SALEACOM. Overcoming Inequalities in Schools and Learning Communities: Innovative Education for a New Century

WORK PACKAGE 1

Report 1. Literature on Successful actions in a global world for the historically excluded

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1. Introduction

This report has been carried out in the framework of WP1. Successful actions in a global world for the systematically underserved of the SALEACOM Project. Overcoming Inequalities in Schools and Learning Communities: Innovative Education for a New Century (SALEACOM hereafter). The main aim of the report is providing a literature review on the strategies that are providing effective solutions to the educational and social inequalities suffered by traditionally underserved populations. This report is the outcome of the collaboration between the 6 research groups from Australia, Brazil, New Zealand, Hungary, Spain, USA and 1 non-academic institution (Drom Kotar Mestipen, Spain). Each partner has contributed a literature review from their national context and expertise, providing a wide review focused on learning environments, classrooms, schools and communities. This also includes evidence that resulted in improving situations of exclusion affecting students from systematically underserved populations: Roma, Indigenous, African American, Latino, Afro-Brazilian, among others.

Different disciplines and topics have been covered in the review and discussed in the respective secondments:

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Below we present, firstly, the methodology that has been implemented to carry out the literature review. Secondly, we focus on the educational and social inequalities, especially in the context of the European countries. Thirdly, we develop our findings on Successful Educational Actions. Learning Communities and potentially successful strategies identified in the different national contexts through which the worldwide network created by SALEACOM is present. Lastly, we conclude highlighting some of the main contributions of the report.

2. Methods

This report collects a literature review regarding the main theoretical lines tackled in the framework of SALEACOM Project, as a result of the knowledge exchanges offered by the global network that has been created and the scientific literature review. Firstly, this knowledge has emerged through the dialogue that SALEACOM’s researchers have generated during the first period of the project. This knowledge exchange was carried out through nine secondments that have involved six institutions from five different countries – Spain, Hungary, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. These dialogues, generated through workshops, lectures and meetings have focused on theoretical aspects, successful actions and methodologies of research with vulnerable groups. In addition, during the secondments, the involved researchers have been able to come into contact with schools, associations and initiatives in different social areas that are contributing to overcome inequalities in their respective contexts.

Secondly, the development of this report has been the result of a comprehensive review of existing documentary sources that have addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective the following issues: 1) research on the increasing inequalities in the European and global context, 2) research on the interconnections between educational exclusion and social exclusion; 3) studies identifying educational strategies providing a positive impact on overcoming inequalities faced by vulnerable groups. In the search and selection of sources special attention has been given to literature on minority groups and to gender dimension. Furthermore, it has been included both empirical and theoretical research on the issues addressed through sources such as: 1) articles indexed in scientific databases; 2) reports issued by international organizations; 3) official statistics; 4) legislation, policies and European institutional programs; 5) other articles and publications related to the national contexts in which research is focuses and 6) communications presented at international scientific conferences.

Regarding the articles indexed in scientific databases, it has been prioritized the use of ISI Web
of Knowledge. Additionally, we have used other databases such as Scopus, Scimago, PsycINFO and ERIC. Among the selected articles we have prioritized those published in journals that have been indexed in the Journal Citation Report (JCR) in different areas of knowledge (Educational Research, Social Sciences, Social Work, Urban Studies, Women's Studies, Family Studies and Ethnic Studies).

3. Educational inequalities and systematically underserved populations

Poverty has increased globally in the last twenty years, affecting specially those people belonging to cultural minorities, those with a low academic training, and those who live in areas with high levels of poverty (Garland, Massoumi & Ruble, 2007; Korsu & Wenglenski, 2010; Seguin, Apparicio & Riva, 2012; Wilson, 2003, 2012, 2010). This fact is not only generating problems for developing countries but also for the most advanced economies, where inequality and poverty have raised during the last decade (Baharoglu & Kessides, 2004; OECD, 2011), reaching in 2012 more than 124 million people in Europe at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat, 2015b). Starting from this situation, following we present the literature review regarding the inequalities that have been identified in the European context, and that have affected traditionally excluded groups. Special attention is given to the Roma case in Europe. Currently, it is estimated that about 12 million Roma are living in European countries, America and some areas of Asia and Oceania. However it is identified, most of the Roma and travellers are living in Europe, especially in Central and Eastern Europe (European Council, 2009). To make an approach to the contextual inequalities identified in Europe, following we provide a short presentation in regards to the inequalities the Roma and non-European migrants suffer in the Spanish context. On the other hand, we address the situation of Roma population in Central and Eastern Europe.

3.1. Educational and social inequalities in the European and Spanish context

The deterioration of living conditions in different European regions has been multidimensional, affecting social areas such as employment, access to health services, housing, nutrition or education (Alkire & Santos, 2011; Hansen & Gordon, 2014). In recent years, the Spanish case—with a 21% of its total population at risk of poverty in 2010 (Matsaganis & Leventi, 2014)—has exemplified the multidimensionality of inequalities. As consequence of the precarious employment situation, the weak social protection schemes and the abusive lending practices, the number of evictions has increased dramatically—over 350,000 families lost their homes since
Spain's property market burst in 2008 (Álvarez de Andrés, Zapata Campos & Zapata, 2015; Cano Fuentes, Etxazarreta Etxarri, Dol, & Hoekstra, 2013). It has particularly affected vulnerable groups with a weak position in the labour market. In response to the deterioration of the living conditions, various social movements have emerged across Europe, providing solidarity and effective actions (Soler, 2015) as for instance the PAH (Platform of People Affected by Mortgage) in Spain (Romanos, 2013).

Addressing this context, some studies have identified the protective role of education, as more educated individuals suffer smaller income and health losses as a result of poor labour market conditions (Cutler, Huang & Lleras-Muney, 2015). Empirical evidence shows these protective effects as on average, in 2012 the unemployment rate of early school leavers was the 40.1%, compared to the 23.2% of youth unemployment (European Commission, 2013). In this regard, the Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2010) includes education as one of the strategic sectors to break the poverty circles and obtain a sustainable and inclusive growth. This implies facing some educational challenges such as the persistence of early school leaving in most European countries (Brunello & De Paola, 2013) – the 11.1% of 18 to 24 year-olds have left education and training without completing an upper secondary programme (Eurostat, 2014). This is particularly remarkable in the Spanish context where in 2013 youth unemployment rates reached the 55.5% (Eurostat, 2015) and in 2012 it was the European country with higher rates of early school leaving – one in three young people aged 15 to 24 leave school before completing their secondary education (UNESCO, 2012).

Furthermore, one of the priorities of the European education policy is the implementation of equitable and effective educational interventions that address the educational and social inequalities of Roma and non-European migrants, collectives who have traditionally suffered situations of profound exclusion (Atkinson & Da Voudi, 2000). Several studies (Fox, 2001; Sordé, Flecha & Alexiu, 2013) have highlighted the structural inequalities and discriminatory attitudes that perpetuate Roma exclusion. This group is facing great difficulties to rely on law, participate in political life, be integrated into the labour market and have access to housing and health services (Agarin, 2014; McGarry, 2014). The World Bank (Ringold, Orenstein & Wilkens, 2003) claimed that the poverty levels among the Roma community are much higher than for the rest of the population. For example, in Spain in 2013, 72.3% of the Roma population lives in situations of social exclusion while these situations affect 23.5% of the non-Roma population (Foessa, 2014).
The situation of the Roma population in many European countries illustrates the connection between educational and social exclusion and reflects how the trajectories of educational segregation in early childhood turn into several inequalities throughout the life cycle. For instance, education is one of the areas in which the Roma suffer more segregation and rejection. The report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2012) shows that Roma children are disproportionately present in special education in different EU Member States, reaching the 75% of children attending special education schools. In the Spanish context have been identified attitudes and practices that difficult the educational success of Roma students (Greenberg, 2010; Nicaise, 2012; Macias & Redondo, 2012) including barriers such as the reduction of the educational level offered to them, segregation within schools, low expectations or unequal information provided to Roma families. Several authors (Hancook 1988; Rose, 1983) have denied some existing discriminatory statements that qualify the lack of schooling and school failure of the Roma as a constitutive element of their culture. On the contrary, there are studies indicating that one of the factors linked to school disengagement of the Roma is the ethnocentric perspective of the educational systems (Gómez & Vargas, 2003; Macias & Redondo, 2012). In their study, Cahn & Guild (2011) emphasize that educational segregation and discrimination of Roma children has been one of the main reasons for Roma families to emigrate to Canada or the UK, leaving their origin countries. Furthermore, the exclusion of the Roma from early childhood is one factor explaining their low representation in higher educational levels (Murray, 2012). For instance, in Spain, 64.4% of Roma students between 16 and 24, do not complete secondary education compared to the 13.3% of non-Roma students who do not finish it. (FSG, 2013)

Non-European migrants are another of the most disadvantaged groups in the European context (Levecque & Van Rossem, 2015; Parisi, 2014). In 2014, 40.1% of the non-EU-born population was found at risk of poverty or social exclusion, while less than 22.5 % of the native-born population suffered the same social difficulties (Eurostat, 2015). Similar trends has been identified in the Spanish context, the second-largest recipient of immigrants among the OECD (Arango, 2013), where 55.4% of non-European migrants are at poverty risk (INE, 2015) and their unemployment rate was of 39.21% at the time in which the national unemployment rate was around the 5.21% (INE, 2013). The majority of non-EU migrants come from different countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America (Ballester, Velazco & Rigall i Torrent, 2015) and have low educational backgrounds (Cortés et al., 2008). Inequalities have also a particular impact on the educational field, as in the majority of European countries students with non-European migrant background suffer from inequalities in the educational
systems and are at a higher risk of leaving education prematurely (Griga & Hadjar, 2014; Levels, Dronkers & Kraaykamp, 2008). For instance, the share of non-EU-born early-leavers in 2014 was more than twice the rate of the native-born early-leavers (10% against 21%) (Eurostat, 2015).

