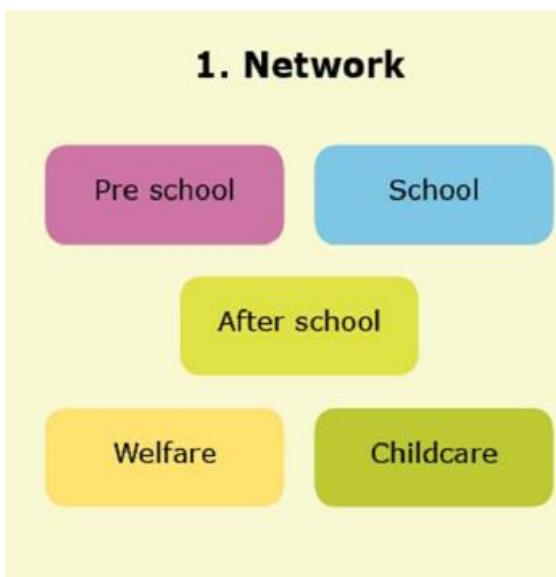
The movement of community schools started about 18 years ago in the Netherlands. The reason was that, traditionally, there were separate services operating in the Netherlands. All these services served different purposes, were financed in a different way, operated in separate buildings.

This did not have to be problematic about 50 years ago. There were traditional families. Now, the situation has changed profoundly. There is an urgent need to bring the separate services together.



Models of community schools

Network



Different services and school work together. All the services work in separate buildings.

Multifunctional accommodation



Different services and school work together. They are located in the same building, but they do remain separate services, with different staff, different opening hours.

Integration of services



This integrated model is completely new, it did not exist about 15 years ago. All services and school work together, are located in the same buildings, and offer integrated services.

The important thing is that this model is a natural organization that is more efficient. It allows to monitor the development of the children and youngsters and to trace and eliminate possible (language) deficiencies.

Working in an integrated way is more practical, for staff as well as for clients and stakeholders. It stimulates a modern and transparent school structure. The model is contemporary and welcoming. A career in education is combined with identity development. It allows to transmit values and to develop personal and social skills. It provides safety and solidarity.

A model and example of such a type of community school is 'het Meesterwerk', a school with integrated services: one vision, one 'captain', one servicedesk, one team, one parents association. 'Het Meesterwerk' is open from 7 am until 7 pm, and cooperates with the surrounding area. The school aptly illustrates the saying 'It takes a village to raise a child'.



Conditions

- Vision. No expansion without connection

The core of the community school is the fact that children, adults, the neighbourhood, the market, the community and the world are brought together under professional guidance. They get involved, learn together, from each other. They cooperate to create the future.

Children learn practice and theory, together with the parents, in and with the world, not limited by place or time.

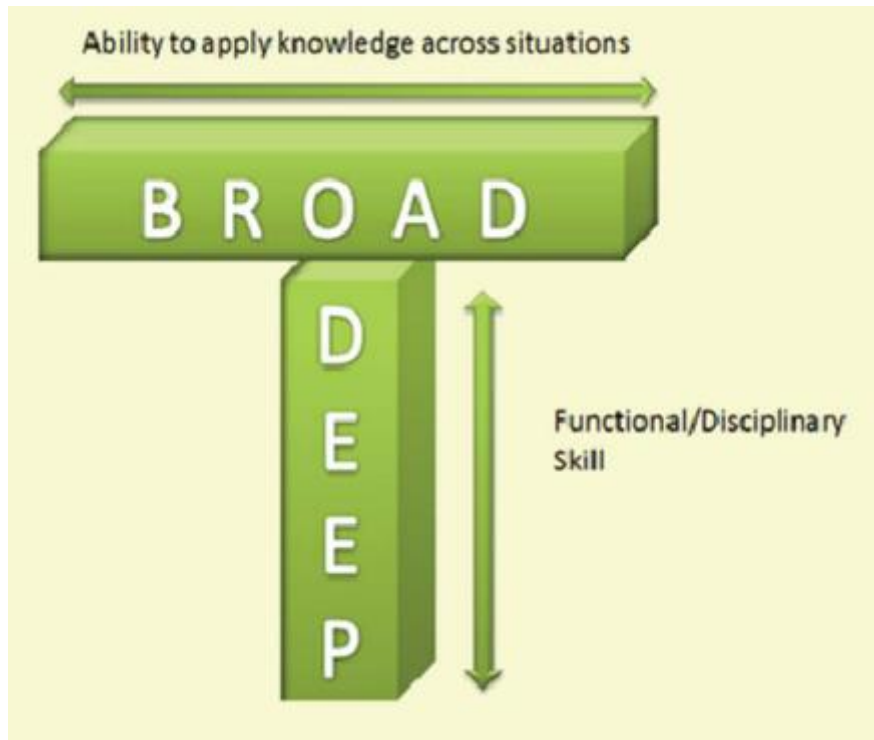
- Quality of management and organization

Community schools need to develop a long term vision, and have to monitor the goals and targets set in a systematic way. Stimulating key words are entrepreneurship, responsibility, professionalism, freedom and creativity, respect, time, pride and inspiration, love.⁸

- Cooperating professionals

Professionals cooperate along the T-shaped model (Weggeman 2007). Respect, openness, integrity and professionalism are key words.

⁸ De brede kapitein. Ervaringen van twee schoolleiders met hun Brede School., Job van Velsen, 2008.



- Balance and variety of programme and methods.

In the community schools, there is a nice after school programme, which comes together with the programme during school time. Both programmes can empower each other.

- Welcome and meet the world

In this field, collaboration and communication with the parents is crucial.

- Balance in timeschedule and time before and after school

Our school time is still based on the timeschedule of a rural society, with long holidays in summer. Is this still the best schedule for today's children?

- Rooms and interior, management and exploitation

Nowadays, in the Netherlands, 95% of the new primary school buildings are multifunctional. This can be extended to secondary education.

- Outside

How can a nice schoolyard be developed, in order to support the development of the pupils?

- Making good use of experience

Pilot experiences are going on. A pilot is, for instance, experimenting with integrated day arrangements: children (and their parents) can choose their own holiday arrangements.

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Trends

Today, 30% of all primary schools are community schools (1800 schools); 35 % of all secondary schools are community schools (400 schools). During the last years, the focus is more and more on quality.

Nowadays, 'brede scholen' are increasingly located in a wider variety of areas; not only in large cities in traditionally disadvantaged areas, but in order to maintain a certain level of facilities for children and their parents also in small villages.⁹

Further steps are taken in the field of description of functions and profiles, of school leadership, of teacher training, of cooperation between schools and childcare. It is necessary to continue research on the effects of community schools.



⁹Factsheet on 'community schools in the Netherlands' at http://www.eunec.eu/sites/www.eunec.eu/files/attachment/files/development_of_community_schools_in_the_netherlands.pdf

THE COMMUNITY FOCUSED SCHOOLS INITIATIVE IN WALES

Sue Rivers, Deputy Chairperson of GTCW (General Teaching Council Wales)



Sue has taught in secondary schools across South Wales, initially as a Home Economics Teacher and then Head of Personal and Social Education. She was promoted to Head of Pupil Monitoring and then appointed Assistant Headteacher which she undertook for eleven years and then appointed Deputy Headteacher for four years before taking voluntary early retirement to follow other avenues utilizing her vast range of expertise of whole school issues.

Sue is currently undertaking many roles:

- Deputy Chairperson GTCW*
- Consultant External Mentor for NQTs studying the Masters in Educational Practice.*
- Chief Examiner for GCSE PSE Short course.*
- Centre Quality Reviewer*
- Standards Verifier for BTEC PSD, Workskills and Health & Social Care*
- British Council/ CEWC Trainer for Global Citizenship/ International Education*
- Estyn Peer Inspector*

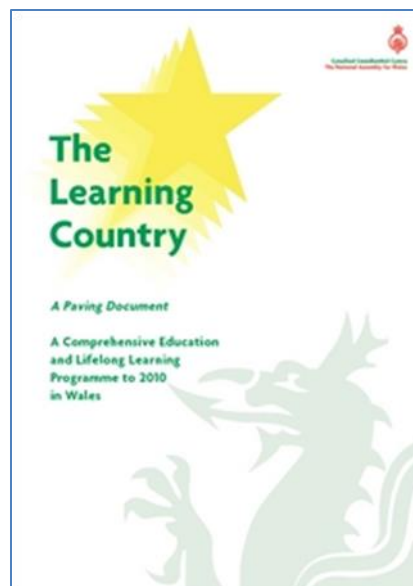
Sue has experience of Leadership and Management at Secondary level which involved School Evaluation and Improvement Planning, Data Analysis and Target setting. Teaching and Learning, Induction Tutor, Community Focused Schools, Continuing Professional Development and Performance Management. Her expertise centres around whole school initiatives related to Wellbeing – especially Personal and Social Education, Careers and the World of Work and Healthy Schools.

She also has a wealth of experience in developing initiatives involving Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship such as the Eco-schools scheme, Sustainability and the International Dimension Awards and British Council International linking project

Schools in Wales

In Wales school is compulsory until the age of 16. Education is bilingual: Welsh and English. All schools come under 22 local authorities. Education is funded by the government.

In Wales, community focused schools became an issue in the context of tackling disadvantage. In the first document issued in this field, 'The learning country' (2001)¹⁰, the basic idea was that education has to tackle poverty and disadvantage. Since then, the community school focus has been included in several other programmes, although sometimes under a different name.



Today, the Welsh government has three key aims in the field of education and training:

- Tackle the low level of literacy
- Tackle the low level of numeracy
- Address the impact of poverty on low educational achievement

It is in the field of striving for this third aim that community focused schools can be situated.

As it is set in the definition supra, community focused schools are all about networking, about getting systems in place that allow effective networking.

Schools are often the centre of a community but are sometimes underused in the evenings, on weekends and in the holidays. The Community Focused School initiative encourages schools and local authorities to view their schools as a community resource. In practice this means not only using schools for after school clubs for children and young people, but also a possible base for additional services such as health, social services, libraries and adult education activities.

¹⁰ The Learning Country
<http://wales.gov.uk/dcells/publications/publications/guidanceandinformation/learningcountry/learningcountry-e.pdf?lang=en>

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Work undertaken by the WLGA and the Welsh Government under the Narrowing the Gap project showed that a key factor in a successful school is a close relationship with the wider community which the community focus school initiative aims to achieve. Involvement with the community improves the achievement and motivation of a school and benefits the pupils in that school.

'A community focused school is one that provides a range of services and activities often beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community'¹¹

Areas of deprivation

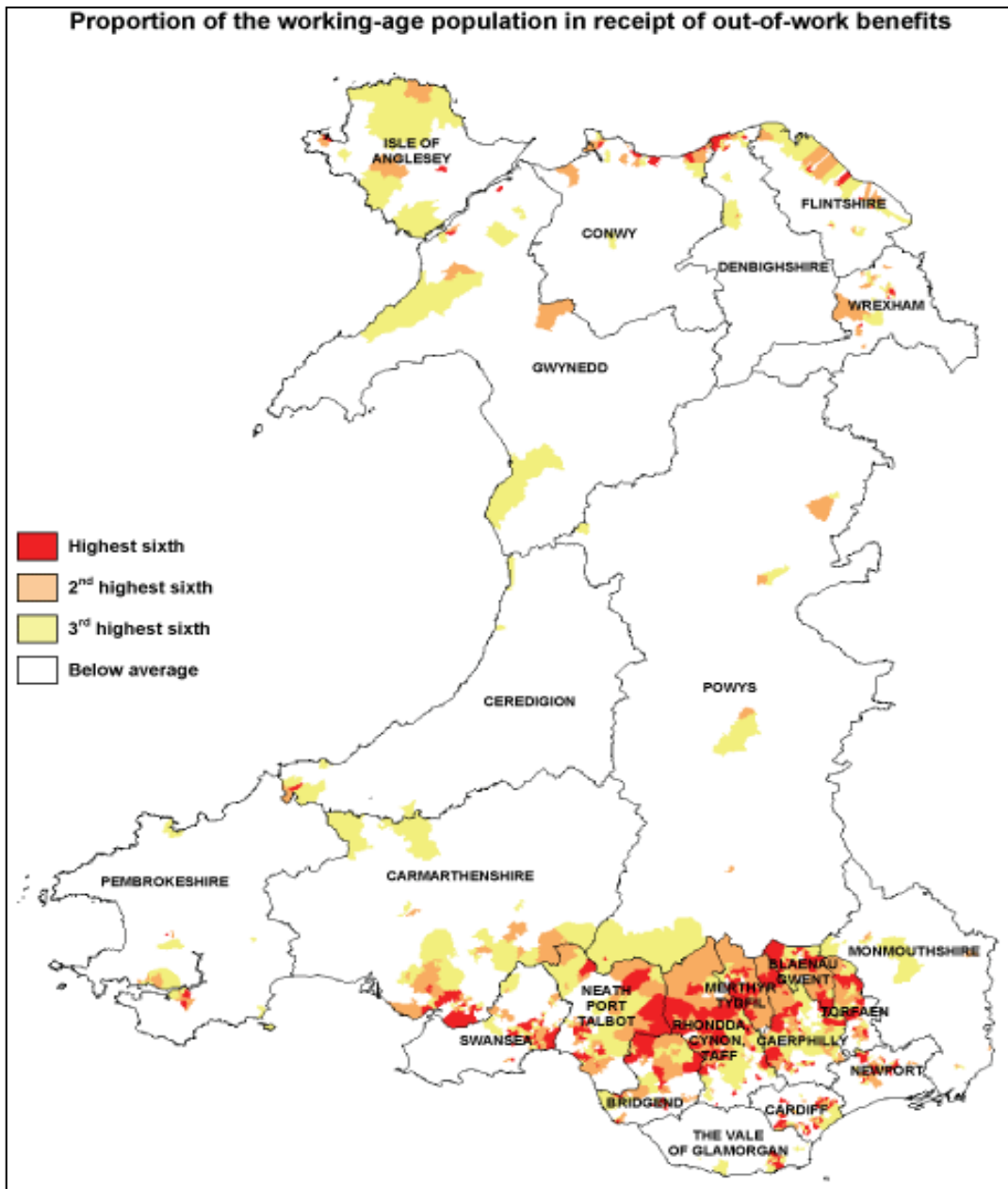
In the map, the red areas are the most deprived ones in terms of income deprivation. They are situated mainly in the South and along the North Wales coastline. These areas used to be historically areas of employment (coal mines in the South, manufactory in the North). Education used to be seen as the way out of the mines, of the factories. Those jobs disappeared and have not been replaced.