3.2. Educational and social inequalities in the Central and Eastern Europe

Across Europe, the past decade has brought about disturbing experiences of the growing importance of ethnicity in producing and reproducing the disadvantaged positions and relative deprivation of people from other than white European backgrounds. It came to light through culturally framed political conflicts – underscored by frequent local clashes – that large groups of people from “immigrant backgrounds” face dramatic marginalisation in the communities where they live and where many of them were born to; vocal groups of Europe’s large Muslim community have made repeated public appeals against the intensifying Islamophobia that rules out earlier attempts at peaceful and trustful cohabitation according to multiculturalist principles and politics; news about the harsh oppression and institutionalised social exclusion of Roma call attention to deep racialised fault-lines in the post-socialist social structures in Central and Eastern Europe; cross-country comparative studies on income and living conditions have found that ethnic minority communities – both East and West – suffer impoverishment and exclusion at substantially higher risks than their compatriots from the majority, furthermore, the long years of economic crisis have turned the impediments of many migrant households into a terminal condition of destitution with no hope for improvement; labour statistics signal rates of unemployment among these same groups that are significantly and constantly above the corresponding indicators for people from the majority, moreover, those from minority backgrounds usually have to face long months and years on the dole with the threat of ultimate marginalisation; finally, the subsequent PISA surveys turned public attention to the origins of the ills of ethno-social differentiation by indicating in measurable terms the striking disadvantages of ethnic minority adolescents in those core skills of reading, comprehension, and basic mathematics that are essential for entering the world of labour with a hope for regular and safe employment and that are also fundamental for meaningful social and political participation.

These worrying facts draw up a consistent trend of making ethnic belonging a foundation of deep social divides: those from “immigrant backgrounds” (be they new migrants or children or grandchildren of migrating ancestors) are for the most part deprived from opportunities for upward social mobility, moreover, the second and third generations often face worse conditions
than their parents and grandparents did some decades before. The amassing troubling developments call for a thorough reconsideration of the prevailing interpretations that tend to see the divides a transient concomitant of migration. It waits for fresh inquiries to understand how ethnicity gains meaning, influence and power in becoming a strong factor in forging people’s social standing and how it contributes to the breaking up of the once universally meant notions of citizenship.

Choosing education as a lens through which ethnic distinctions can be revealed in their making seems a quickly growing and promising field of social science research. This choice provides an opportunity to look at a sphere of social and institutional relations where all European societies consider equality a fundamental principle: compulsory education is everywhere meant to provide the basic knowledge, skills, and behavioural routines for introducing young people into successfully participating in the social, economic, cultural, and political domains of everyday life. Hence, ethnic differentiation in basic education highlights those factors and processes that prefigure departures in later participation along the measures of selection by culture and performance that are assumed compelling for schools in their competition on the educational market. However, this way not only unequal opportunities for advancement and later career can be looked at their origins, but a window to the departing understandings of citizenship is also opened. Furthermore, ethnically informed inequalities in education reveal a mostly hidden process of social stratification: by providing differential knowledge and skills along the lines of ethno-cultural belonging, the process of schooling predestines departing positions on the labour market, and through these, foreordains differentially rewarded and differentially recognised adult social positions. This way a study of ethnic differentiation in education helps us understanding how ethnicity becomes a constituent of social class belonging and, vice versa, how differences in social class positions appear in the garment of allegedly culturally informed choices and freely shaped “multicultural” arrangements.

In the light of these considerations, educational systems are viewed in terms of the part they play in social reproduction, i.e. as institutional arrangements embodying differential access to, and distribution of, socially relevant knowledge. Schools, in helping define for young people the meanings of identity formation, family and community ties, and career aspirations, were looked at as key organisational locations, facing, relating to, and intervening in the broader social debates and practices on ethnic differences. Using such an encompassing approach, accumulating research evidence shows how schools operate in their roles of knowledge distribution and socialisation, and how they contribute, in this way, to reducing, maintaining, or
decreasing inequalities in young people’s access to further education and training, and also to the institutionalised and informally organised segments of the world of labour.

3.2.1. Ethnicity and the structural determinants of educational achievement

Recent studies have revealed the relative significance of ethnicity in generating persistent differences alongside other factors, especially gender and social class background (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000). These studies demonstrated that ethnic differences in education can strengthen gendered differences among students from similar social background, while a gendered understanding of ethnicity can reveal severe fault-lines in class-based cohesion and solidarity. Moreover, as John Ogbu has shown, recognised educational achievement and associated assessment procedures are but reflections of existing relations of power (Ogbu, 1991). Research has developed similar findings on the structural embedding of low educational performance and restricted employment opportunities of Roma youth in Central and Eastern Europe. Factors conducive to the ultimate exclusion from education (e.g. widespread poverty, early involvement of youth in generating income for subsistence, replication of the ‘ghetto culture’ in pockets of harsh segregation) have a systemic character and are reproduced over time (UNDP–ILO, 2005; Sirovátka, 2006; UNDP–FRA, 2012). Amid the post-1990 conditions of transition toward a market economy, employment of Roma has fallen dramatically due to their low education, lack of marketable vocations, disadvantageous regional dispersion and discrimination (Will, 2001; Emigh & Szelenyi, 2001; Ringold, Mitchell & Wilkens 2003; UNDP–ILO, 2005). At its turn, enduring lack of employment is a major source of the high occurrence of extreme poverty of Roma households that is intensified by residential and institutional segregation. To a large extent, widespread school segregation of Roma children and youth is a direct derivative of these conditions. However, the strong segregating tendencies within the educational system also add to extreme ethnic separation in the broader social environment of schools.

3.2.2. Institutional forms of segregation in schooling

Institutional forms of segregation include special schools for pupils with ‘developmental disabilities’, organisation of Roma ‘ghetto schools’, intra-school selecting into all-Roma classes, refusal of enrolment of Roma students in mainstream schools, as well as locally developed informal procedures of separation (Messing, 2014). By considering all forms together, a recent field research of the European Roma Rights Centre with retrospective data of 2004 documented the remarkable increase of segregation in and among schools to the detriment of Roma students (ERRC, 2015). As findings of the research show, whatever the particular forms are, the quality
of education provided to Roma is invariably inferior to the mainstream educational standards (Kende and Neményi 2006). Further, schools with a high concentration of Roma students are ill equipped and understaffed, particularly in the poorest areas. It follows that deprivation in education has become the major driving force behind the ‘poverty cycle’ of Roma: findings of longitudinal studies on the life chances of Roma youth show an ever closer link between inadequate schooling and the risk of permanent poverty (Kusa, 2002; Kertesi & Kézdi, 2005, 2011).

Although tracking is perhaps the most visible, it is certainly not the only form of radical selection with immediate consequences within the mechanism of compulsory education. Another phenomenon with massive impact on minority ethnic youth is selection according to ‘abilities’: children with special educational needs (defined usually in terms of lacking certain intellectual and behavioural traits that are necessary for successful participation) are referred to institutions apart from mainstream education. As supported by a wide range of studies, services in these separate institutions are, as a rule, poor in quality and quantity, and eventually impede advancement: the certificate received here qualifies students for entering only a seriously limited range of institutions of further education. Referral to these institutions usually follows a multi-step process with the participation of qualified psychologists, educators, teachers, often even social workers. However, the tests they apply are adjusted to the prevailing school requirements. Hence, it is not a matter of professional bias or prejudices but follows from the very nature of the applied tools that they tend to devalue the performance and ability of children with language difficulties and ‘foreign’ cultural background. In this way children from minority ethnic backgrounds ‘objectively’ gain a high probability of being sent to these institutions, whereby education according to special needs becomes a robust channel of ethnic/racial segregation and an impediment to receiving meaningful education.

This form of selection hits Roma children in the first place: though the proportions vary country by country, it is still a general phenomenon in the Central and Eastern European region that schools for children with special educational needs are filled up with Roma pupils and vice versa, the proportion of Roma pupils oriented into this segregated form of schooling is several times higher than the averages in the respective cohorts (Szalai et al., 2008). It has to be underlined that this form of schooling represents a dead-end that blocks students’ continuation on the secondary level and that also severely limits their accession to vocational training. This way special education opens a direct path to early school leaving, unemployment and poverty (Zentai 2009). However, the associations between ethnic segregation and poverty are broader.
As studies demonstrate, deprivation in education has become the major driving force behind the ‘poverty cycle’ of Roma: findings of longitudinal studies on the life chances of Roma youth show an ever closer link between inadequate schooling and the risk of permanent poverty (Kusa, 2002; Kertesi & Kézdi 2005, 2011).

3.2.3. Early School Leaving

It is widely recognized that there is a close association between early school leaving (ESL) and the marginalisation and frequently terminal social exclusion among the most vulnerable poor and minority youth groups across Europe. Yet, while ESL is intimately related to poverty and marginalisation everywhere, the immediate causes behind the phenomenon show great variation as well as do the ways of how societies respond with policies and measures within the school system and outside of it. Further, the diverse structural features of the educational systems condition ESL and the risks involved in it differ with regard to their longer-term implications on young people’s labour force participation and career outlook (Szalai & Kende, 2014).

During the past ten years, the share of early school leavers has been decreasing across the EU. In Hungary, the ESL rate has been fluctuating: the period between 2004 and 2006 was marked by stagnation, and then from 2006 to 2010 by decrease, and since 2010 by increase, i.e. the situation has become worse in recent years. In 2014, the ESL rate was around 11.4 per cent in Hungary, somewhat better than the EU average. Yet, looking at the NEET index\(^1\), Hungary has remained 3-4 per cent below the EU average. Given that the labour market position of people with secondary education is only slightly worse in Hungary than in the EU, and the position of those with higher education is equal to the European average, in Hungary the correlation between high youth unemployment rates and low education levels is even stronger than in the European Union as a whole. Since young people’s exclusion from the labour market on the ground of poor and inadequate education results in a high occurrence of terminal unemployment and the involved permanent inactive status, it follows that the primary policy goal of increasing the ratio of people in employment cannot be approached without tackling the problem of ESL.

Furthermore, interviews conducted by the Center for Policy Studies at the European, national and local levels confirm that ESL in Hungary is a Roma issue at its core. The extreme

\(^1\) The indicator on young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) provides information on young people aged 15 to 24 who meet the following two conditions: (a) they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the International Labor Organization definition) and (b) they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total population in the same age group and sex, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question ‘participation to education and training’. Data come from the European Union Labor Force Survey.
selectivity of the school system separates children according to their social and cultural backgrounds starting as early as the first years of schooling. Such a separation also involves selection along markedly different levels and qualities of their education. The lack of basic competences of the poorest and most vulnerable children – with a high proportion of Roma among them – determines their school career, their path to the vocational school and an increasing risk of dropping out.

Longer-term studies and qualitative inquiries into the individual, familial and institutional factors associated with early school leaving and the reproductive processes that these generate are missing from the map of educational and employment research. It follows that our knowledge about the problems of dropout and ESL is rather tentative and concentrates on case descriptions. Given this situation, studies in the broad field of educational disadvantages focus mainly on the measurable aspects of education and training, and attempt to draw trends mainly from macro-level statistical associations. According to research about the paths of becoming an early school leaver, the most typical antecedent is dropping out, most often, at the secondary school level at the age between 14 and 17.

Policy analysis prepared by the Center for Policy Studies within the Resl.eu FP7 research consortium revealed that there is no explicit ESL policy in Hungary. Policies preventing dropout do not exist, either. Although the definition of Early School Leaving (ESL)\(^2\) has been adopted by Hungary during the process of EU accession, it was not effectively adapted to actual educational policy making or academic scholarship. The unfavourable PISA results in 2000, 2003 and 2006 influenced the domestic education policy for introducing competence-based education as a main driver in education until 2010. This policy shift, along with desegregation efforts and early childhood interventions such as the introduction of the Sure Start programme and of complex neighbourhood interventions to prevent child poverty between 2002 and 2010 are likely to have had an effect on the prevention of dropout, and therefore on the decrease of ESL rates. With the 2010 change of government, efforts to implement social integration between Roma and non-Roma children did not end, but their backing by education governance stopped. It is likely that the educational policy decisions since 2010 led to the increase of the ESL rate as the new policies do not foster equity in education as a basis of preventing dropout. Moreover, a recent regulation\(^3\) gave green light to the renewed segregation of Roma children,

\(^2\) The indicator is defined as the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and who were not in further education or training during the last four weeks preceding the survey. The indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey.

including changes concerning the opening of church schools (a potential contributor to segregation\(^4\)), the decrease of compulsory school age, changes in vocational school system and the surrender of competence based teaching.

These processes have also been reflected upon by the European Commission, as mirrored in its country-specific recommendations of 2012 and 2013, which state that while Hungary was successful in reducing the yearly rates of ESL prior to 2010, certain elements of the new Act on Public Education involve the risks of increasing social inequalities, segregation and early school leaving (European Commission, 2012, 2013). Hungary has been encouraged to prepare a national strategy on ESL, to strengthen the inclusivity in primary and lower secondary education, especially for Roma students. The recommendations also underlined that transitions between the different stages of the school system as well as the transition to the labour market should be supported by governmental means (European Commission, 2013). The response of the Hungarian government was to issue a government resolution on preparing a national framework strategy on ESL.\(^5\)

It is worth noting that the rupture caused by the change of government in the trends for strengthening inclusion and reducing inequalities in education remain invisible on the level of strategies. The rhetoric of the strategies continues to be completely ‘in conformity with the EU and corresponds to the recommendations of other transnational organisations as well. The reasoning for the measures included in these documents apparently reflects international norms. At the same time, some of the experts involved in national policy debates claim that the measures adopted by the current government will have contrary effects to the recommendations.\(^6\) (…) In order to understand the context of the new regulations, it is important to know that the previous national educational policy – claimed by educational experts to be more ‘in conformity with the EU’ – was only partially successful because it lacked the necessary support. Although enjoying political consensus in professional circles, the politics of integration was unpopular among many teachers and parents and society and school staff

\(^4\) http://magyarnarancs.hu/publicisztika/viszik_ha_adjak_­az_onkormanyzati_iskolak_egyhazi_fenntartasba_­adasanak_konnyiteserol-­73836

\(^5\) http://www.kormany.hu/download/5/fe/20000/V%C3%A9gzetts%C3%A9g%20n%C3%A9lk%C3%BCli%20iskola­­elhagy%C3%A1s%20.pdf

\(^6\) It is envisaged that the participants in the Bridge I and II Programmes will be those remaining outside of vocational education and training; it is also argued that the three-year programme of vocational training is insufficient to provide marketable knowledge, while the lowering of the age limit of compulsory education will induce the expansion of a group of young people without proper education and training who most probably will face unemployment and poverty from the outset.
vehemently opposed its implementation. The present, right-wing Conservative government argues that it is responding to the ‘social demand’ when it refrains from forcing integration and places greater emphasis instead on the support services promoting remedial education. Yet it is too early to determine to what extent the results of the two political approaches will differ in terms of dropout.

In accepting that there is a very strong connection between ESL and the extremely low level of school competences, the drop in the PISA results for 2012 predicts a negative tendency for the future (OECD, 2013). The general worsening of Hungarian students’ performance levels (especially in mathematics) is an alarming trend. It implies that the number of students most threatened by the risk of becoming early school leavers will strongly increase in the coming years.

In tackling the ESL problem, all the interviewees of the Center for Policy Studies agreed on some cornerstones: the interventions should target all important aspects of ESL in a complex, simultaneous and coordinated way; in addition, there should be a focus on early childhood programmes and the very first years of schooling, with attention to the early warning signs that make ESL probable to occur. While their full consensus indicates the possibility of a common political agreement on goals and aims as the foundations of a potential long-term educational policy, in terms of the immediate practical implications they generally agreed that without the proper means for implementation and financing, the entire effort would stay at the rhetorical level.” (Szalai & Kende 2014)

3.2.4. Rural education: school closures and the challenge of securing quality

A large share of the Roma population in Central and Eastern Europe lives in rural areas, in small settlements. Their educational prospects are hence strongly affected by the policies targeting the availability and the quality of local schools in these settlements. Yet, academic research on rural education in Europe is scant7. It features occasionally in rural studies journals as an example of the role local institutions play in stabilizing settlements, or alternatively, their disappearance as a contributory factors to out-migration and settlement decline. Sometimes it makes an appearance in studies concerned with regional development, especially the differences in terms of income, opportunity and general prosperity. The third set of common questions address issues of quality and equity; in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, owing to factors

7 The topic is much more developed in the United States, Canada and Australia where there are long standing academic journals devoted to the subject (Lyson: 2002, Oncescu and Giles: 2014.).
we will discuss shortly, many of the schools with the highest number of low income families or minorities are located in the rural areas, and so questions concerning segregation and anti-discrimination tend to feature high in the academic and the grey practitioner works. Indeed the importance that rural schools can have for the quality of life and continuity of a settlement means that there is a fair amount of grey literature on the topics, with reports being commissioned by foundations, Education Support Program of the Open Society Foundations, for example, by government research departments, the Hungarian institute for Education Research, for example, as well as think tanks and policy research centres. These can take a much policy oriented approach assessing the administrative and financial difficulties that rural schools face or the need to introduce human rights techniques to prevent and reverse increasing signs of minority exclusion within and between schools.

Schooling has a significant role to play in developing the sense of belonging, not only for the students and their parents, but also for other villagers. The school represents a singular site for developing social network ties, both of the internal bonding variety, but also of the linking and bridging variants (Kovacs, 2012). Several studies highlight the fact that in the out-migration of many professional and salaried villagers, the school can sometimes serve as one of the few remaining institutions with skills that can be used for the wider settlement development. Kovach and Kucervova (2007) for example note that many of the so called ‘project class’ that help in the drafting of local territorial development programs are in some way connected to educational fields. In this regard there is recurring theme of the need to maintain rural school as a vital contributor to continuing viability and vitality of the rural areas. As one British researcher put it ‘without the school, the village would die’ (quoted in Kovacs, 2012:113).

The closing down of small rural schools is closely connected to demographic changes in rural areas, with the shrinking and aging of the rural population affecting many parts of rural CEE. However, it can also be tied to changes in the responsibilities of local governments and the continuing debate over the ideal locus for making decisions concerning public services. In an earlier study on regional development, we noted how one consequence of the fall of the socialist system was the decentralization of administrative decision-making, and, with it, a concomitant rise in the number of village schools (Cartwright & Kovacs 2007). In the early 1990s, having a separate village school and kindergarten was an indicator of autonomy and prosperity. However, it was not long before the practical and financial ramifications began to trouble local self-governments. As younger people unable to find work moved out in search of better opportunities, local authorities found it increasingly difficult to pay for local kindergartens and
small schools. Administrations faced the dual problems of falling per capita central transfers and the drop in local tax and other own revenues. In Hungary, village kindergartens were the first to be closed down.\(^8\) This has been a troubling tendency, as international academic research highlights the important potential of early education in kindergarten to promote the educational achievement of disadvantaged and minority children. Also, the youngest children benefit most from having services available near their homes.