In the middle of the country, there is another area of deprivation. This area is very rural, which means that cheap accessible services are far away. This poverty is rather service poverty, not income poverty.

Finally, there is a third strand of poverty, which is participation poverty.

¹¹ Community Focused Schools. Circular No. 34/2003, National Assembly for Wales

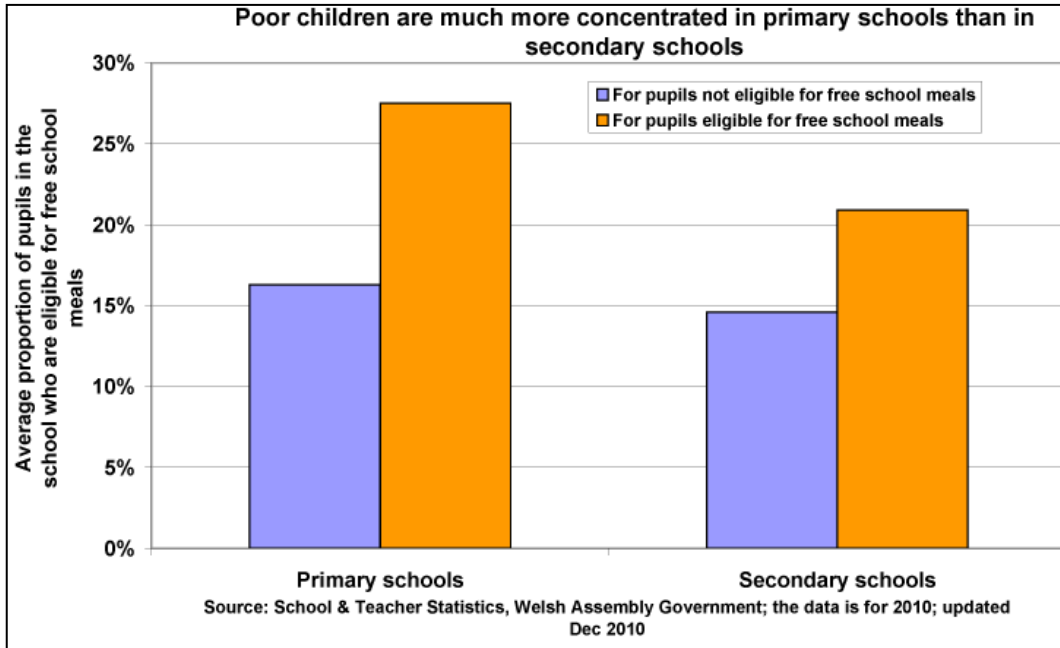
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



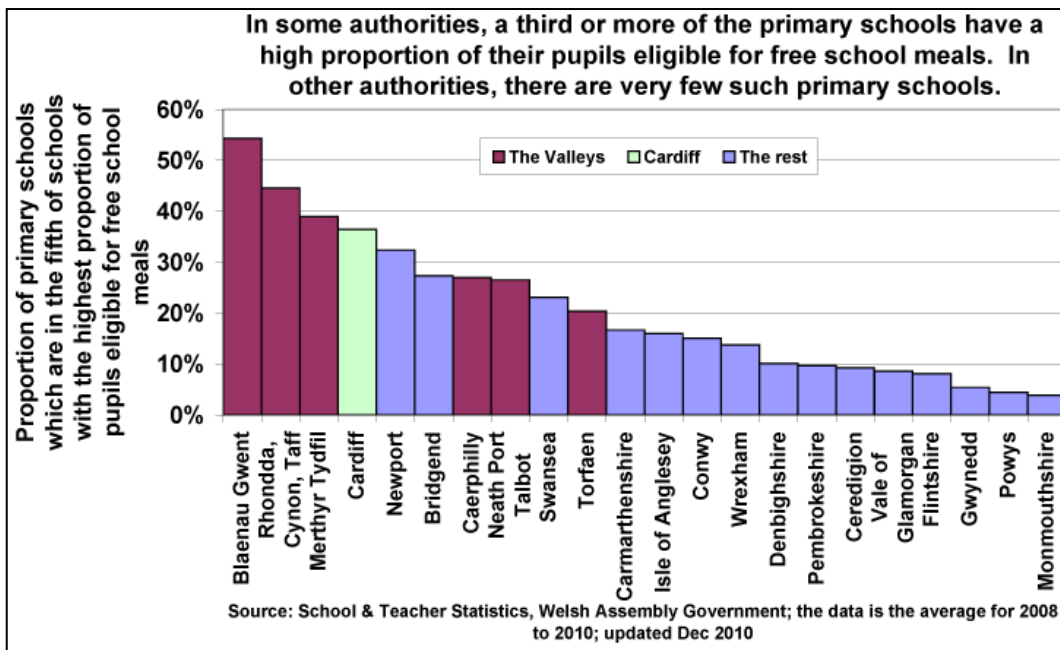
Based on the existing deprivation, Wales identified the need for community focused schools. The talk of Mrs Rivers is based on the theories of professor David Egan, who found a very strong association between poverty (measured through the indication of free school meals) and low educational achievement.

The graph shows that the percentages are higher in primary schools, and more reduced in secondary schools. Based on the average proportion of pupils in the school who are eligible for free school meals, it appears that poor children are much more concentrated in primary schools than in secondary schools.

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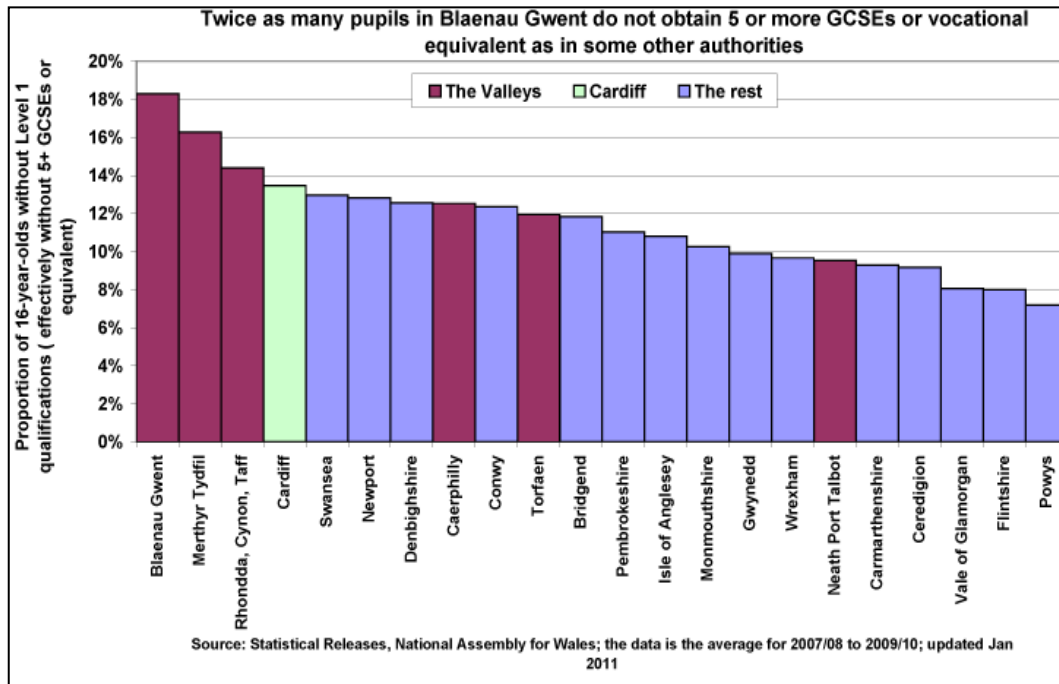


If we compare the Valleys (in the South) and Cardiff with other areas, we see that in these authorities, a very high proportion of primary schools is having a high proportion of the pupils eligible for free school meals.



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The next graph is about the number of pupils at age 15/16 leaving compulsory education before having obtained level 5. In Blaenau Gwent, 18% of the youngsters leave school with only very low qualifications.



Benefits of community focused schools

The benefits of community focused schools have been identified as follows:

For pupils and schools:

- Higher levels of pupil achievement
Pupil data are tracked from the moment they come in until the moment they leave. If higher levels of pupil achievement are clearly demonstrated, this makes parents value education more.
- Increased pupil motivation and self-esteem
- Specialist support to meet pupils' wider needs
This support is given by services available in the community
- Additional facilities and equipment
- Enhanced partnership working with the community
Community focused schools work within the local community, but can also work together with regional/national/international community.
- Enhanced status for learning in the local community
- Reduced pupil disaffection

For families:

- Improvements in child behaviour and social skills
- Greater availability of specialist support for families
- Easier access to relevant services
- Greater parental involvement in children's learning
- More opportunities for local adult education and family learning.

For communities:

- Better access to essential services
- Improved local availability of sports, arts and other facilities
- Local career development opportunities
- Better supervision of children outside school hours
- Promotes community cohesion by re-engaging adults (and in particular parents) in learning. If school does not work with the community, it is difficult to engage parents, who often have bad memories of school themselves.
- Reinforcing relationships between school and home
- Helps regenerate and strengthen communities
- The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) states that 'Schools are the bedrock of a lifelong learning society'.

Features of community schools

- The approach has to be holistic.
- A community school needs a strong moral commitment.
- Every single activity has to have the community or part of it involved.
- There is a need for a strong focus on wellbeing, not only on academic achievements.
- Data tracking is important: attendance, academic achievement, participation in activities.
- High quality teachers. The most deprived schools need the most competent teachers. This issue is particularly important in secondary education: in primary education, the teacher spends all day and every day with the pupils, he has a more holistic view, whilst the secondary teacher knows the pupils less well and tends to focus more on the subject. Community schools ask a lot from the teachers. However, as the teachers actually see the benefits of their work, they are very committed.
- Teachers should be trained to work with the community.
- Effective feedback and praising.
- Developing of metacognition and thinking skills.
- A strong focus on literacy, which is one of the targets of the Welsh government.

Tonypandy Community College



Tonypandy Community College is a comprehensive school for pupils between 11 and 18 years old. It is located in Penygraig in the Welsh county Rhondda Cynon Taff. The school is situated in a problematic area: there used to be a lot of mines; now that the mines are closed, there is a lot of unemployment. Pupils might have the feeling that there is no point in doing well at school, as it will not lead to employment.

There are 950 students. School is open from 6 am until 21.30 pm five nights a week and on Saturday morning. The school shows the lowest exclusion rate in the RCT local authority (Rhondda Cynon Taf is the second largest Local Authority in Wales).

According to the 2010 data, about 26% of the pupils are eligible for Free School Meals. The 5A-C grades GCSE is 64%, and rising. The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is an academic qualification awarded in a specified subject, generally taken in a number of subjects by students aged 14–16 in secondary education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It was introduced in 1986 (with the first examinations taking place in 1988). The GCSE is graded on a scale of A* (highest) to G (lowest). To progress to the next level, usually academic A-levels or A-levels in applied subjects, students normally need at least four passes at grade C or above. Subjects are graded individually. Universities and employers usually regard A–C as pass grades.

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The core subject indicator is 38%, and has gone up. The core subject indicator represents the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

The success of the school is built on a strong long term vision and commitment, supported by the local authority, the governors, the leadership team, the staff, students and parents. The community ethos underpins all working practices, policies and procedures. Qualities that are demonstrated at school include energy, enthusiasm and resilience. Pupils are prepared for work in partnership.

Why did the Tonypany Community College become a community focused school?

- This community aspect enriches and enhances the curriculum.
- It promotes positive attitudes to learning and education.
- It places the school at the centre of the community.
- It impacts on standards.
- It improves the profile of the school and improves the use of resources.
- It makes the job easier.



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The Tonypandy Community College has set as a priority to impact on standards and learning. There is a lot of project work: from Heritage to Crime Prevention and creative writing.

'The Friends' is in essence a Parent Teachers Association (PTA), a group of supporters working for the school on a voluntary basis. They organize Parents Forums (for instance on transition, on exam skills and areas of parental interest and consultation). They deal with additional fund raising and provide support when Parent's Evenings and Open Evenings are organized.

Tonypandy Community College is delighted to have the opportunity to offer the e3+ programme. This initiative, funded by Rhondda Cynon Taff Borough Council, provides young people with a first class out of school activity programme. The e3+ programme has been developed based on research carried out with young people from the College and the wider community and complements the established activities already in place in the Mid Rhondda area. The programme is free and runs from Monday to Friday from 3:00pm to 5.00pm.



This is a fantastic opportunity for the College to further develop its community dimension and provide young people with opportunities to develop skills, interests and hobbies that will support life long learning.