In respect of village schools however, greater efforts have been made to keep them open. Cartwright and Kovacs showed how in the context of changing regional administrations, successive governments sought to promote greater co-operation between neighbouring authorities to collaborate, for example, the state supplied extra funds for joint activities and maintaining shared facilities, whether this was specialist teaching staff, sports facilities, or vehicles. In the context of severe economic shocks though, the impact of these measures usually did little to avert outright closure of marginal schools, and there was inevitably a concentration of services and an overall reduction in the number of rural schools (Cartwright & Kovacs 2007).

The specific contribution of school closure to rural decline is a difficult to assess. One of the first systematic attempts to investigate the reality of small settlement schools in Hungary complained that the topic had become a symbol for entrenched and polar political positions (NIPE, 2006). From the perspective of the conservative, nationalist right, rural schools were at the heart of the community, symbolizing much more than simply education. They had to be protected even if this did mean making extra payments and overlooking some of the real problems of low quality and increasing ethnicity based segregation. Village headmasters and teachers were an important asset maintaining traditions and often being close to political leaders. In contrast, there were those who complained that the schools represented a lot of what was going wrong with rural areas, they were unable to provide a decent enough level of education and so were driving people away from settlements. For reasons that were not of their own making, they were unable to recruit the right kind of teachers who could inspire children and give confidence to their parents; instead, classrooms were in poor state of repair, teachers were covering classes with a huge range of ages and educational levels and inevitably, this became the principal reasons for internal migration. Rather than do their utmost to defend the

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\(^8\) 1995 represented the high point in terms of children in kindergarten, when there was 401,000 children registered in place. Since then, the numbers have fallen by approximately 10,000 every year, until 2007 when there were around 327,000 children in registered kindergartens. Since then the number of children remained at around this level, with some short term fluctuations. Central Statistical Office, long time data series ‘Education’ https://www.ksh.hu/docs/eng/xstadat/xstadat_long/h_wds001a.html
status quo, some of the left critique concluded that the system of small settlement schools was unsustainable and that merger and closure was the best option.

Radó and his colleagues found that the position in Hungary was not quite so straightforward. At the time of his study, 2006, there were 1,220 small village schools with a total of 111,352 students. The average student population was 91 and the average population of the villages concerned was 1,022. However, contrary to received wisdom, these schools were neither significantly more expensive than their urban counterparts nor were they poorer in educational outcomes, once this had been controlled for basic socio-economic starting points. More specifically, the study revealed that ‘[i]f the minimum number of students per school was raised to 150, the national educational costs would be reduced by 2 per cent; if the minimum was raised to 200, there would be an overall saving of 5 per cent. This relatively modest saving would require four to five hundred rural schools to be closed down’ (NIPE, 2006:8).

This did not mean that rural schools should be treated in exactly the same way as urban ones, the study found that recruiting professional staff for rural schools was generally harder than recruiting for urban schools. However, according to the authors, this might be alleviated if the training of would-be teachers gave them a better insight into the realities and challenges of rural schools, as well as more conventional incentives such as preferential pay scales and clear promotion possibilities. At that time, trainee teachers tended to gain their practical experience in larger, better-equipped urban schools. Very few teachers had their work experiences in small rural schools. Changes in rural settlements meant that rural teachers occupied a special position, which could be part social worker, fundraiser, grant writer, event organiser, and/or career adviser. Whilst locals might expect and be grateful for teachers who accepted these additional responsibilities, as the authors pointed out, this could often significantly reduce the pool of willing graduates.

A study commissioned by the Education Support Program of the Open Society Foundations sought to investigate how greater parental participation in schooling could influence quality. The study was very ambitious covering eleven countries in South East and Eastern Europe, interviewing thousands of parents, teachers, principals and officials. The aim was to see whether schools that were more open to parents getting involved could show better results from those that didn’t. This has particular resonance in rural areas and there were some interesting findings. In terms of willingness to be involved there were higher rates in rural areas than urban areas across the countries. However there were also significant variations in the activities that
parents said they would be involved with, for example, there was much higher willingness to volunteer time and money to help maintaining the fabric of rural schools compared to urban ones, however, there was less interest in getting involved in more educational activities, such as organising extra-curricular activities. There seemed to be a strong reluctance to intrude on areas seen as the school’s responsibility, even if there were serious misgivings over the amount of homework, the cost of materials and the pressure from assessments. In terms of differing contexts, it was clear that in many rural areas, the grandparents were the main carers for children, whilst one or sometimes both parents would be working abroad, this was especially the case in Romania, Moldova and Bulgaria. Grandparents admitted that they found it difficult to support their grandchildren in schools, not knowing the subjects as well as having a traditional and sometimes deferential attitude to teachers and school principals (Durbin, Miljevic & Pop, 2009).

In the context of growing territorial divides, there have been several counter initiatives, some coming from the local population, others from churches and civic associations. Kovacs looked at the fate of two village schools as the local population sought to take over their running with differing outcomes. Again, the topic of alternative non-state involvement in rural education has been controversial and closely connected to relations between majority and minority populations. In some cases, the establishment of new schools has clearly been an act of separation between the two groups. Kovacs shows how local populations on both sides have been able to mobilise social network resources in their favour, appealing to differing parties and using differing justifications. In terms of non-parent involvement in schools, faith based institutions have become prevalent in a number of countries, often with additional support from the central government (Váradi, 2010). These can be important factors in reducing rural inequalities at the same time as contributing towards them, especially where religious affiliation is used as a proxy measure for ethnic identity.

3.2.5. Exploiting the potential of early education for equity

The situation of Roma communities poses a systemic challenge to rendering suitable educational opportunities for Roma children – claims a recent communication of the European Commission on Early Childhood Education and Care (2011a). In their case, poor command of the language spoken by the majority and officially used for instruction in schools appears as

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only one of the problems that constitute the huge disadvantages that Roma pupils are faced with when entering education. Although their needs for support are greater, the participation rates of Roma children in early childhood development programs are significantly lower than for the majority populations. The Commission document states that expanding these opportunities is a key policy challenge across the European Union. At the European Union level, the governments of the member states are being encouraged to take measures for improving the availability and accessibility of childcare services (European Commission, 2011a).

In Hungary, similar to the experience of other countries, an important socio-economic gap is present in the skills of children from different backgrounds, which is already present at the start of primary school (Bánfi, 1999; Vári, 2003; Józsa, 2004). There is even evidence that this gap is already present at the start of preschool (Surányi, 2010). This gap is growing further throughout primary school. The unadjusted Roma – non-Roma achievement gaps observable in primary school can be entirely traced back to socio-economic factors (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2010); thus, if there is a Roma – non-Roma skill gap observable at the start of preschool, it is also most likely due to socio-economic factors.

The Hungarian primary and secondary school system, with free school choice, segregation tendencies and large quality differences between schools has the clear potential to exacerbate initial inequalities. Quality differences may change with the current re-nationalisation of the primary and secondary school system, although free school choice remains. Still, attempts to make schools more inclusive could be coupled by early childhood education policies to prevent rather than remedy school readiness differences between children.

From the international evidence, it appears that the universal public preschool system of Hungary can play a huge role in preventing the formation of later achievement gaps. Hungary operates a mature, up-to-scale early education system that is universal and public. The major strength of the Hungarian system is its culturally embedded, developmentally appropriate curriculum (OECD, 2004), which is not narrowly focused on academic skills but adopts a whole child focus. Preschool teachers are expected to have specialized BA degrees. Furthermore, Hungary has a unique system of nurse home visiting coupled with comprehensive public health services and unconditional child allowances that can all contribute to improving the situation of disadvantaged children.

Surányi (2010) also highlights that children from multiply disadvantaged families lag behind in terms of certain socio-emotional competences at their entry into preschool.
There is empirical evidence that disadvantaged students who spend more time in Hungarian pre-primary education show skill gains (Molnár, 2011; Kertesi & Kézdi, 2012), and these skill gains are higher than the skill gains of middle class children, although some of this evidence is only correlational. Still, the problem of unequal access to kindergarten places closely linked to socio-economic background has been evident since quite a long time (Kertesi & Kézdi 2012).

Still, service quality may be lower than expected, and hence the equalizing potential of the early education system is likely not fully exploited. Teachers hold BA degrees, but they constitute only 20% of the total workforce (OECD, 2003), and staff with lower or no training constitutes the other 80%. Remunerations are low. Staff to child ratios are lower than ideal. Disparities between the fiscal capacities of municipalities can have a substantial impact on service quality. Preschool curricula may be well suited for the average child, but less suitable for groups with a concentration of disadvantaged children (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2006).

Furthermore, the potential for the effectiveness of preschool may be underutilized by the lack of synergies between preschool and related services. Hungary falls short of meeting the Barcelona target when it comes to education and care services to children under three, and the majority of slots for under threes are in the relatively more developed settlements and serve children of working, better-off parents. There is a lack of coordination between the different services targeting disadvantaged children; specialized services for special educational needs are frequently in low supply in small rural settlements. Furthermore, the focus of the system is more on the child and less on its family and its community, although outreach to parents has been identified as a main causal pathway of program impacts in the literature. Recently a regulation was introduced to address unequal access by making early education compulsory, but it did not address most of the underlying causes of unequal access, such as barriers to affordability of access that are quite low but still are important constraints for the most disadvantaged families, or any potential underlying factors of low demand.

11 In larger and better-off settlements, nurseries serve children under three. While children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with many siblings have in principle priority access, in practice places are mostly occupied by better-off middle class children with working parents.

12 The small-scale, low budget and low intensity Hungarian Sure Start program complements the Hungarian early childhood service provision in three important ways: it involves parents, reaches out to underserved children younger than three and aims at the integration of education and social services. However, there is no evaluation available on the program yet.