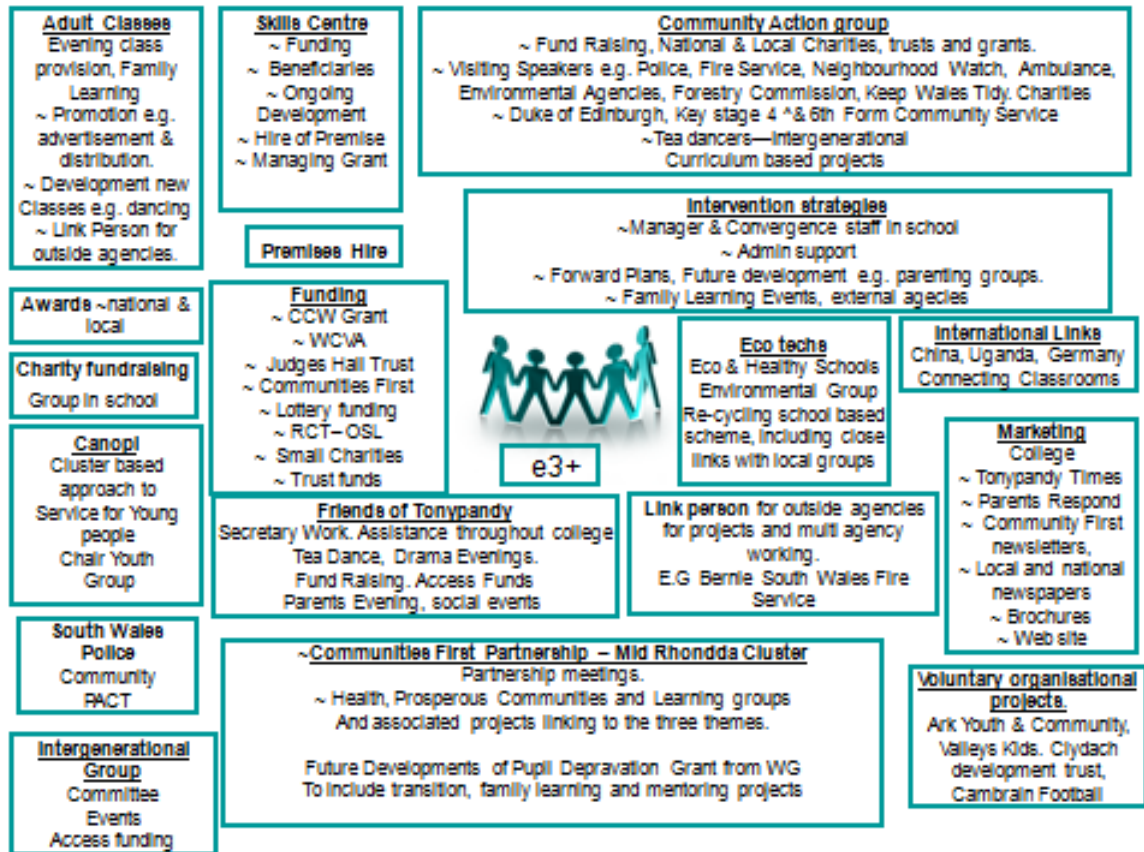
Media studies, animation, photography, cookery, football, rugby, horse riding, creative writing are organized. The school had 1989 places available in April 2013 with a 65% uptake.

The school has international links with the Welfen-Gymnasium Ravensburg (Germany) and the Busui Central College, Mbale (Uganda).



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In order to organize the wide range of activities that is presented in the scheme below, a community manager has been appointed.



This community manager is member of the College Leadership Group, including the headteacher, the learning manager, the community manager, the asset manager, the office manager and the network manager. It is an evolving role, the job description tends to become wider and wider. The salary is funded by the College and by additional funds (e³⁺, from the local authority).

The current project manager lives locally with a good understanding of the community and its needs. She has a background in police work and lead a team of learning support assistants, before moving to her current role. First, she worked 1 day, 2 days and 3 days before working full time. She is a people person and is passionate and enthusiastic about her role. She has the ability to work effectively with young people and their families. She has excellent interpersonal and communication skills and is very resilient. She is a valued member of the school staff.

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In 2013, a whole range of activities are provided for adults:

- Relaxing with Flowers - Flower arranging
- Strengthening Family Programme
- Community Library
- Essential Skills Programme
- Alternative Therapies
- Sign Language
- Photoshop
- Sewing Group
- Zumba – fitness
- Skills Centre offering: Plumbing, Carpentry



Under these nice titles, adults participate in activities that involve numeracy and literacy skills; the adults don't realize the skills they are acquiring.

During the last two years, the school obtained additional funding:

- Local Authority - e3+ funding £150,000.00 /€176,491
- 5x60 officer post £500.00 activity budget (€588)
- International links with British Council £7,000.00 /€8,236
- Additional funding £180,000.00 / € 211,789
- Country Side Wales Grant £20,000.00 (only school in Wales supported to develop outdoor space). (€23,532)
- Special projects BERNIE, Zoom. Activities worth in excess of £40,000.00 / € 47,064
- Range of additional small pots of funding.

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The school received an important number of awards:

- Heritage School Awards – 5th year running taking top prize on two occasions. (£1,500.00/ €1,764)
- Community Champion Award winners November 2008/2009 represented Wales in London in 2008
- Youth Awards 2008/9/10
- Zoom Awards
- Media4 Schools Awards winners
- Silver Eco School and Phase Three Healthy Schools
- Chair of Friends Shortlist South Wales Echo Community Champion 2010
- International Schools Award.

Keith Towler, the present-day Children's Commissioner for Wales, visited the school, and was very impressed, as we can read in his comments:



"Every member of staff I spoke to outlined how they felt that working in partnership, extending the reach of the school into the community they serve and placing the needs of their students at the top of their work was making a real difference to the lives of children and young people."

"All the things that I would want to see and which every young person going to school should have as a matter of right. In fact, everything about Tonypany Community College says: 'we respect children and young people'. Great to see."

"Inclusion, working in partnership, the involvement of families and provision directed by the active participation of children and young people are words we hear a lot. It is not everyday you see it happening in practice. What a great place."

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS POLICY INITIATIVES IN ROMANIA

Magdalena Balica, Institute of Educational Sciences, Bucharest

Magda is senior researcher in the Institute of Educational Sciences and co-founder of Observatory for LLL Development, Bucharest – Romania. With a background in psychology and educational sciences, Magda has over 15 years of experience in the field of educational research gained through national and international projects and working groups at the European and national levels.

She has extensive experience in producing, testing and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative research tools and also in drafting policy papers on different educational issues. In the recent years a special interest of her research was e-learning pedagogies and learning facilitation processes, especially addressed to schools communities from rural deprived areas. Starting with 2006, Magda founded also the Online Learning Centre of the Institute of Educational Sciences <http://training.ise.ro>, visited now by a more than 7000 teachers taking online courses or attending online communities on various educational areas.

In Romania, the notion of community schools is not known. The ideas on schools and their links with the community are influenced by the country's past.

Romania has known a highly centralized educational system. Decisions are strictly hierarchical. School autonomy is limited, ideology is deeply embedded. Education is seen as a chance offered to all and less as a community service. Schools are not so much responding to the pupils needs; it's the pupils that have to respond to the needs of the community.

In the school career becoming a 'pioneer' was an important moment. The red tie symbolized that the pupil is becoming part of a nationality based culture. The most important value embedded in the school culture was to belong to the nation.



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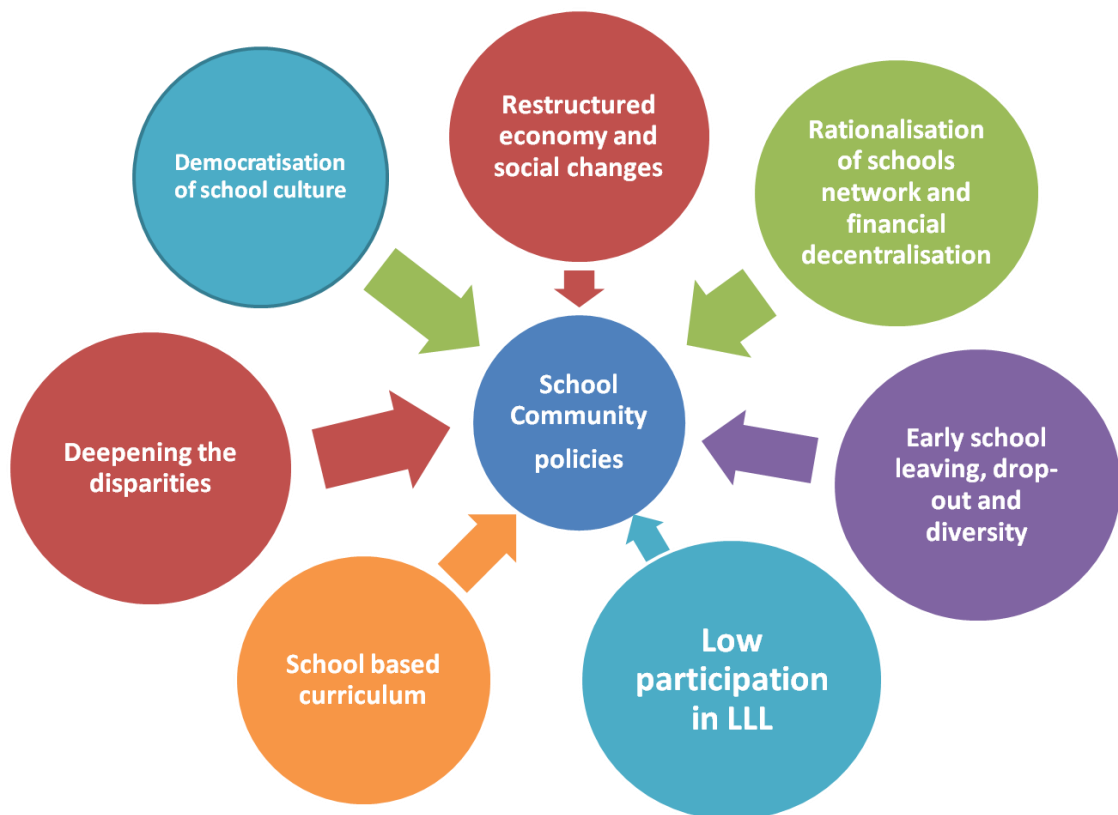
The sense of community has in a way been compromised, and education still suffers from that.

In the planned economy large enterprises were parenting schools, ensuring work places for all graduates.

School disparities were under discussion: rural versus urban schools, mainstream education versus special education, the issue of ethnic segregation. Diversity as such, however, has never been a concept under debate.

In the last 20 years, a lot of changes have been going on. Policy makers in Romania understood that the schools were too expensive, and that there was a need for financial decentralization. At the same time democratization of school culture is taking place: pupils have the right to organize part of the education themselves, and to participate in the school governance.

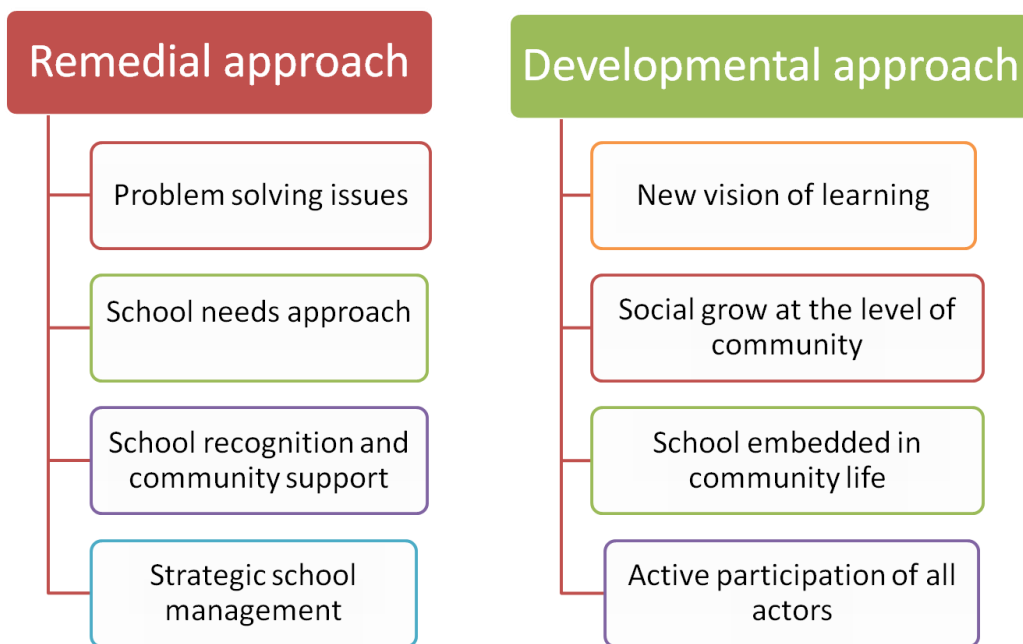
A number of other context factors are relevant for emerging community school policies:



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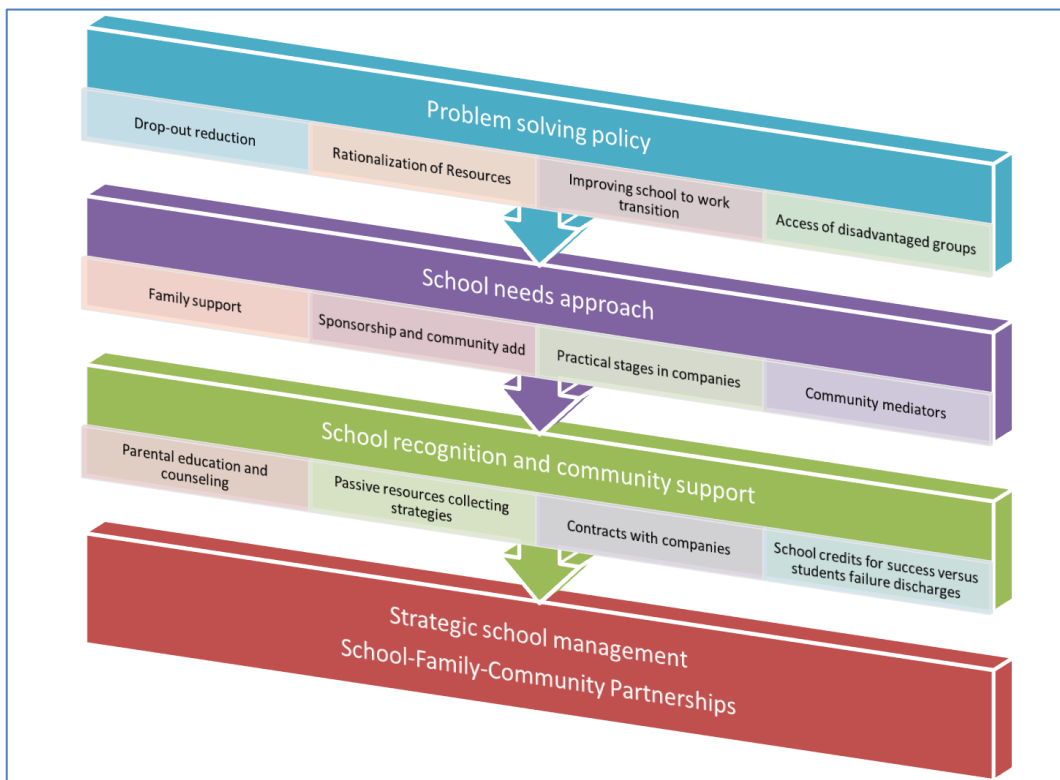
In the next scheme, two different approaches of community schools are described. The one is a rather remedial approach, the other one is a rather developmental approach. In Romania, the approach is closer to the left part of the scheme, with all the characteristics linked with the 'strategic school management'. Every five years, a strategic management plan has to be drafted, including a set of quality assurance indicators. Remedial policies focus on problems, and deal with standards and assessment of schools, access and equity, social disparities.