13 Art. 8.2 of the 2011. CXC law on national public education, in force on 1st September 2015. Children above the age of three have to attend kindergarten for at least four hours a day. Children can be exempted on the request of parents by the local notaries up until the age of five. Children can attend family daycare until the age of five, instead of public kindergartens. Such daycare providers typically have smaller groups, and ask for attendance fee, thus it is not likely that disadvantaged children would opt for this opportunity. The government plans to phase out family daycare provision.
Free meals have been available to disadvantaged children since 2003. Yet affordability for disadvantaged families is still constrained by indirect and additional costs such as transportation, provision of clothing, contribution to the costs of educational and sanitary materials, fruit and extracurricular activities. The conditional cash transfer attached to kindergarten attendance that was in place for a few years and was meant to incentivize attendance for disadvantaged families and to partly cover these costs has been scrapped together with the regulation that made attendance obligatory from the age of three.

Some parts of the country are characterized by a relative oversupply of kindergarten slots, and other parts by a relative undersupply of places (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2012). Lack of slots, or even the full lack of local provision is the most common in the settlements having less than 2000 inhabitants. These small, rural, relatively poorer settlements have a population that is more likely to face socio-economic disadvantages. In settlements with a relative shortage of slots, disadvantaged children have been so far effectively excluded from service provision on the basis of the unemployment of their parents and on the basis of their parents raising younger siblings (Borsos-Repka, 2009; Vágó, 2002).

In kindergartens with lack of slots, space, materials or teachers, expansion of access can lead to a deterioration of structural aspects of quality, to lower process quality, and to lower than expected gains in terms of child development (cognitive, social and emotional skills relevant for educational success). Depending on the degree of this problem, even negative child development consequences can ensue, especially in the social and emotional domains of development.

Policy has also paid limited attention so far to the demand-side factors of the shorter kindergarten attendance of disadvantaged children that may be also rooted in the problematic relationships between the parents of disadvantaged and Roma children and the staff in kindergarten institutions. These problematic relationships may be rooted in the mistrust resulting from potentially different cultural values and expectations (Havas, 2004; Pik 2002). If

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14 International evidence on kindergarten attendance shows that due to this conditional cash transfer, the share of disadvantaged and Roma children attending kindergarten has increased in Hungary compared to attendance rates in other CEE countries (REF 2012). The evaluation of this conditional cash transfer program by Kertesi and Kézdi (2012) shows that the policy indeed had a positive impact on enrolment, albeit with some deadweight costs. However, it is unfortunate that it was not coupled with the provision of additional supply and parenting outreach.

15 Havas (2004) highlights the mutual distrust between kindergartens and families of disadvantaged children that ensues when kindergartens put moral blame on parents for actual or expected kindergarten problems with their children or when kindergartens perceive problems of disadvantage as ethnic, minority problems, independent of the share of Roma population living in the settlement.
compulsory access worsens service quality and there are no targeted policies in place to improve the outreach of early childhood services to the families, already problematic relationships may worsen further due to the extra burdens on kindergarten teachers and due to the perception of lower quality on the side of parents.

In order to ease the shortage of slots in kindergartens, the government has recently made the rules of school enrolment stricter, changing the decision-making procedure on delayed school entry. Yet some research findings suggest that flexible school entry has been so far beneficial especially for disadvantaged children (Hámori & Köllő, 2010), among them for boys (Molnár, 2014\(^\text{16}\)). Thus, insofar the decreased flexibility in delayed school entry is due to the compulsory enrolment into kindergarten at the age of three, this regulation may then have a small negative indirect and unintended effect on the skill development of disadvantaged children.

Altogether, it is clear that there is a danger that the expected benefits of increased kindergarten access for disadvantaged children will not be fully realized. Better policy knowledge about the quality of preschool education, its determinants and its consequences could help to design policies that prevent this.

Since achievement gaps can be traced back to socio-economic disadvantage (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2010), in principle, there is no reason to discuss the issue of the ethnic dimension of early childhood education and care policy. Targeting of any public policy interventions is only feasible on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage, as it is difficult to obtain reliable data on ethnicity. However, there is also an agreement in the literature that teaching of Roma minority culture should be mainstreamed into public education and that teachers should receive in-service training on Roma culture as well. This would bolster the identity of Roma children, and help teachers to better address the problems Roma children might face. Some argue for further Roma-specific measures to improve educational attainment of Roma children, such as the provision of educational assistants, salary top-ups for educators of Roma children, in-service training, support to secondary education (financial support, dormitory provision, tutorial system) and prevention of school drop-out (Havas, Kemény & Liskó, 2001).

Public policy could reach out further to better support disadvantaged and Roma children under the age of three. The Sure Start program aims to support children from the birth on and involves support to the families. It remains to be seen what the impacts of this program are and whether

\(^{16}\) Unpublished, results as presented by the author in December 2014 at the Széchenyi István College for Advanced Studies.
it could or should be scaled up. Less specifically targeted programs could provide health, socio-economic and family benefits too. Interventions to support women in childbearing age and pregnant women could have substantial impacts through influencing foetal development. The nurse-visiting program could be assessed and improved, and better linked to the system of kindergartens. Unconditional and conditional income transfers have a role to play, as shown by the international evidence (Almond & Currie, 2010). Policies targeting parents and educators would have to bear in mind the impact of poverty on the developing brain and create interventions that do not only aim at providing additional cognitive stimuli to children but help in the buffering of the impact of stress on their cognitive development (Shonkoff, 2010).

3.2.6. Prejudices against the Roma in schools and the potential role of educational policies

Sociological studies on the intergroup attitudes of the Hungarian teenagers consistently find that the magnitude of prejudice is highest against the Roma minority, having a level of negativity around 60% across the studies (Barcy et al., 1996; Szabó & Örkény, 1996, 1998; Ligeti, 2003; Murányi, 2006). In the study of Szabó and Örkény (1996), more than half of the respondents (58%), in the last year of elementary school, answered that they would not like to have Roma desk-mates. The survey of Szabó and Örkény (1998) of students in the last year of secondary school found that in open questions, Roma were usually mentioned in relation with negative content and stereotypes. According to the findings of Barcy et al. (1996), prejudice against the Roma in Hungary in the nineties has been comparable to the prejudice against the black population in the United States in the 1950s. Ligeti (2003) found that those students who believed that Roma people can be labelled as Roma based on a distinctive lifestyle they lead, were also the ones who most severely rejected social contact with Roma. At the same time, those students who gave a liberal answer, leaving ethnic identification to the individual, had the smallest social distance from the Roma.

Parents can be considered primary agents of socialisation regarding the intergroup attitudes of their children. Indeed, Ligeti (2003) found that the parenting style preferred and experienced by the respondents proved to significantly influence attitudes towards the Roma: while the trust- and freedom-based parenting style is related to tolerance towards the Roma, the authoritarian, punishment-focused parenting style goes hand in hand with robust rejection and prejudice.

Yet the above-mentioned sociological studies yielded somewhat mixed findings concerning the role of socio-economic background on the level of children’s prejudice. Murányi (2006) looks
at nine surveys: in some, the classical pattern could be reconfirmed having a negative relationship between the parents’ status and the child’s level of prejudice. In other surveys, the relationship rather resembled an inverted U, meaning that children of the poorest and richest parents had less prejudice than children of parents with an average income level. The same tendency was found based on the educational level of the parents: in cases where the parents had a low or high educational level the adolescents were found to have less prejudice than those whose parents had an average educational level. However, socio-economic background accounts only for a small share of the variation in prejudice.

In Murányi (2006) the results of the nine surveys were inconsistent concerning the effect of the settlement type on the level of prejudice. It is important to note for the present study that results concerning the level of prejudice in Budapest compared to the other parts of the country were contradictory, as both higher and lower levels of prejudice were found in the capital. In general, socio-economic indicators were found not to greatly impact the level of prejudice of the Hungarian adolescents. Nevertheless, the detailed analyses of the socio-economic and cultural background of the respondents revealed certain milieus, where prejudice against minority groups was more likely.

According to the empirical survey findings, the peer composition of the school class proved to play a role in the attitudes of the teenagers. The presence of Roma classmates was found to reduce the level of prejudice of the students. Ligeti (2003) points out that the decline is conditional, since the effect either remains constant or the tendency can even turn around when there are more than two or three Roma students in class, which may be due to the different efforts of teachers in these two types of classes to create a tolerant atmosphere. According to Ligeti (2003), class teachers’ activity does play a role in fostering tolerance among their students.

Clearly, the peer composition of school classes differs by secondary school type. In the survey of Szabó and Örkény (1998), there were no significant differences in the rejection of the Roma by students by different educational tracks across different secondary school types. Yet Ligeti (2003) found that the most tolerant students were overrepresented in the most prestigious grammar schools and students harbouring relatively high levels of prejudice against the Roma were found in the less prestigious secondary school types (Ligeti, 2003).
Both Barcy et al. (1996) and Szabó & Őrkény (1996) highlight the dysfunctionality of schools in the civic socialization of the students. Barcy et al., (1996) identify ignorance and lack of knowledge as the main cause of negativity against minority groups. In the survey of Szabó and Őrkény (1996), knowledge about the minorities living in Hungary was found to be unrelated to the level of intergroup prejudice in adolescence. This suggests that the transmission of information about minorities in the school has not been a sufficient means for fostering tolerance towards minority groups.

Considering the potential influence of teachers, it is striking that a survey initiated by the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights found high levels of anti-Roma prejudice among future elementary school teachers (Kaltenbach, 2001). Similar results were found by Mária Vásárhelyi who surveyed a non-representative sample of 500 future history teachers at various Hungarian universities in 2003 (Vásárhelyi, 2004). Besides a high level of prejudice against the Roma (61% of the respondents agreed with negative stereotypes regarding the Roma), anti-Semitism was also found to be widespread, whereas future history teachers had surprisingly poor knowledge about important events of the Hungarian and world history. Some years later Vásárhelyi found similar results among a representative sample of 700 Hungarians in their twenties: 47% of the respondents were labelled as militant racists and a further 30% had more negative than positive answers about the Roma (Vásárhelyi, 2009).

According to Murányi (2006) and Murányi & Szabó (2007), a plausible explanation for why prejudice and exclusion-oriented national identity are more likely to be present among lower status teenagers can be based on the concept of ritual density of Case and Fuchs (1989), which postulates that prejudice should not be only understood as an attitude but rather more complexly as a life form, influenced by the intergroup experiences and the size of the social networks of the adolescents. High ritual density is characterized by frequent interactions within a closed group characterized by a restricted linguistic code, acceptance of traditional moral codes, limited knowledge of socio-cultural traditions of other groups and limited outside group interactions. Such a pattern can be observed among lower status youth living at small-sized settlements with relatively narrow self-reported social networks (Murányi & Szabó 2007). For these young people, identification with the norms of their narrow social group is more important than for youth living a life form characterized by lower ritual density. In a context of high ritual density, intolerance and exclusion are more likely to be present.

17 In a non-representative study of 60 practicing elementary school teachers who teach one or more Roma children, Bordács (2001) also found that the Roma were the most rejected ethnic group and that teachers had robust prejudice against the Roma. Around every fourth teacher indicated that they would prefer not to teach Roma children at all and the same proportion believed in the genetic cause of the relatively low success of Roma children in Hungarian schools. The survey used the questionnaire from the earlier presented study of Barcy et al (1996).
density, group norms are reproduced as individual norms and are not questioned; contacts with outside groups do not lead to a questioning of group norms but rather to their reproduction. It is not entirely clear how school interventions could play a role in breaking down high ritual density.

In the studies on the attitudes of the Hungarian youth the measurement of prejudice seemed not to play a central role and methodological dilemmas of measuring prejudice are not discussed. In some of the surveys, teenagers’ agreement with stereotypes could just as well indicate prejudice as familiarity with the stereotype. Furthermore, the studies did not attempt to discover what prejudice means for the adolescents. A correlation has been established between a rather nationalistic, exclusion-based Hungarian identity and the prejudice against the Roma and other outgroups, but further understanding of the nature of the prejudice of the Hungarian youth would be valuable. The wider social context and the norms related to prejudice or racism were not included in these studies, neither the investigation of the role of close friendships in the intergroup attitudes of the teenagers\(^{18}\) (Váradi 2014).

A recent analysis by Hajdú, Kertesi and Kézdi (2015) looked more in detail at how inter-ethnic contacts within classrooms in the form of friendships and hostility might interact with achievement (measured by GPA) and have an eventual impact on peer acceptance. Roma students with higher GPA were found to be more popular and less refused than Roma students with lower GPA, the data showed no evidence for negative effects of “acting white”. According to the findings of the study, higher exposure of Roma students to non-Roma classmates benefits high-GPA Roma students in terms of the composition of their friendships but hurts low-GPA Roma students by decreasing their overall number of friends and by increasing their overall number of refusals. A tentative policy-relevant conclusion of the study can be that education policies should aim both at increasing exposure of Roma and non-Roma students to each other (more equal distribution of Roma students across classrooms) and raising Roma achievement at the same time, as a joint focus on these two goals is more likely to produce social cohesion than policies that aim at one aspect of the two.

### 3.2.7. Identity formation, schooling and education policies

Maltreatment and degradation in education carry a range of further severe implications. The accumulated negative experiences contribute to Roma students’ frequent oppositional stand and

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\(^{18}\) In the studies of Barcy et al. (1996) and Szabó & Örkény (1996; 1998), respondents were asked whether or not they personally knew members of various minority groups.
their turning away from schooling. Cultures of resistance embrace other behavioural manifestations than sheer opposition: estrangement from schooling among the youth from the most deprived groups of Roma is generating apathy and a soundless rejection of schools that is often coupled with absenteeism and truancy. True, declining regular school attendance is often less motivated by neglect than following from the pressing needs of early entrance to work which, in turn, is a dictate of deep poverty (Szalai, 2011).

The weakness of familial aspirations in serving as potent drives for upward mobility is shown in the educational careers of a large group of Roma adolescents whose families are deprived from even the minima of the necessary social and cultural capitals to back up their desires. These young people often internalize their parents’ will for advancing in education; nevertheless, the profound needs of mere sustenance overwrite all such aspirations and they gradually develop a culture of disaffection toward schooling. Quantitative and qualitative data of the East-West comparative research project ‘Ethnic Differences in Education and Diverging Prospects for Urban Youth in an Enlarged Europe’ (EDUMIGROM) show that neither the familial transmission of deeply ingrained values nor the attraction of the surrounding conditions are enough on their own to assist students’ successful educational career; rather, it is a favourable constellation of these factors that can be considered to open the doors for ethnic minority youth for successful advancement toward social integration. However, ambitions and aspirations of Roma youth and their families for social integration often meet hostility and refusal on the part of the non-Roma majority, whereby inclinations for turning away from the wider social relations and institutions and motivations for an ethnic enclosure may become intensified (Szalai, 2011).

The conditions of identity development of Roma adolescents are distinctively hard in the ‘new’ democracies of Central Europe. Concerning one’s self-perceived position in society, the post-socialist transformation has brought about general feelings of uncertainty, regardless of people’s objective conditions. Moreover, corruption of the safe yardsticks for self-determination has proven an enduring experience affecting the subsequent generations and thus perceived as an all-societal condition of the new era. Widespread impressions of the fragility of attained status, and the perceived injustices that are associated with them, undermine the socio-political process of distilling the universal contents of citizenship: the arising fierce competition and heated social struggles conclude in a fragmentation of the privileges, rights, and entitlements implied in the notion. The unceasing fights for securing advantages through hierarchically determined institutional channels have produced an effective bifurcation of social rights that confine Roma
and the poor to second-rate services and provisions often with racialised substances (Szalai, 2013). The emerging racialised fault-lines in all spheres of social practice leave their marks on how young members of the ethnic minority comprehend their position and how they see their future perspectives. Despite variations in the strategies of identity formation, the self-perception of young Roma reflects a high level of stigma threat and deeply internalised stigma consciousness: ‘us’ and ‘them’ are not only sharply distinguished in their self-reflection, but are seen as belonging to two different worlds that are in hostile relations to each other and that may invigorate even life-threatening attempts on the part of extremist groups in the dominant society. True, Roma teenagers often express a hope for becoming accepted and integrated, but such imaginations are always articulated with a great deal of reservation due to the profound uncertainties beyond one’s control. The conditions of a healthy identity development are further endangered by ruptures in the public discourse and the flaws of democratic notions of unconditional human rights. It follows that being Roma carries exclusionary contents from outside that allow for acknowledging ethnic belonging only with reference to one’s own community, while it often implies abnegation, shame, or angry opposition if articulated in relation to the outer world (Neményi & Vajda, 2014). Such a dualist self-perception becomes in itself the source of threats and disruptive taboos. In an interplay of the outer pressures for self-denial and the liberating defensive responses of the community, frail ties to the majority often become even weaker which, in turn, give rise to tendencies of apathetic enclosure into one’s own group as the only entity providing safety – even if such a refuge is rendered at the price of abandoning all desires for a better life (Zentai, 2009).

Experiences about the causes and motives behind being separated on ethnic grounds further refine the picture. Although ethnic segregation is a widespread phenomenon with discriminative contents that cuts across the East–West divide, its implications on the identity development of ethnic minority youths are far from being uniform. If not accompanied with exclusionary practices in other domains, the simple fact of living in a residentially segregated community barely impacts the self-esteem of adolescents from ethnic minority backgrounds: being compensated by free access to schools and a wide range of the amenities of urban life, they tend to internalise the positive facets of a closed community that provides solidarity and protection. The situation is different if segregation becomes institutionalised in schooling as the major arena of teenage daily life: in these frequent cases, the stigma of negative distinctions is inescapably implicated, and consequently, the perceived stigma threat becomes a constituent of the identities of those affected. However, a lot depends on how such a threat is counterbalanced by the freedoms of choice and movement that allow for developing certain positive associations
with being distinguished as the ‘other’. Nevertheless, the forceful ethnic segregation of Roma largely deprives of such freedoms. The EDUMIGROM research identified the most harmful formations of intra-school selection in those exclusionary ways of streaming and tracking that tend to devalue ethnic minority youths by attaching shortcomings as traits of the ‘ethnic personality’ to stigma. In such cases personal degradation becomes an important constituent of the self, and thus the destructive tendencies in identity development hardly can be effectively countervailed, even by the principally preserved entitlements that are entailed by legal rights.

Finally, the imprints of ethnic separation on identity development significantly differ, whether the given state of affairs has been forged by the will of the ethnic community, or on the contrary, whether it has been forcefully created from outside, most often by powerful groups and potent agents of the majority. Voluntary separation – a phenomenon frequently experienced in Muslim communities – usually entails the recognition of the group in question, and is seen by its young members as a symbol of strength and as a source of hope for upward mobility in society-at-large. By contrast, involuntary separation characterising the state of the Roma youth – be it motivated by exclusion and/or by openly oppressive conducts – is usually a source of internalised self-degradation that is coupled with a high level of stigma consciousness. Of course, individual techniques to cope might differ, but feelings of endangerment hardly ever can be put to rest (Neményi & Vajda, 2014).