The developmental approach would embed schools closer in the life of the community, with a new vision of learning leading to social growth at the level of the community: what is the added value of education in people's lives? Active participation of all actors is crucial in this developmental approach. A real community school should give a voice to all actors. These remedial policy solutions focus on specific target groups and communities and involve the community in the educational discourse.



Remedial policy approaches in Romania

The scheme below shows how remedial policy approaches are taken on board of the schools. There is a long trajectory from the problem solving policy, through school needs approach and school recognition and community support until the ultimate strategic school management and school-family-community partnerships.



Emerging developmental policy initiatives for Community School in Romania

- School based curriculum
 - EPA (Educational Priority Areas) networks are operating with an adapted curriculum. This project was started in 2002 in Romania with the support of UNICEF.
 - Introduction of civic education and other optional courses on community participation in the curriculum
 - Extracurricular activities
- 'A different school' programme
 - This programme organizes one week of learning activities in and with the community, out of the school. This programme has been

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implemented for the second year now, and is highly valued by the students. They discover new ways of learning.

- 'School after school' programme
This programme introduces learning activities after school with a contribution to and from the community. This programme is an initiative from the community, it responds to social needs.
- Clear and coherent policies for Initial Vocational Education and Training schools.

Partnerships are set up between schools and companies in planning, monitoring and evaluation. There is local and regional school planning within local and regional planning committees, IVET school networks are growing.



New Law on National Education 2011

This new law offers a framework for emerging policies on community schools in Romania. Policy makers are still in a phase of discussion, not much has been implemented until today.

In the law, chapters are dedicated to

- school - family relation: a kind of educational contract between parents and school is under debate.
- school-local authority partnerships. These partnerships include managerial responsibilities.
- networks of schools serving the community.
- Lifelong Learning Centres: schools can host multi-functional LLL centres based on analyses of the needs of the community.

Challenges for community school developmental approach

Most of these challenges have to do with the past of Romania and with insufficient decentralization.

The school culture is rather closed, a kind of ivory tower. Parents come to the schools, but only to be reported on how their children are doing.

Teachers have only low experience of networking and sharing resources. It is not always easy for them to take up the role of a facilitator; a professional facilitator might be more trusted.

Finally, in the political discourse education is a priority. However, this is not reflected in the budget.

Evaluation is another important challenge for community schools. The success of a community school is difficult to measure. How to measure the smile of a child?



The link with the workfloor School visit

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN BRUSSELS

Piet Vervaecke, director 'Onderwijscentrum Brussel'

Piet Vervaecke has worked from 1993 in the field of education support in several schools in Brussels. From 2002 on, he has been coordinator. Some years later, he became responsible for the reform and reorganization of the education supportive services in Brussels, and the creation of the education centre Brussels, of which he is the director from 2008. With 65 staff members, this centre is now the reference in Brussels in the field of language policy, diversity, parental involvement and community schools.

An Claeys, community schools coordinator Brussels

An Claeys has been a French teacher in secondary education. After that, she became press responsible for the French tourist office in Brussels.

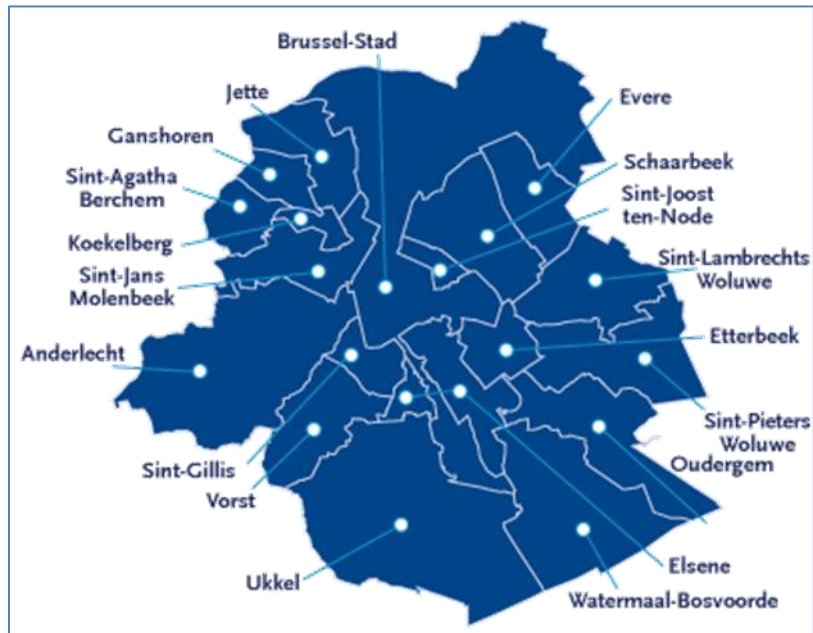
From 2011 she works at the Flemish Community Commission: first as assistant director within the direction of Education and Training, and from 2012 as general coordinator of Community Schools in Brussels. The Community Schools platform in Brussels is responsible for promotion of expertise and for quality guidance of Community Schools.

The Brussels Education Centre (OCB = Onderwijscentrum Brussel) is a skilled professional partner who trains and supports school teams within Dutch-speaking education in Brussels areas such as language and multilingualism, dealing with diversity, parent and local resident involvement and the community schools. The OCB fulfils that function by working in close collaboration with partners, quickly responding to changing needs in a metropolitan context and because it continues to develop and shares its expertise, experience and skills.

The Brussels Education Centre is a lever for the development opportunities of children and youngsters.

A Snapshot of Brussels

The map of Brussels: 19 municipalities, 1.119.088 residents.

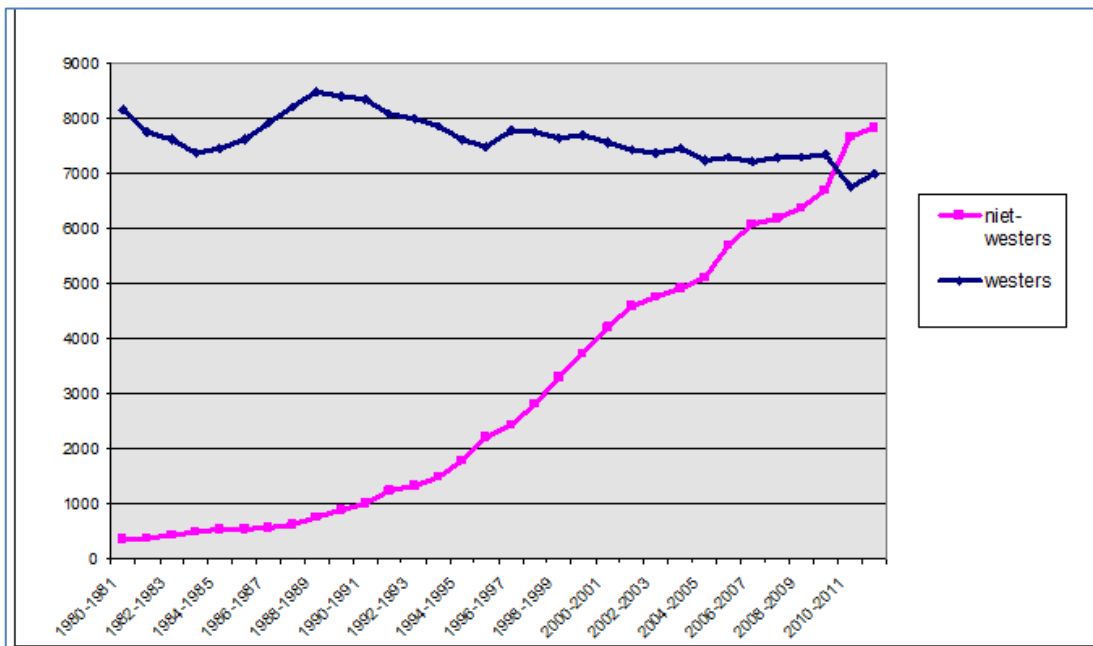
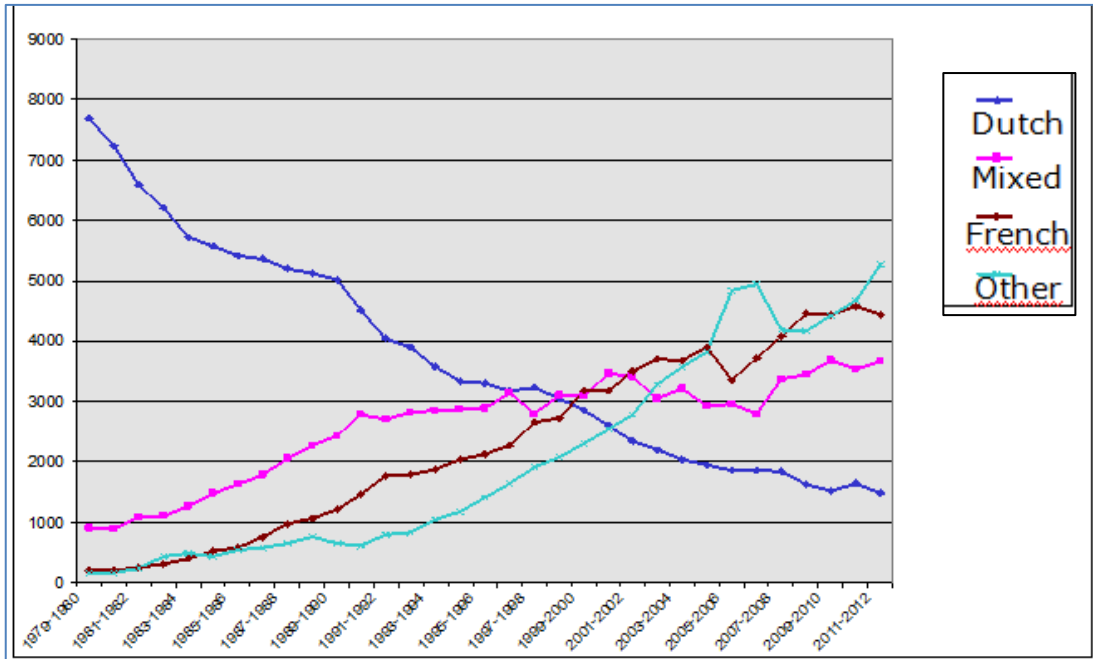


Brussels is a fast growing city: there are about 20.000 new residents each year. The average age is 37.8 years. Diversity is growing, not only in terms of ethnic, cultural and linguistic background, but also in terms of socio-economic duality: one child in four grows up in a household that does not derive its income from work.

In Brussels, the Brussels-Capital Region deals with territorial matters; the Flemish Community Commission (Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie = VGC) deals with personal matters: culture, youth, sport, well-being, health, family, education and training.

The following graphs illustrate the evolution in the language primary school children speak at home, and in their cultural background:

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View on the Community Schools in Brussels



This is the Brussels reality in which children grow up. They need a lot of skills to grow up in Brussels and to become active and participating citizens.

Children and youngsters meet one another through language, culture, religion, ethnicity and socio-economic background.

It is important to see the development of children and youngsters in their totality. The development encompasses various areas that are closely interlinked. Each school or organization has its limit, no single organization has all the in-house expertise to optimally meet the needs.

The community school has an eye both for the opportunities and the challenges in the environment of children.

In the community school the needs and deficiencies, chances and opportunities of children and youngsters living in Brussels take centre stage. Every objective, collaboration and action must be weighed up against the benefit it has in terms of children's and youngsters' development.

The Flemish Community Commission Vision Statement is based on the vision of the Centre for Diversity and Learning that did a lot of studies on community schools and that followed up pilot projects since 2006.

In the definition of a community school four aspects are very important:

- Every community school is different. The **local context** is the starting point.
- The objective of a community school is to realize **maximum development opportunities** for children.
- Community schools try to realize this objective by working on a **broad learning and living environment**.
- The community schools are organized **in collaboration between various sectors**.

The local context

Community schools are a lever for four Brussels' challenges:

- Equal opportunities.
One child in four grows up in a household without income from work. It is important that those children also get access to a broad range of activities. On the other hand, children with working parents, but without family in their neighbourhood, miss a lot of chances. Their parents don't have the time to bring them to music classes, to the football club after school. Community schools in Brussels want to enhance chances for ALL children in Brussels.
- Parental involvement
The community schools recognize the role of partners and want to assume responsibility for the education of children together with those partners. Open communication between parents and other educational partners makes greater harmony possible between the upbringing at home and the education they receive elsewhere. Knowledge, insights and experiences can be exchanged. Parental involvement has a significantly positive effect on children's functioning: they feel safer, perform better and connect better with other people. Parents can boost the effectiveness of the community school, the community school supports the parents.
- Multilingualism
For children who grow up in Brussels, Dutch is often not their mother tongue. It is the second or third language after Polish, Arabic, French. It is important to deal with linguistic diversity in a positive way and to use Dutch functionally. The community school is the perfect environment to work on Dutch language skills.
- Diversity
Everyone who works with children needs to have an eye for the opportunities and the challenges this diversity entails, and wants to learn from the others.

The following **example** can be useful to clarify some of the theoretical aspects above, without depicting the community school as a whole:

Starting situation

- We're on a site where both an elementary and a secondary school, offering technical secondary education (technisch secundair onderwijs - TSO) and vocational secondary education (beroepssecundair onderwijs - BSO) are located.
- The school is already working in partnership with an initiative for out-of-school childcare (initiatief voor buitenschoolse kinderopvang - IBO), the local library and with various sports and youth organizations.
- The school has a high percentage of non-Dutch-speaking pupils.
- The secondary school teachers feel that their pupils' motivation to learn Dutch is poor. Most of these youngsters will not need to speak a word of Dutch once they head home after school. Youngsters often see Dutch as a non-functional school language.

Context analysis

To address this problem, the issue has been discussed by the pupils' council, the parent council and at staff meetings. Together with a number of already existing partners, the school is investigating the opportunities in the neighbourhood.

The proposals to give Dutch a more active place in and around the school were put to the pupils via a survey. Via this questionnaire, pupils could also suggest new ideas and formulate their needs and interests.... Together they came up with general and specific objectives.

Maximum development opportunities

A qualitative Community School aims to enhance children's and youngsters' development in five areas:

- Health, both physical and mental health
- Safety in all its aspects, at home and outside of the home
- Talent development and fun, in a broad approach to learning
- Social participation, by encouraging the school and the neighbourhood to become mutually involved with one another
- Preparing for the future, improving pupil's learning performances, amongst other things by targeted language education and out-of-school language stimulation

The following examples illustrate this striving for maximum development opportunities:

→ Leisure time project



Various local sports clubs are being approached with the request to introduce youngsters to some of the less familiar sports during lunchtime.

They discover new sports, the purpose is that they enjoy it and maybe discover new activities that motivate them. As these sports are completely new to them, instruction, and hence language, play a central role. Youngsters who like this sport, can participate in the offer of the sport clubs.

→ Storytelling project



The library organises a story-telling workshop, so that youngsters can learn how to read to children. Once they have followed the workshop, they can put their new skills into practice by reading cartoons to small groups of children during midday or after schooltime.

The youngsters maybe discover a new activity that motivates them, the working with children. They can use Dutch in a real context so it's good for their language development. They also can practice their social relations during contacts with children and responsables of the library.

Youngsters who like this, also can follow an entertainment course at school and workplacement arrangements are made with youth work initiatives.

→ Media project



Youngsters cannot wait to create their facebook account, at 13 years old.

For those who are at the age of being active on social media, media is an important issue in the development.

During the Dutch language classes, they learn about the media: they discover the Brussels media, they are sent to the Flagey building and given a short course by FM Brussels, TV Brussel, the journal, the website.

During the year, media projects are undertaken during the language courses. Pupils are writing reports from activities for the web and for the newspaper; they are taking pictures, making playlists, preparing videos.

Pupils can choose a specialization after school time, for instance radio making.

They get tips and learn some of the tricks of the radio-making trade by a journalist at the radio. Via a subsidy application, the school can install a small studio from where pupils can broadcast on campus two afternoons a week.

Pupils are also involved in the technical support and the realisation of the project. Via the school's website, the broadcasts can be listened to again and pupils can vote for their favourite music on the school radio.

Another example: Pupils who play music are guided towards workshops organized by the 'Rockfabriek' and are given the opportunity to record some of their work which is subsequently broadcasted via the school radio. Teachers and pupils jointly produce reports within the framework of their classes. Outside of school hours, the school collaborates with MOS, Studio GLOBO, ABC and other partners to produce short reports on topics that appeal to youngsters. These reports are broadcasted via the school radio.

It is important for all those activities that they are linked to the purpose: integral development and maximum development chances.

A broad living and learning environment

A community school combines the three angles of a broad learning and living environment:

- Broad learning in the sense of acquiring interrelated competences in a context that is true to life (which is the case in the media project described supra).
- Widening the learning and living environment offering new contexts, making the existing contexts offer more accessible or throwing open and setting up the infrastructure.
- Reinforcing their learning and living environment by removing obstacles, supporting people and making them more competent or by optimising their physical environment.

Collaboration between various sectors

School is the place where all the children and youngsters meet, whatever their background is.

If the school can work together with other schools, and with other sectors, on a common purpose, the collaboration offers added value for every partner.

In this cooperation, all partners are equal, and their commitment is proportional to their means.

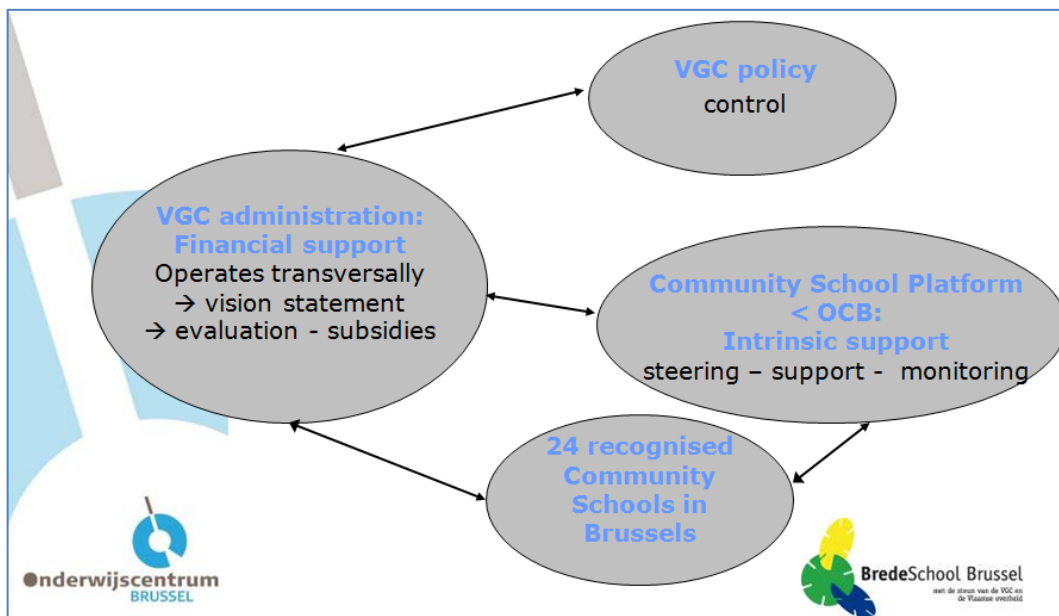
The local coordinator is pivot to keep things move: he is in charge of the practical organization and coordination but also makes sure that the preset objectives are attained.

Implementation of the community schools in Brussels

In the following scheme the main players in the implementation of the community schools in Brussels are situated.

The VGC (Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie or Flemish Community Commission) operates transversally. They provide financial support and fund up to 50.000 euro for staff and operational activities. From September 2012, 24 Community Schools are recognized. The VGC is responsible for the evaluation.

The supra-local Community School Platform of the OCB (Onderwijscentrum Brussel or Education Center Brussels) provides intrinsic support. They support and train the local coordinators, they follow up the local community schools at a supra-local level, they are responsible for supra-local communication, for study and development work. Their main purposes are to enhance expertise and quality assurance.



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The local coordinators develop their activities at a local level. They actively participate in the supra-local platform. They are in charge of coordination, support, communication and monitoring of the local community school.

The main objective is to develop the local community school in a targeted and sustainable way in line with the principles of the vision statement.

The map shows how the 24 recognized community schools are spread in Brussels in 2012-2013.



Primary school Sint-Joost-aan-Zee, Brussels



Participants were welcomed at the primary school Sint-Joost-aan-Zee by the school director, Mr Sven Moens, and by a number of partners, pupils and parents.

The primary school is situated in Sint-Joost-ten-Node in Brussels. Sint-Joost-ten-Node has 23 557 inhabitants on 1,1 square kilometer. The average income is 6000 euro per year. The population is very young, with an average age of 32 years. Many people live in poverty, in deprivation of chances.

The school has about 340 pupils from 37 different nationalities. Most of them come from Turkey, from Northern Africa, from black Africa, from South-America. All children live in the direct neighbourhood of the school. More than 80 % of the pupils are pupils for whom the school gets extra state subsidies because of the fact that they need extra care.

From 2007, the school has, again, children who speak Dutch at home.

Sint-Joost-aan-Zee is a school from/for and in the neighbourhood. The school wants to give to the children as much chances as possible. The starting point is well-being and involvement. The team is convinced of the fact that clear structures give a feeling of security, and that an open school culture lowers thresholds and opens doors.

Parents are considered to be the most important partners in education. The school gives a place to the parents in the school setting, through approachable activities in an atmosphere of mutual openness. The school literally opens the door for the parents, and the parents open the door for the school. This can be done, for instance, by organizing tea parties, a mother's day celebration, the celebration of 6 December of carnival, healthy breakfasts.

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When a specific project ends, this is celebrated with the parents. Moreover, parents have the opportunity to join the children during school excursions.

In order to enhance the chances of the children, additional partners are involved, if they respond to certain conditions. They have to have a proper consultation structure, be able to make clear agreements and work according to a well thought-out plan.

Openness is not sufficient, it is only a condition for a next step: in order to enhance the success rates of the children, the parents have to know what the school expects from their children, and why this is the case.

The community school Sint-Joost-aan-Zee closely works together with the following partners:

- Library Joske
- IBO De Buiteling (before and after school care and activities)
- Community Center ten Noey, which is the cultural center of Sint-Joost
- Aximax, the youth center
- Sjazor, the parents council

First, a management group was put together for the community school. They determined a vision and mission based on the local context. Parents and children have been questioned.

Now, a wide range of activities is organized:

- Sports during lunchtime with volunteers from Buurtsport Brussels
- Reading activities in the library in cooperation with 'de Buiteling', every Monday after school hours
- A home language project for parents, who can develop their mother tongue together with their children
- French language activities for young children
- Weekend school on Saturday, in order to offer more future perspectives to the children; they discover different professions.

In the future, the community school wants to offer a wide range of activities for children and parents, and to build a broad network with the different partners. They want to organize more activities in the field of art and music. They want to familiarize parents and children in the socio-cultural activities in Brussels.

The community school is convinced of the fact that to believe in the qualities and possibilities of your public is crucial.

Statements

1 Community schools are closely associated with new understandings of learning

1.1 A new concept of learning

During the last decade there has been a growing awareness that formal learning processes alone cannot guarantee a high level of performance in education. Qualitative education starts from an approach based on learning outcomes and involving formal, informal and non-formal learning. As a consequence, the different contexts where learning takes place becomes part of the educational setting. Contexts can include the peer group and the social network of youngsters, their family and socio-economic environment, their cultural heritage and various cultural interests.

In this context, community schools are a very powerful concept to rethink and reshape education as an active partner in society. Involvement in society and cultural environment can support school life and education by enriching the learning processes of the pupil. Community schools are not based on a unilateral demand from education to other sectors. They are built on strong partnerships and good communication with tangible outcomes aimed at strengthening pupils' learning, the school as an organization and the community role in society. The (educational) perspective of community schools reaches far beyond addressing the needs of pupils at risk or providing extra-curricular activities.

Although all community schools aim to broaden the outlook of the school, the actual scope can be diverse. Many aim to build overarching strategies that address tackling social and economic disadvantage whilst others focus on overcoming special needs. Others may focus on improving the competence and motivation level of students by linking with cultural activities, sports, easing the transition into employment and tackling early school leaving. Another focus can contribute to enhancing the environment of major cities with problems such as social cohesion.

1.2 Interrelation between education and other provisions

Often, we witness the compartmentalization of different services and partners such as child care, school, welfare, police, preschool services, library, transport, housing providers, health services, local authorities, non-profit organizations, parents' organisations.

When all these partners are brought together, they offer a different perspective of looking at the relationship between education and society. Schools are seen as a social resource in the community and the community feels obliged to contribute an opinion on education such as identifying needs and deficiencies to enhance the life chances and opportunities of the children and youngsters. Therefore EUNEC considers community schools as an important instrument in the global European approach to expose education to the broader world¹².

2 A clever change strategy

2.1 Clarifying the goals fit for the context

A community school is, given its definition and scope, closely linked to the context and the social and cultural environment of its setting. Therefore, it is neither feasible nor desirable to define community schools from one single viewpoint.

The scope of a community school depends on the level of centralisation or autonomy of the macro educational system. It depends on the local conditions such as the tension between rural areas and big cities. It depends on the composition of the school population and its social and cultural features.

Therefore each school or region should start from a blank canvas and set forward its own purposes based on its mission and an evidence based analysis of the context. Depending on the goals set forward a school can search partners, utilize their experience and knowledge, and develop collaboration.

Different models and scopes are possible.

Models

Services can work together in a range of different settings such as networks.

Services can work together in multifunctional accommodation, in the same building, but still working separately.