An important finding of the EDUMIGROM study is that, by the age of 14–16, young people from ‘visibly’ distinguished ethnic backgrounds have gained an impressive experience of being ‘othered’ in a variety of minoritising forms that often involve degradation by fellow students belonging to the dominant majority or another (relatively more resourceful) ethnic minority group. ‘Othering’ practices are especially widespread and frequent in the schools and their environment in Central and Eastern Europe. Here interethnic prejudices and attempts at devaluation seem to be integral part of life at school, though the manifestations of ‘othering’, if compared to impressions from the outside world, appear to be softer, and often are dressed as youthful teasing as if impregnated by a certain degree of cohesion (Feischmidt, 2014). Nevertheless, even such milder expressions of abjection induce a feeling of being imperilled by exclusionary separation, especially if one belongs to the most disadvantaged segments of the community. In these latter cases, experienced devaluation comes as a mixture of negative charges against poverty and ethnic minority belonging that are amalgamated into a stone-like ideology that serves to justify refusal on the ground of culturally framed, unappeasable stereotypes of the dominating majority.
The conflicting character of interethnic peer relations in schools in the countries of post-socialist transformation manifests itself in the high occurrence of bullying driven by ethnic hostility, and also in the infrequent accounts of true friendships that would transgress the sharply set ethnic boundaries. The unceasing feeling of Roma adolescents of being looked down and excluded by their peers from the majority comes through in their countervailing efforts to embellish simple interethnic acquaintances as genuine friendships. Teachers from majority backgrounds often share the involved prejudiced views that many of them try to compensate by a supportive, though deeply paternalistic, orientation toward their minority students. However, the research revealed a number of occurrences of offensive and hostile relating by the schools’ staff to children and their families: the latter pattern, reflecting intense anti-Roma sentiments among the dominant groups, proves to be rather frequent in segregated schools in the Central European communities (Kostlán, 2014).

3.2.8. Concluding remarks on educational and social inequalities in the Central and Eastern Europe

By drawing an overall balance-sheet of Roma educational experiences, one has to underline as a major conflict that while acceptance of the importance of schooling has become an important aspect of Roma involvement in education this new and welcome trend has been accompanied by no reduction – or in some regards: actual increase – of tendencies of discrimination and segregation. It is important to note that such an increased departure between Roma needs and their satisfaction has been a shared history among the post-socialist countries with sizeable Roma population. Although reforms in education have taken different steps in them, all of these reforms proved incapable of turning around segregation and to assure equal opportunities (ERRC, 2015). Such tendencies characterize all levels from kindergarten to secondary education, although the risks at stake and people’s efforts to reduce them seem to become intensified upward the institutional ladder. The failure to reduce segregation and maltreatment of Roma students is in itself a source of conflicts and frustration. Although perhaps the voice of Roma has become somewhat more heard in education than a generation before, the weakness of their interest representation concludes in an unbroken reproduction of their subordination and exclusion (Kóczé, 2012).

In Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, the political opening invited critical thinkers, emerging civil society actors, and enlightened governmental bodies to explore key agendas of the human rights’ tradition in a European (and global) context. The economic decline generated by the collapse of whole sectors of the economy, cutbacks in welfare provisions, and the
encroachment of the global capitalism after the fall of the Berlin Wall started to shape new inequalities in society. Low educational and social capital did not allow most Roma to preserve their fragile positions in the labour market and the forces of the free market rapidly pushed them to the margin of the stock of housing. Some minority political organizations and Roma grassroots organizations also started to emerge in almost all of the countries concerned. But their actions and interventions could not balance the intersecting forces of social marginalization. Furthermore, freedom of speech not only brought plurality, debates, and deliberations but freedom of expression of prejudices and discriminatory language as well. The European Union accession process put the issue of the inclusion of minorities, and specifically the cause of the Roma, high on the political agenda. It also implanted the language of anti-discrimination in critical, legal, and policy discourses. At the same time, it has also generated social and political resentment towards minority protection, Roma inclusion, and the spirit of multiculturalism. In a condensed historical time, the intellectual and policy proposals of multiculturalism arrived in this part of the world together with its harsh critiques.

In general, there are shifts and cleavages between two major positions to frame the problem of social exclusion of the Roma. One uses the notion of ethnic discrimination and minority rights: the other refers to socio-economic (class) deprivation and welfare or anti-poverty principles. Professional convictions and political considerations may contest or reinforce one another when positions are taken and voiced. Of course there are scholarly and critical accounts that argue that the two axes are inextricably intertwined in processes of exclusion, and thus policy interventions should combine a dual approach. The political contexts, interethnic relations, their entanglement with other minority issues, and strategic compromises result in different framing trends and accents in the countries of the region. At the same time, the general scholarly and policy assessment agrees that the European Union’s Roma Policy Framework has produced the necessary comprehensive statements, strategies, and guidelines (European Commission, 2011b). The issue is high on the agenda of international and domestic civil society actors. The implementation of these policy measures, however, shows little success. The least enthusiasm and devotion to this complex social issue can be seen by the national governments of the member states, in this case mostly the ‘new’ Central European member states. But it should also be noted that some differences prevail among each national government’s capacities and willingness to shape Roma inclusion policies. Some tangible policy initiatives in the field of education should be acknowledged, especially in Hungary and Romania, but in the most recent political circumstances these initiatives are controversial. The authority of European Union is still high but not as pressing as it was during the accession period.
4. Successful approach in a global world for the historically excluded

As it follows, we bring on the literature review identifying those global strategies aimed at overcoming the educational and social inequalities affecting the historically excluded population. In this section we provide two types of strategies. First of all, we focus on the Successful Educational Actions—actions that have demonstrated containing universal components and that can be transferred across contexts, generating successful results (Flecha, 2015)—highlighting how these actions are applied in Learning Communities. Regarding this first type of strategies, we contribute with evidences of the impact Learning Communities are generating in the European and Brazilian context. Second of all, we incorporate outstanding strategies identified through the secondments carried out and through the exchanges promoted in the framework of the network that SALEACOM has created. These strategies are: 1) initiatives launched by Drom Kotar Mestipen Roma Women's Association in Spain; 2) Tanoda’ afterschool program in Hungary; 3) Generative teachers serving CLCC in USA; 4) Leadership for social justice and equity in New Zealand; 5) National Exceptional teachers in high poverty areas in Australia; and 6) Affirmative Action in Brazil. During the following phases of the Saleacom Project, we will continue to deepen on the impact and potential provided by these strategies.

4.1. Successful Educational Actions and Learning Communities

This section focuses on Successful Educational Actions (SEAs) and its implementation in Learning Communities (LC) where they have contributed to overcoming inequalities experienced by historically excluded populations in Europe. Specifically, we focus on the impact achieved in classrooms, schools and communities by four specific SEAs: 1) Educative and Decisive participation of the community; 2) Interactive Groups; 3) Dialogic Literary Gatherings; and 4) The Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts.

4.1.1. Learning Communities and Successful Educational Actions: Introduction

Learning Communities (Flecha & Soler, 2013; Gatt, Ojala & Soler, 2011) is a project based on the implementation of a set of SEAs oriented towards the transformation of educational contexts to maximise learning opportunities for all diverse students. This project is consistent with the most relevant scientific theories on education, which highlight two key factors in education in today society: the role of the interactions to enhance learning and the importance of community involvement in schools and education. Thus, LC are based on a dialogical and interactive
conception of learning that involve the community in order to enhance learning and overcome educational inequalities (Flecha, 2000; Garcia Duque, & Alexiu, 2010).

The first LC was created in 1978, with the transformation of an Adult Education School in La Verneda-Sant Martí, a working-class neighbourhood of Barcelona (Spain) (Morlà, 2015). Since then, La Verneda project has had an impact not only on the participants’ learning but has also on generating social and cultural transformations that have contributed to the regeneration of the district (Sánchez, 1999; Tellado, Serrano & Portell, 2013). The success of the project enabled this model to be extended to other schools in different educational levels and geographic contexts. In 1995 LC started at the level of compulsory education in the Basque Country (Northern Spain).

Research conducted on LC (Diez, Santos, & Alvarez, 2013) shows that these schools increase academic performance, reduce early school leaving and absenteeism, prevent conflicts and improve coexistence and social cohesion, having a particularly important impact on the transformation of the academic prospects of children of cultural minorities living in disadvantaged contexts (Garcia-Carrion, Girbés-Peco & Gomez-Zepeda, 2015). Flecha & Soler (2013) described how the transformation of a Spanish Primary School serving a majority of Roma students and located in a highly deprived area into a Learning Community made possible reduce absenteeism rates from 30% to being occasional (Flecha & Soler, 2013). Similar improvements have been identified in another school in a deprived urban area with a high proportion of immigrant students (Diez, Gatt & Racionero, 2011). Five years after the transformation of the school into a Learning Community, the percentage of students who pass the official exam on reading skills increased from 17% to 85% (2001-2006). As a result of improvements such as those mentioned, the European Commission has issued several recommendations that encourage the Member States to implement LC (European Commission, 2010b; European Commission, 2011) as a strategy to address educational exclusion of disadvantaged students (European Parliament, 2009).

The impact generated by the LC is due to the implementation of SEAs that count on the participation of the community and that affect all the different areas of the school operation, from the management to the classrooms. The concept of ‘Successful Educational Action’ (Flecha, 2015) was created within the European Commission’s FP6 project INCLUD-ED. Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from Education, carried out between 2006 and 2011 and coordinated by CREA. SEAs are not isolated best practices that promote
good results in particular cases or contexts. Rather, they are actions that have resulted in school success in different countries and environments (García-Carrión, Girbés-Peco & Gómez-Zepeda, 2015). According to Flecha & Soler (2013, p.452), they seem containing ‘universal components, transferable across contexts’. The improvements generated the SEAs have led to the selection of INCLUD-ED by the European Commission as the only research project in the social sciences and humanities highlighted among the 10 examples of ‘success stories’ in European research.\(^\text{19}\)

In the light of the social impact and the political recommendations that have resulted around the project since then (European Commission, 2010b; European Commission, 2011), many schools in different countries around the world have been transformed into LC. In 2016, there are around 500 LC in 6 countries—Spain, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Peru and Brazil—at different levels, including pre-primary, primary, secondary and adult education, public and private schools, in rural and urban areas, in very poor contexts and other medium-high socioeconomic level. Furthermore, the international expansion of the project is contributing to overcome educational inequalities historically suffered by indigenous populations in many countries of Latin America (Alvarez Cifuentes, 2015; De Mello, 2009).