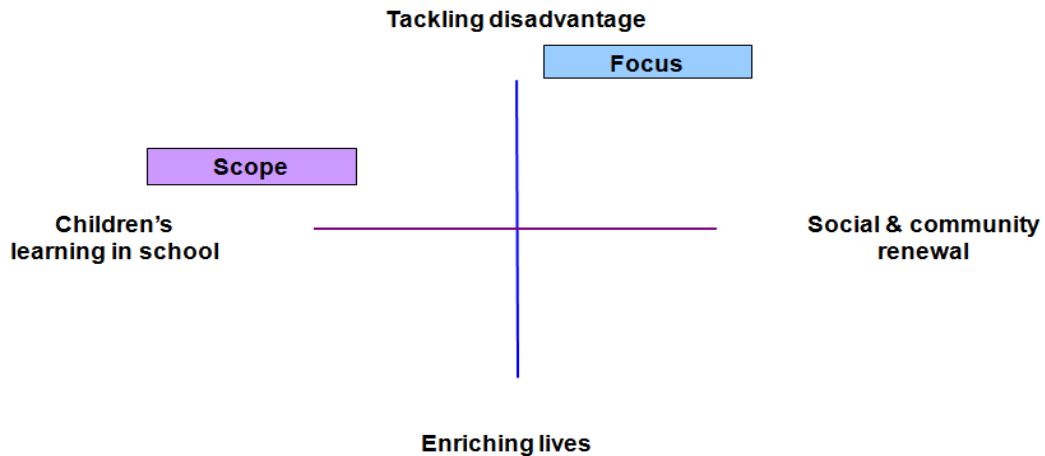
Finally, all services can work together in an integrated way - one organisation, one vision, one team that cooperates with the surrounding area.

A community school has to reflect on its **focus** and on its **scope**.

¹² Communication from the European Commission, 'Rethinking education. Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes.' 20 November 2012. (http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/com669_en.pdf)

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The focus can range from tackling disadvantage to enriching lives. The scope can range from an individual approach on children's learning in school to social and community renewal.



Schools and their partners have to consider how different strands of learning can be linked: early childhood, elementary and secondary programmes and programmes for lifelong learning.

Every community school has to be aware of its position within these different approaches. Reflecting on this position will lead to a clear purpose and focus and allows for long term evaluation.

2.2 A sustainable innovation strategy

To build effective community schools in the long term, there is need for a clever innovation strategy with clear locally defined purposes. Community schools should result from long term, strategic and sustainable policy established in schools and involving the surrounding social, economic and cultural network.

It is critical that schools and administrations are mindful of what they are trying to achieve.

Schools and community should rely on a theory of change. They should start with an analysis of the current situation and formulate a plan of action involving two or three broad strands.

The community school needs to outline the intended impact of its actions and to evidence long term outcomes. The theory of change model offers the advantage that schools can demonstrate that the achievement of aims has involved thorough evaluation.

The commitment and involvement of the team is crucial. The concept of community schools calls for inspiring school leadership, with all staff members

sharing the same vision and showing strong moral commitment resulting in a strong community ethos embedded throughout the school.

In addition to teachers, the involvement of other professionals in the school is crucial in order to broaden the perspective and secure success.

2.3 Balancing between school autonomy and government facilitating

The autonomy of schools is crucial. Legislation should leave space for local policy acknowledging the school and community context. By definition community schools work in a local context.

The government should set out broad principles and purposes, but implementation has to be local. The government has to support schools in planning and provide systems that allow for effective networking. It is the local network that is challenged to develop a local response to the central framework. Authorities can assist schools in strategic planning but strategic planning is the responsibility of the local team/school.

The involvement of all community services and partners is crucial and not solely reliant on education professionals. A good community school should listen to the voice of all participants and involve in particular the parents through appropriate activities. It is crucial to involve and support the valuable contributions and resources of the local people.

3 A community is a good school with a community ethos

During the discussions, EUNEC members realized that clear criteria required for classifying a school as a community school cannot be outlined. Every school has or should have at least to some extent the characteristics of being involved in the community. All schools organize a number of activities and projects that could be categorised as 'community related'.

According to EUNEC, the most important difference between just a good school and a community school is the perspective: where the perspective of a good school is educational, the perspective of a community school is broader: the community ethos underpins all working practices, policies and procedures. This broader perspective enhances the school culture; education is enriched by the huge influence that is present in the community.

It is reasonable to believe that community schools can be more effective than other schools, and it is important to monitor this effectiveness closely.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN THE EUNEC MEMBER COUNTRIES

In order to enrich the content of the seminar and to better prepare the debate, the EUNEC secretariat has asked its member councils to formulate an answer at the two following questions:

1 Improving the relationship between school – local community and networking platforms

Is this theme part of the policy debate in your country? Is the definition set forward by EUNEC¹³ relevant? Are there any essential elements missing? Do you recognize the differentiation between community schools and multifunctional schools? What is the perspective from which the issue is raised?

- debate on equal opportunities,
- raising levels and standards of learning
- integration formal and informal learning
- multi functionality of school buildings
- other

How does your council consider the debate on the embeddedness and the partnership of schools with the local community? Do you have any relevant recommendations on this theme?

2 The concept of community schools.

School level: Is the concept of “community schools” known in your country? Or is it used with another name? Are there schools in your country working with this concept? What priorities have they chosen? What are their experiences of difficulties?

Central policy making level: Is the concept integrated at a central policy level? What is the role of the central government, of the community and of the school?

13 “A community school invests in networking and cooperation with relevant partners in and outside the school in order to broaden the scope of learning, to enlarge the educational time and raise the quality of the educational offer, in order to improve performances of all pupils.”

Dutch Education Council

Adrie van der Rest

There was a policy debate over this theme in the beginning of the millennium. There was a need for schools that encompassed more than school education only. As a result, schools invested in the development of broad schools ('brede scholen'). Broad schools are more or less the type of school that the EUNEC described. The term broad schools refers to schools that combine education with child care, health care, welfare, sport and/or culture.¹⁴ The societal function of the broad school should be explicit.

The goals of the broad schools are mainly to enhance learning outcomes and broad talent development, in particular for disadvantaged pupils. There is a tendency to focus more on talent development of the child and less on the involvement with parents and neighbours.¹⁵

Recommendations of the Dutch Education Council

Although there are many schools that form ties with partners in the community, this largely depends on initiative of the local partners. It is not a structural policy in the Dutch schools. The Dutch Education Council has therefore advised in 2010 that every school should develop a societal programme: a plan how school and community can strengthen their ties, in particular with the societal elite. People who have successful careers in industry, society, art, music or who are in other ways successful are encouraged to connect with the school.

In another policy paper about Extended Education ("Uitgebreid onderwijs", 2010, see abstract on internet¹⁶) the Dutch Education Council recommended that schools should extend their formal and informal learning opportunities.

In the Education Council's view, extended education means that the school (or other education-oriented party) offers something extra which is aimed at 1) meeting the legal requirements (f.e. basic reading and math skills), 2) the broader and deeper development of talent, and 3) broadening the views of pupils or students towards work and society. Examples are schools with an extended school day, schools with special cultural or sport activities, schools with English or Spanish classes. The three goals also reflect the three types of extended education that we can distinguish: extended education aimed at improving learning performance, extended education aimed at enrichment, and extended education aimed at providing an orientation towards work and society. This last goal is more important for disadvantaged pupils.

¹⁴ www.rijksoverheid.nl

¹⁵ See the yearly report of Oberon, 2011.

<http://www.oberon.eu/Beheer/DynamicMedia/publicaties/BS-jaarbericht2011.pdf>

¹⁶ Abstract: <http://www.onderwijsraad.nl/upload/english/publications/extended-education.pdf>

This plea is repeated in an advice about cultural education ('cultuureducatie: leren, creëren, inspireren!', 2012).¹⁷ Schools should more often use the possibilities cultural institutions can offer.

Another relevant publication is the advice about the partnership between parents and education (Ouders als partners, 2010).¹⁸

There are many broad schools in primary education (ca 2000 or 29% in 2011) and in secondary education (ca 400 or 33% in 2011). In all municipalities there is at least one broad school. The growth is decelerating.

There is no national policy that describes how these broad schools must be organized. This results in a wide variety of schools. Some schools are located in a multifunction building that includes child care organizations and schools, sometimes combined with other welfare organisations. In other cases, organizations cooperate without from stand-alone-buildings. This type of broad school has grown in popularity in recent years, especially in the countryside, whereas the multifunctional building has become less common (from 50% to 33% in recent years). In some cases, education and child care are integrated in one organization for children 0-12 years old with one board of directors. These organizations are called integrated child centers. The expectation is that their numbers will increase.

The municipalities have a large part in these broad schools (coordinating, housing, preschool education, subsidized provisions), although schools are taking over their role.

Because of the variety in broad schools, their effectiveness is difficult to measure. Other difficulties are the substantive coordination of educational and other programmes, and the differences in funding and legal rights and obligations. For example, education and child care are funded by different Ministries.

Flemish Education Council (Belgium)

Roos Herpinck and Carine De Smet

Based on the vision text 'Community Schools in Flanders and Brussels. A framework for development', under the authority of the Minister for Work, Education and Training of the Flemish Government, 2006.

The development of community schools in Flanders and Brussels is relatively new. Of course there existed schools that collaborated with other partners, that widened their scope, that wanted to support the integral development of children and youngsters. But at the policy level, interest in the concept

¹⁷ Abstract: <http://www.onderwijsraad.nl/upload/english/publications/cultural-education.pdf>

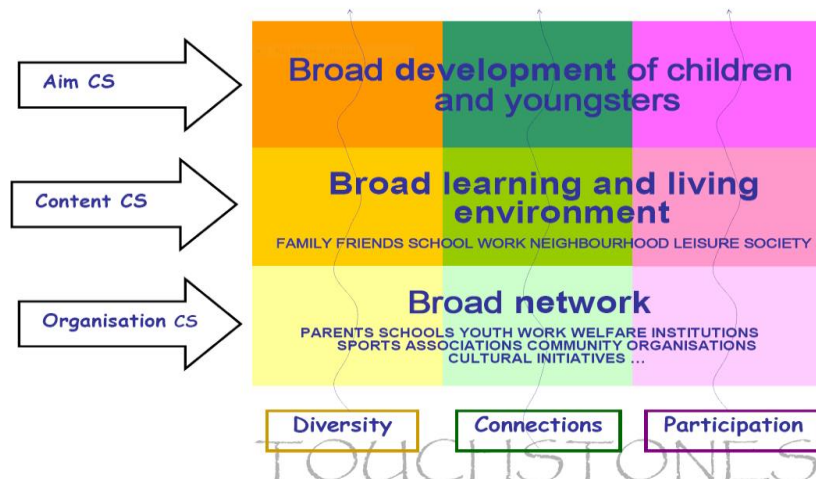
¹⁸ Abstract: <http://www.onderwijsraad.nl/upload/english/publications/parents-as-partners.pdf>

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developed in 2004. Community schools are a typical 'bottom-up' process that cannot be forced by regulations. But, at the same time the government can facilitate the development by eliminating judicial obstacles, making it easier to combine different financial sources etc. From 2006 until 2009 the Flemish minister of Education granted subsidies for 17 pilot projects. In the final report recommendations about the implementation of community schools in Flanders and Brussels were written. The pilot projects showed that the local authorities play an important role in what the focus of community schools is, as they focus on the immediate needs of children and youngsters in a specific environment. Further research by the Centre for Diversity and Learning (Ghent University) shows that municipalities work on different tracks to support community schools. In four bigger municipalities, community schools are supported by the municipality, not only in funding, but also by giving training, providing a coordinator etc. Not every municipality has a common framework supported by the council. If this is the case, more cooperation between different services at the municipality level is possible and different schools are included in the network of community schools.

The idea of a city starting up a community school arises mostly in underprivileged areas. Community schools are seen as a way to tackle inequalities in society. However, community schools do not want to stigmatize underprivileged groups or keep them in their deprived situation. It is exactly the mix and exchange of experiences, visions and ideas that create enrichment. That is why a broad target group is deliberately aimed at, that is all children en youngsters. Community schools therefore also widen the outlook of children and youngsters from well-to-do and sheltered environments. Everyone contributes to a rich exchange and helps to build bridges and close gaps.

The text boxes below contain a summary of the Community schools starting points and touchstones. They make out the Community school reference framework.



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- The aim of the community schools: broad development of children and youngsters.

For children and youngsters not to be in the margin of society, they have to develop an enormous amount of competencies. A community school stimulates and promotes these competencies. The total development of the personality occupies centre stage. Diversity is a key element in that respect: a variety of manners, talents, learning styles, interests and needs. The variety of the public is important as well. Community schools want to participate in the realization of a broad development for all children and youngsters. However, this does not exclude attention being paid to equal opportunities.

- The content: a broad learning and living environment.

Children and youngsters move through a multitude of learning and living domains, and learn within formal as well as informal contexts: school, sports associations, cultural initiatives, youth work, neighbourhood, peer group, family. Community schools stimulate and link the experiences and competencies they acquire everywhere, by increasing interaction between these different domains.

- The organisation: getting to network.

In a community school, partners equally collaborate with a common goal in a broad network. Partners actively look for possible connections and opportunities, common goals, shared concerns and joint actions. A community school cannot but take shape at the local level. This movement can also be instigated top down. Municipalities and/or organizations which are active at supralocal or meso level can play an inspiring and stimulating role.

The Flemish Education Council has no recommendations on this subject. The Council organized a seminar on the theme of 'Community schools' in December 2011. A report and presentations can be found (in Dutch) at <http://www.vlor.be/verslag/seminarie-de-brede-school>.

Lithuanian Education Council

Is this theme part of the policy debate in your country?

The programme of the 16th Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2012–2016 envisages the establishment of multifunctional centres for the provision of preschool, pre-primary, primary and other forms of informal children's and informal adult education. The Programme also governs the creation of the conditions for the provision of cultural, social and other services for the local community. This is a relevant subject, as is reflected in

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our legislation and activities (for more details, see answer to the next question).

Is the definition set forward by EUNEC relevant? Are essential elements missing?

Currently, municipalities in Lithuania, especially in rural areas, are establishing universal multifunctional centres (UMCs) as well as schools-multifunctional centres (SMCs) that, among other functions, also offer either primary or basic education. The aim of establishing both types of centres is to address the problem of insufficient quality, supply and accessibility of educational and social services in rural areas by creating, implementing and developing a modern infrastructure of educational and social services.

The Pre-primary and Pre-school Development Programme for 2007–2012, approved by Government Decision No. 1057 of 19 September 2007, defines the UMC as an institution providing educational, cultural and social services to children and local communities. The UMC activities may include: pre-primary, pre-school and informal education for children, child day care, informal adult education, educational assistance, special education, distance learning under formal and non-formal education programs (curricula) or modules, entertainment, socio-cultural and artistic activities for children and adults and other services. The target groups and functions of UMCs are determined by the local municipal authorities in view of the needs of the local community. UMCs are also seen as a tool to increase access to pre-primary and pre-school education, especially in rural areas, as illustrated in paragraph 1.8 of the Action Plan of the Pre-primary and Pre-school Development Programme for 2007–2012. The Programme provides for both the establishment of new UMCs and the adjustment of the existing facilities for running pre-primary and pre-school education programmes and for offering other educational, cultural and social services for children and local communities.

The School Improvement Programme Plus (hereinafter referred to as SIP Plus) was approved by the Minister of Education and Science by order No. ISAK-2331 of 3 December 2007. SIP Plus is designed to reach the objectives under priority 2, Lifelong Learning, of the Human Resources Development Action Plan for 2007-2013 and priority 2, Public Service Quality and Availability of Health, Education and Social Infrastructure, of the Cohesion Promotion Action Plan for 2007 – 2013 drafted in order to reach Lithuania's priorities, goals and objectives under the Strategy for the Use of the European Union Structural Support in 2007–2013.

In SIP Plus, the concept of UMC does not differ from the way it is defined in the Programme approved by the Government referred to above. SIP Plus defines the UMC as a new and innovative unit of the educational system and a new tool to ensure better access to and quality of educational services in view of the existing problems of schools being closed, pupils not being assured of learning options, and lack of adult education services. SIP Plus also stipulates that establishing UMCs in rural areas will help to build active communities and

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strengthen the existing ones, as well as create conditions for social partnership, develop social capital, give an impetus to innovative solutions and improve networking capacities. Thus, the UMCs are seen not only as an embedded segment of the educational system, but also as institutions established in specific localities in order to analyse and meet the needs of the local communities, support the community-building process and strengthen relations between the members of every community.

In addition, under points 15 and 24.2.1.3 of the Rules for Establishment of Formal Education Schools approved by decision of the Government No. 768 of 29 June 2011, schools with vacant premises may change their mission and be reformed to serve either as schools–multifunctional centres (hereinafter SMCs) or special schools–multifunctional centres.

The Lithuanian SMCs are most likely to be compared to community schools (as UMCs do not run any formal curricula). The Rules for Establishment of Formal Education Schools stipulate that schools with vacant premises may be reformed into SMCs and that multifunctional centres can be established in former school premises to provide informal education, education assistance, cultural and health care services as well as meet social needs of the community. SMCs are intended to cater for pupils aged between 7/6 and 16 by offering primary and basic education. In addition, SMCs offer informal education programmes for children and adults and enable the local community to cater for its cultural, health, social, and other needs. Thus, in the case of Lithuania, apart from networking and improvement of the quality of education and training, there is an additional aspect, namely, lifelong learning. The activities of the said multifunctional centres are oriented not only at pupils, but also at meeting the needs of the local community.

Do you recognize the differentiation between community schools and multifunctional schools?

There are no community schools in Lithuania in the sense defined by the EUNEC. However, schools in the regions and rural areas may also traditionally act as centres offering cultural services, sports and education to local communities. Nevertheless, this is not formalized as a school type. By and large, this depends on the initiative of the communities at individual schools. Joint activities of schools and local communities, such as running various projects, social services, etc. may also be initiated by the local authorities, e.g. wardens and municipality representatives. However, this only amounts to initiatives of individual communities of individual schools. As for cooperation between schools and local communities, school councils play an important role as the supreme institution of self-government of schools. Under Article 60.3 of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, the role of the school council is to represent pupils, teachers, parents (foster parents, guardians) and the local community. Notably, the engagement of the local community in school management through the school council is an officially established and regulated form of cooperation.

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Both UMCs and SMCs are new to Lithuania. They came about as a result of addressing the problem of the falling numbers of pupils, especially in rural areas. The UMC means more than just multifunctional use of the existing premises, which the name seems to suggest. In our case, the Lithuanian UMC is comparable to the community school because of the partnership between UMCs and social partners, joint coordination of activities, design of a joint vision and analysis of the needs of the local community that informs the planning of the relevant activities by the UMC. Currently, the Education Development Centre is running a project entitled Development of Lifelong Learning Opportunities in Rural Areas funded by the European Social Fund and national budget of the Republic of Lithuania. In the framework of this project, the concept document on UMCs (including SMCs) is being drafted, which will offer a definition of the UMC and cover its objectives, principles of operation, organisation, engagement of the local community, specificity of the work with various target groups, and other matters.

What is the perspective from which the issue is raised?

Enhancing the availability and quality of educational and other services (schools are being closed, the opportunities to choose learning are not ensured for pupils, the availability of adult education services is insufficient, etc.)

How does your council consider the debate on the embeddedness and the partnership of schools with the local community? Do you have any relevant recommendations on this theme?)

In the framework of the project Development of Lifelong Learning Opportunities in Rural Areas run by the Education Development Centre in 2012–2014, twenty municipalities, alongside the universal multifunctional centres or school–multifunctional centres, set up coordination groups comprising local community representatives and local bodies or institutions providing public services. The mission of the coordination groups is to help the multifunctional centres to identify the real needs of the local community, offer proposals on ways to meet the potential needs and solve the problems. On the basis of the experience and the insights from the project, proposals on the most effective ways of cooperation between schools or informal education institutions and the local community will be drafted and presented.

Is the concept of “community schools” known in your country? Or is it used with another name? Are there schools in your country working with this concept? What priorities have they chosen? What are their experiences of difficulties?

Since the concept of community schools is not defined in the legislation, schools do not use it. It can be seen in the context of the project Development of Lifelong Learning Opportunities in Rural Areas mentioned above and in the examples of joint activities of schools and local communities (see materials attached). Currently, Lithuania has 26 multifunctional centres,

including 7 universal multifunctional centres, offering no formal education, and 19 schools–multifunctional centres offering primary or basic education. Schools–multifunctional centres also include three special schools–multifunctional centres. Twelve (both universal multifunctional centres and schools–multifunctional centres) out of 26 centres mentioned above have been opened in municipalities in the framework of the projects under the measure Establishment of Universal Multifunctional Centres in Rural Areas under priority 2 of the Operational Programme for promotion of Cohesion for 2007–2013 titled Quality and Availability of Public Services: Health Care, Education and Social Infrastructure. In line with this measure, 78 universal multifunctional centres should be opened in Lithuania’s municipalities in 2015.

We believe that cooperation among schools (networks, teams) is addressed under the eTwinning programme run by the Centre of Information Technologies in Education. Recently, the results of a case study of teacher collaboration, eTwinning School Teams, have been published. They describe cooperation experience of 24 European schools on the basis of the following parameters: institutional factors and organizational climate in schools (school context, school innovation history), human factors (eTwinning team), institutional factors (team activities, opportunities and challenges), influence of eTwinning teams in schools and future plans. Although there are no Lithuanian schools among the 24 aforementioned schools, similar processes can be observed in Lithuania, too. The results of the study show that:

- Schools have a wide variety of eTwinning teams, where the support of school leadership for the establishment and functioning was essential. It allowed for more flexible planning of activities of school teams not only between teachers and pupils but also with parents and other external stakeholders.
- eTwinning school teams form part of school vision and are conducive to innovation in schools. Two groups of schools could be identified in the study. Some schools already had considerable experience of cooperation with other schools in Europe before engaging in eTwinning projects, while for other schools, eTwinning projects were the first step towards European cooperation. The study revealed that it does not matter where cooperation begins, most importantly, both ways lead to the same objective.
- The level of development of eTwinning school teams varies. Some teams are only at the point of formation, while others continue an old tradition of cooperation. It is known from previous experience that innovation is not a one-off phenomenon but rather a complex process, which develops in time and involves many actors (Forkosh-Barush, 2008). The study has also demonstrated that the activities of eTwinning school team influence the pedagogical objectives of a school by contributing to the existing activities and bring about either some minor or radical changes into the learning environment. The flexibility and adaptability of the eTwinning programme is basically compatible

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with both the introduction and adjustment of pedagogical innovations and transition and transformation.

- The role of a lead teacher (teachers) is another important factor. These people inspire other members of the team and bring some fresh ideas into school life. Previous studies have shown that leader's motivation is the main stability component in innovation and one of the most effective factors of pedagogical innovation based on the use of ICTs. It is equally important to motivate and support leaders and focus on building school teams.
- Uneven distribution of innovation models among schools is determined by time and context, i.e. school environment, teachers, pupils, content, etc. It also depends on the author of the innovations (one of the teachers or school leadership).
- eTwinning is referred to as the community for schools in Europe that helps not only to build e-communities, but promotes the establishment of local school communities or school teams and enables local school teams to collaborate with e-communities of other schools in Europe.

Currently, over 1,100 Lithuanian schools and 2,700 education specialists (teachers, head teachers, librarians, social workers, etc. working with 3–20 year-old pupils and students) are engaged in the programme with 1,690 projects (369 running and 1,324 completed).

On the European level, the programme runs in over 104,000 schools by 200,500 education specialists from 35 countries and involves over 27,800 projects.

Teachers engaged in the eTwinning programme are encouraged to integrate the projects into the curricula and informal education and invite their colleagues, pupils, parents and the local community or local authorities to join. The activities and results of the projects are published on the European website, at: www.etwinning.net, on the national website of the programme, at: www.etwinning.lt, the education portal, at: <http://portalas.emokykla.lt>, the websites of the schools engaged in the projects, as well as in local, regional and national press, on the municipal websites, at events organised in the framework of the programme (over 50 events are held annually), etc.

Every year, the best projects are awarded the National Quality Label or the European Quality Label. The projects are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Pedagogical innovation and creativity: can certain aspects of the project, such as content, objectives, methods, activities and methodologies, end products, promotion and publications, be considered as more innovative and creative than others?
- Curricular integration: integration of project activity into the existing curricula.
- Collaboration between partner schools: interaction and collaboration of teachers and pupils from different schools when running the project.

(e.g., not simply sharing results, but also engaging in active cooperation).

- Use of ICT: creative ways of using ICT during the project apart from e-mail.
- Sustainability and transferability: ensuring the continuity of the project by engaging the entire school and sharing benefits with other stakeholders, such as the local community and local authorities.

National Education Council Portugal

Manuel Miguéns, secretary general

Improving the relations between schools, local community and networking platforms

This is not a relevant topic in our present political agenda. Schools are free to develop projects and activities involving local communities, municipalities, local associations or enterprises.

We would suggest that EUNEC definition could be wider, since when involving other partners, schools should not only aim at improving learning outcomes but also promoting the social development of the community they serve.

The debate on this issue should consider

- equity, equal opportunities for students from different social and cultural origins;
- integration of different learning contexts – formal, informal and non formal;
- better results – students with better learning performances.

School can perform be better if the cultural level of the local community as whole is higher.

The National Council of Education (CNE) addressed the theme of school – community partnerships in several published statements arguing that organizations with an educational potential (formal, non-formal, informal) within a particular school community should establish partnerships and promote networking activities in order to devise education and training offers to respond to local needs. Thus, schools, training centres, firms, municipalities, associations, museums or science centres for example, that operate at a particular territory school collaborate to involve locals, youngsters and adults, in lifelong learning activities.

The concept of community schools

The connection between schools and communities has been implicit in public policies concerning decentralization and school autonomy implemented since 1975.

Despite the fact that the concept of “community schools” is not a current concern in Portugal, there are some institutions with practices that could be associated to such an approach.

The expression “integrated territorial approaches” is commonly used to refer to educational projects that associate formal and non-formal and promote learning experiences using the local as the reference or the starting point. Such projects tend to establish partnerships with different local actors, mainly municipalities.

Nowadays the Ministry of Education runs different programs involving several community partners in order to improve school performances. These programs are usually implemented in economic and socially deprived areas with severe problems of poverty, violence and school failure. In these contexts schools are integrated in TEIP – Educational Territory of Priority Intervention. Starting in 1996, this approach involves about 9% of the schools.

Other projects involving mainly rural and isolated schools were developed during the 90s trying to promote social and cultural development of the community by using the school as the reference or the starting point. With a perspective of integrated development, these projects tried to promote culture, education, health and environment within the local community, using the school as a development pole.

However, school merging policies and migration to urban centres would result in the extinction of those isolated and rural schools.

General Teaching Council for Wales

Sue Rivers, Deputy Chairperson General Teaching Council for Wales

Improving the relationship between school-local community and networking platforms

Is this theme part of the policy debate in your country?

The theme of Community Focused Schools has been at the centre of the devolved Welsh Governments’ strategy in tackling poverty and disadvantage in education for many years.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

"We want to see a much closer relationship between schools and the communities they serve. We want schools to act as a community resource – not just in school hours but out of hours and in vacations as well. We see them as being integral to community capacity building – providing a basis for delivering, not just education and training ... but also a range of other services like family support, health and enterprise promotion ..."

("The Learning Country" National Assembly for Wales, 2001)

It was included in the Education Act 2002 and identified as:

'A community focused school is one that provides a range of services and activities often beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.'

(Community Focused Schools. Circular No. 34/2003, National Assembly for Wales)

The report on the first phase of 'Narrowing the Gap in the Performance of Schools Project', published by the National Assembly in October 2002 identified key factors that contributed to the success of schools working in challenging circumstances. The study found that where schools engage with their local community this has a direct impact on pupils' attainment and raises their aspirations to progress from school to further education, training and employment. It is and has been for many years, a Welsh Government priority to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment. Evidence exists across Wales of schools whose pupils come from areas of high deprivation and make excellent progress and achieve high levels of attainment. These schools often enhance learning outcomes through parental engagement with the school and supporting the development of effective home learning environments.

In 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government made funding available to the Local Authority education departments to develop Community Focused Schools. This specific funding came to an end in 2011 and was replaced by the School Effectiveness Grant and the Pupil Deprivation Grant.

In 2012, these grants became the Welsh Government's principal means of providing financial support for the three national priorities for schools:

- improving standards in literacy;
- improving standards in numeracy, and
- reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

The Welsh Government now associates Community Focused Schools work more narrowly with its third priority above, as follows:

"Reducing the impact of poverty on educational achievement"

Research indicates that effective family and community engagement can have a positive impact on outcomes for all but especially for learners from more deprived backgrounds. Schools should identify interventions that are effective in supporting parental and community engagement from the earliest opportunity. In particular, those in Communities First areas should look for opportunities to work with the Communities First Clusters. Schools' strategies for the PDG should actively support the Learning Communities theme of the Communities First Programme and ensure that there is coherence and join-up with Families First and Flying Start provision to support families in their communities.

International research demonstrates the potential long term benefits of investment in childcare and early education, especially for disadvantaged groups. The evidence concludes that good quality early years (0-7years) education can boost children's cognitive and social skills, which gives them a better foundation for success at school. It is this potential for educational success that is followed by increased success later on in life through employment.

No one factor is key to enhancing children's outcomes; it is the experience over time that matters. The Welsh Government is of the view that parents and carers need to understand their responsibilities in supporting their child's education, not just in the early years but throughout their education, and consortia should be considering what activities schools can undertake in ensuring this message is communicated and in drawing parents into the learning process."

(School Effectiveness Grant and Pupil Deprivation Grant 2013–2015, Guidance document no: 101/2013)

Is the definition set forward by EUNEC relevant?

The definition put forward by EUNEC complements the Welsh Governments' definition in that it is focused on networking as many partnerships for the benefit of all and raising the quality of learning and standards of performance.

'A community focused school is one that provides a range of services and activities often beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.'

(Community Focused Schools. Circular No. 34/2003, National Assembly for Wales)

The benefits of community focused schools have been identified as follows:

For pupils and schools:

- higher levels of pupil achievement
- increased pupil motivation and self-esteem
- specialist support to meet pupils' wider needs

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

- additional facilities and equipment
- enhanced partnership working with the community
- enhanced status for learning in the local community
- reduced pupil disaffection

For families:

- improvements in child behaviour and social skills
- greater availability of specialist support for families
- easier access to relevant services
- greater parental involvement in children's learning
- more opportunities for local adult education and family learning.

For communities:

- better access to essential services
- improved local availability of sports, arts and other facilities
- local career development opportunities
- better supervision of children outside school hours
- promotes community cohesion by re-engaging adults (and in particular parents) in learning – reinforcing relationships between school and home
- helps regenerate and strengthen communities
- The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) states that 'Schools are the bedrock of a lifelong learning society'.

Are essential elements missing?

The contribution of Community Focused Schools to community cohesion could be greater in the EUNEC definition.

The UK Government's formal definition of community cohesion is that which

'...must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another'.

Within this context, the link between Community Focused Schools and Community Cohesion is that both seek to promote inclusion for all and the objectives are to promote integrated and cohesive communities where:

- learning is used as a powerful tool in promoting integration and mutual respect;
- there is a clearly defined sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities and access to Community Focused Schools services; and,
- there are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Do you recognize the differentiation between community schools and multifunctional schools?

Community schools are those at the centre of the community whereas a multifunctional school may not necessarily provide for the community need, may not be centred on raising the quality of learning and raising standards of performance.

What is the perspective from which the issue is raised?

There are a number of relevant perspectives in which Community Focused Schools can be seen, including:

- the debate on equal opportunities
- raising levels and standards of learning
- integration formal and informal learning
- multifunctionality of school buildings

By nature, Community Focused schools should be accessible for all, by all, irrespective of background. All members of the community should have access to learning opportunities and this is most successful where formal and informal learning complements each other

How does your council consider the debate on the embeddedness and the partnership of schools with the local community?

The General Teaching Council for Wales endorses the role Community Focused Schools play in reducing the impact of poverty on educational achievement through developing strong partnerships and in raising the aspirations of learners through a range of opportunities.

Professor David Egan states

“Schools cannot maximize the reduction of the poverty gap unless their work is supported by strong engagement with their parents and communities.

Parental engagement can have a significant impact on reducing the poverty gap, but it is unlikely that there is sufficient high quality parental engagement in place in Wales.

Significant opportunities exist to improve the links between schools and communities in the most disadvantaged parts of Wales through closer working with Flying Start, Families First, Communities First and Community Focused Schools.”

(Prof. David Egan, Communities, Families and Schools Together: a route to reducing the impact of poverty on educational achievement in schools across Wales)

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Is the concept of "community schools" known in your country?

The concept of the Community Focused School has been at the heart of the Welsh Governments' policy on addressing poverty and educational disadvantage for over twelve years. Welsh Government provided funding to local education authorities from 2005-2011 to assist schools in their areas in developing their Community Focus initiative.

The funding to support the Community Focus initiative now exists through the School Effectiveness Grant and the Pupil Deprivation Grant and is distributed to schools through a grant application.

Many case studies of excellent Community Focused Schools exist, highlighted by agencies working towards full participation in the concept such as Continyou, RAISE and Estyn (School Inspection Service)

What priorities have they chosen?

The core priorities are those of:

- Tackling poverty and educational disadvantage
- Raising the quality of education and standards of performance
- Parental and Community engagement.

What are their experiences of difficulties?

There are many difficulties to overcome in order for Community Focused Schools to be successful, the main one being the 'hard to reach' section of the community and ensuring their engagement in the activities on offer. In order for this to be successful there needs to be coordination of multi agency working, recruitment of staff, securing funding through grant applications and the sustainability of such grant funding.

Is the concept integrated at a central policy level?

The concept of Community Focused School has been recognized at central policy level for many years. Its importance has been developed through many government circulars and guidance materials. See answers to Q2.1.

What is the role of the central government, of the community and of the school?

Central Government produces the policy and provides funding through grant applications from schools.

Schools produce implementation plans with community agencies, distribute funding accordingly and provide a range of activities and projects under the umbrella of Community Focused Schools.

“Schools have a vital part to play through the day-to-day work they do with disadvantaged students. Schools, the people who lead them and teachers make a difference.

But schools are only part of the solution. They are a necessary but not sufficient part of a system-wide and sustainable approach. Just as important is gaining the involvement and support of the families and communities these young people live in. Family- and community-level influences have the strongest impact on young people’s educational achievement.

What we need, therefore, are holistic policies to tackling the influence of poverty on educational achievement, which join together interventions at family, school and community level”.

(Egan, D. (2013) How to cut the education – poverty link. Bevan Foundation)

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Education Council Hungary

Tas Szebedy

In Hungary the policy debate during the last decade took place in the schools and the local community affair. The discussion of the policy makers and of members of the present government was solved by legislation. Government took over the management, the issue of financing the majority of schools from January 2013. Most of the schools in Hungary from January 2013 became state run schools, (about 3000 schools). There is no real debate between school and local community. The institutions will now solve local professional autonomy in educational programs provided by the designated tasks, but 90 % of the local curriculum is a core curriculum.

This definition set forward by EUNEC, of course, is relevant, but at the current transformation of the entire public educational system, there are mainly the central questions of equality in the treatment of identity, and overall fairness.

In Hungary the economic autonomy of the individual schools is lacking. Everybody knows that professional autonomy without an economic playing field is just a blank password, and the law gives only professional autonomy to the schools, and nothing in the field of decision about the financial part of the regulation. The budget without freedom is not dependent on any local institution, which is a highly centralized system, and it is not able to respond to local needs and specialties. It is also evident that the advertized minimum conditions of quality improvement for sure, cannot be guaranteed in a 120 thousand teachers employed maintaining large public organization.

In Hungary, the community schools staff is primarily religious or celestial, this may appear as a foundation maintenance. From this point of view it is radically different from the multifunctional schools. It is likely they will survive if the operation can be centrally controlled. The school is a multi-purpose local capacity building. However, for the maintenance of the present highly centralized economy, transparency, predictability of funding makes it difficult for them to survive.

Basically, the debate on equal opportunities is the main current perspective. At the same time the educational policy constantly emphasizes raising the standards and raising the levels of learning issues, but without the economic aspect of the question. It is treated as a theoretical problem.

Formal and informal learning are integrated, but it is mainly only in some institutions where innovative workshop operate with real practice.

Multi-functionality of the school buildings is very often talked about. However, without considerable financial investment in the development of school buildings due to a lack of funding, this is not a relevant issue in most parts of the system. Even the new national "daily exercise" can only be realized in a limited way, because there is no suitable size equipped gymnasium and sports hall in a substantial part of the public schools. Changing school buildings is almost impossible without planned investments into education, what is not visible at the current period.

The members of the National Public Education Council consider basically that decentralized solutions are technically adequate. They find important the embeddedness and the partnership of schools with the local community, but the local community lost its importance during the last few years period of strong centralization. The "partnership" in the current period rather acts as a slogan, or political campaign vocabulary.

At the moment, we observe with a great interest in international, particularly the European Union's proposals, the implementation of which our country

could only be present at the level of professional debate. In the next two years in our country a radical centralization of the system as a whole takes place.

Union of Schools Associations Czech Republic

Miloslav Hons, Headmaster of Basic school Chomutov

Is this theme part of the policy debate in your country?

Yes, it is, but we can see that it is more important and more actual in the regions, districts or parts of bigger towns where there are not so much social problems, with lower rate of unemployment, where people are not poor and don't have the basic existential concerns. In the region with social problems it sometimes seems as an "irrelevant luxury" for the people with the basic existential problems. It is clear that the main task of the school that wants to be the centre of local community is to persuade people, both parents and pupils (students) that it can be fine and very useful for them to join the activities of the community school. They can find there very good relevant support for their needs which costs very little money or nothing. It is very important to attract people, institutions and small entrepreneurs and craftsmen to cooperate with the community school. It will also help them in the future.

Is the definition set forward by EUNEC relevant?

Yes, it is relevant from the perspective of lifelong education needs.

Are essential elements missing?

We think that it is alright.

Do you recognize the difference between community schools and multifunctional schools?

At first we think and understand the community school is less formal than multifunctional school. The activities there can be wider or vice versa very narrow. It depends on opportunities of all schools. Community schools can consist of more parts – like a library, theatre, after school activities etc.

What is the perspective from which the issue is raised?

The debate on equal opportunities is number one, because a lot of talented pupils and students leave schools early without any education. The background of the problem is the low support to pupils who are not encouraged by parents and family raising levels and standards of learning – as a part of next steps.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Integration of formal and informal learning is at the very beginning in our country. Mostly informal education isn't well developed, and isn't formally accepted.

Do you have any relevant recommendations on this theme?

The headmaster of the school must be absolutely persuaded that the cooperation with the local community is necessary; the school is able to offer much more than traditional education – many after school activities for pupils and their parents, grandparents and for their younger brothers and sisters as well. The school is a multigenerational institution. And education is a lifelong process. All members can use all strong points of them and have to know about their weakness, they want to find all opportunity and dangers of the environment. There must be strong and wide support of local political and educational authorities. Start from smaller goals. Get ready to accept the first failures and jeers. Remember:

- The most important is always cultivation of pupils. There are both levels IQ and EQ . (knowledge and social skills together).
- Connect education and activities inside of the community.
- All communities' activity must be part of the school's concept .
- Embodied energy and efforts must be reasonable.
- Feedback and annual evaluation are not only good, they are necessary. Use wider forms of it. Ask the bystanders as well. Use all examples of good practice.
- Try to inform about the life at community school as more as possible. Celebrate a lot.
- Ask people inside the community what they like, what they need what is good for them.
- Take advantage of locally embedded learning – for example projects which are connected with the area- history, nature, locally famous people.
- Encourage all type of local positive partnership.

School level: Is the concept of "community schools" known in your country?

Yes, it is. There are schools which work as a community school, but we can't say that there is one model or one shape of the community school. There are differences between schools in bigger towns and villages, in the western part of Bohemia and south Moravia.

Or is it used with another name?

Yes, some of them are for example named healthy school or green school.

Are there schools in your country working with this concept?

Yes some of them respect the so-called "Ten Commandments"

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

WHAT THEY WANT

1. They want to change schools
2. They want to get rid of wrong views
3. They want more than just part knowledge
4. They want to build on the natural human needs
5. They develop individual assumptions and take into account the particularities of each individual

WHAT THEY OFFER

6. Greater degree of freedom for pupils
7. Greater freedom in deciding
8. Good psychological climate, good relationships and tolerance
9. They support all kinds of creativity, cooperation and openness
10. They are ecological, healthy, esthetical, open, economy and friendly schools.

What are their experiences of difficulties?

They often meet with scepticism. Parents are afraid that students can only play and don't learn the important things for their next life.

Central policy making level: Is the concept integrated at a central policy level?

There are some efforts on the government level but the results are mostly not too big and too good. Sometimes there are some proposals on the level of the ministry of education which allows also to community schools to get some extra money for their projects and actions.

What is the role of the central government, of the community and of the school?

They should create a legislative framework and help them to integrate them to the official structure of state aid.

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COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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