In what follows, the literature review highlights both the scientific basis of the SEAs and the contributions of these actions to improve the educational reality of disadvantaged students. Moreover, we consider the impact these actions have achieved through their application in LC.

\textit{a) Educative and Decisive participation of families and communities}

The role that family involvement plays in the educational success of disadvantaged students has been widely addressed by educational research (Epstein, 1991; Fan & Williams, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hidalgo, Epstein & Siu, 2002; Sénéchal & Young, 2008). However, it has not been until the last decades that studies on school participation have adopted a broader approach that includes also community involvement (Mediratta, Fruchter & Lewis, 2002). Despite the potential of community participation, certain studies have pointed out a number of structural, organizational and cultural barriers that prevent schools from benefiting of

\(^{19}\) The European Commission selected ten projects developed under the Framework Programmes of Research considering them as examples of how EU research funding can generate enormous added value for Europe. As expressed by the European Commission; ‘Through working in an EU funded collaborative project the researchers in INCLUD-ED were able to (...) arrive at solutions that can be applied across Europe, adapted as necessary for local contexts and customs’ Retrieved September 15, 2014, from: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-520_es.htm?locale=EN
community participation (Carreón, Drake & Barton, 2005). At the same time, it has been suggested that not all kinds of participation have the same impact, and that some attempts to promote community involvement might even have produced unwanted results such as mistrust or conflicts (Fine, 1993). The INCLUD-ED project (2006-2011) identified educational strategies across Europe that maximise the potential of community participation in schools, regardless the socio-educational characteristics of participants or the contexts where they live. Among these, educative participation and decisive participation have been reported to have the greatest impact on improving students’ learning and social cohesion within schools and communities. LC take into consideration not only the role of parents and families, but also other relevant social agents such as volunteers, NGOs, school staff and members of the public administration, who get involved in schools through these types of successful participation.

**Educative participation** includes family and community participation in learning activities aimed either at children or at themselves. Family and community members participate both in classrooms –i.e. in Interactive Groups (Valls & Kyriakides, 2013)– and in after-school initiatives –i.e. activities to extend students’ learning time such as Tutored Libraries (Aguilar, Alonso, Padrós & Pulido, 2010)–. As regards activities for family and community education (De Botton, Girbés, Ruiz & Tellado, 2014; Diez, Gatt & Racionero, 2011), successful examples have been identified, which have as a major common characteristic that the activities are organized in response to the needs and requests of families. Flecha, et. al. (2009) show the positive results obtained when Roma mothers take on a central role in the design and organization of the literacy classes and the ICT training offered by the school. Along the same lines, De Botton, Girbés, Ruiz & Tellado (2014) demonstrated the benefits generated by the participation of Moroccan immigrant low-educated mothers in the Dialogical Literary Gatherings. The impact generated in terms of empowering cultural minorities and marginalized groups was highlighted by Apple (2012, p.158).

The concept of **decisive participation** implies including the voices of community members in the management of the school (Diez, Gatt & Racionero, 2011). Building on the recognition of cultural intelligence, families and other members of the community participate actively in decision-making processes concerning relevant issues of the school life. This is made possible through opening dialogical spaces and creating specific mechanisms –such as joint committees or assemblies– that allow overcoming the limitations that vulnerable groups have suffered to participate in such spaces of dialogue and decision-making (Habermas, 1984). It allows moving forward towards communicative equality (Fung, 2005) and promoting egalitarian and dialogical
relationships in schools (Melgar, Larena, Ruiz & Rammel, 2011). This kind of participation allows addressing the educational challenges described in the introduction, while at the same time offers solutions to the educational and social inequalities suffered by disadvantaged adults (Flecha & Soler, 2013; OECD, 2011). Oliver, de Botton, Soler, & Merrill (2011) indicate that when schools based on SEAs open their doors to vulnerable groups, the benefits obtained go beyond the school context, contributing to overcoming social exclusion (Flecha, García, & Rudd, 2011; Oliver, Soler, & Flecha, 2009). Thus, SEAs offer effective and efficient strategies to build inclusive learning environments, contributing to maximize the social capital of individuals and communities.

b) Interactive Groups: the power of the interactions to promote learning for all

Grouping forms called Mixture and Streaming have shown not being effective, leading to serious problems of coexistence and school failure, and particularly affecting the most vulnerable students such as cultural minorities or children with special educational needs (Braddock & Slavin, 1992; Flecha, 1990; Oakes, 1985; Petreñas, Puigdellívol & Campdepadrós, 2013). **Mixture** refers to the classroom organization in which all students form one group—heterogeneous in terms of level of learning—with one teacher and where no specific measures are activated to address diversity. **Streaming** refers to homogeneous grouping of students using criteria such as their academic level, origin or mother tongue or the reduction of the curricular content to some of them (European Commission, 2006:19). While Mixture does not allow teachers to respond to the growing diversity in the classroom, Streaming condemns the most disadvantaged students to lower learning levels, and offers them unequal educational opportunities. Furthermore, it has a strong negative impact on school climate and the emergence of prejudice (Braddock & Slavin, 1992; Oakes, 1985, Wößmann & Schütz, 2006). Despite authors such as Dewey (1930) already informed at the beginning of the 20th century that these practices perpetuate the division of social classes and opportunities across schools, they are still present in many European schools.

In contrast, the **Inclusion** model provides more positive results (INCLUD-ED, 2011). Inclusive classrooms are those that provide the necessary support to all students while maintaining a shared learning environment and reorganizing the existing resources. Thus, the inclusion model avoids any form of segregation. Among the different types of inclusive interventions identified, Interactive Groups (IG) provides the best results in terms of instrumental learning and the improvement of classroom climate (Valls & Kyriakides, 2013).
IG entails creating small heterogeneous groups in the regular classrooms incorporating adult volunteers from the community. This SEA has its foundations on the dialogic learning (Aubert, Garcia & Racionero, 2009; Racionero & Padrós, 2010) and, in consequence, the classroom is organized in order to increase and diversify interactions as a way to move children to higher levels of cognitive development (Rogoff, Goodman Turkanis & Bartlett, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). Elboj & Niemelä (2010) identify that IGs function as communities of mutual learners where students create knowledge through dialogue and establish supportive dynamic and positive school climates through solidarity and mutual help. The role of the volunteers is to ensure that the interactions among the group led all children to solve the curricular tasks successfully (Tellado & Sava, 2010). IG involves a more effective re-organization of the existing human resources as any family or community member can participate, regardless their academic or cultural background. The evidence collected around this SEA reports the successful involvement of adult relatives, former school students, professionals of different fields, community members, and a wide variety of volunteers who bring into the classroom their funds of knowledge and cultural intelligence as a way to multiply children’s learning opportunities (González, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Ramis & Krastina, 2010). Herrero & Brown (2010) highlight that during IG participants interact in more egalitarian ways and using their collective intelligence. As a result, both the processes and the results are much more effective. At the same time, IG enables opening schools to the community providing students with a wide variety of role models, which reduces prejudice. The impact of this form of classroom organization in improving the education of historically excluded pupils has been shown empirically. Garcia-Carrion et. al. (2015), showed that the application of the IG has reversed the trajectory of failure of two schools with immigrant and Roma students, placing the results of these schools above the average in the region in some educational areas. For instance, in one of these schools, 72.7% of the students could reach a high level in English global competence, whereas the region's average is 37.8%.

c) Dialogic Literary Gatherings: breaking with cultural elitism

Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) are a SEA that is making possible that any person regardless their age, culture or social status can read, share and enjoy classic works of the universal literature, including works of writers such as Kafka, Joyce, Dostoyevsky and Cervantes, overcoming the idea that culture is only the properly appreciated by the elites (Flecha & Garcia, 2013; Soler, 2004; Pulido & Zepa, 2010). DLG started at the end of the seventies at the Adult School La Verneda-San Martí in Barcelona (Spain) as an action aiming to address the low educational levels of the population in the neighbourhood, mostly working-
class residents with low socioeconomic levels (Aguilar, Alonso, Padrós & Pulido, 2010; Flecha, 2000). The success of this initiative enabled that from the 90s it could be implemented in schools at all educational levels: early childhood education, primary and secondary education. Currently, the DLG are implemented in different centres of formal and non-formal education. For example, research has identified that the implementation of DLG in prisons is having a positive impact among the inmates (Flecha & García, 2013; Pulido, 2015).

In DLG the best works of universal literature are made accessible to children and non-academic people, and these are discussed in an environment of respect and freedom of speech (Flecha, 2000). DLG has its theoretical foundations in the Dialogic Reading (Soler, 2003, 2004) that conceives reading and understanding of the text as an inter-personal process through which people are able to deepen in their interpretations of the text and reflect critically on the reading and the world (Bakhin, 2000; Freire, 1984).

The benefits of the implementation of DLG in the school context include improved overall learning attainment, reading comprehension, communication skills, critical thinking and motivation for reading among the students (Elboj, 2015; García-Carrión, 2014). These improvements are especially significant with students with learning difficulties, disabilities, those belonging to cultural minorities or living in disadvantaged areas (Garcia, 2015; Molina, 2015). This SEA promotes the creation of an environment where values such as of coexistence, respect, tolerance and solidarity are developed parallel to the learning process itself (Pulido & Zepa, 2010). According to Aubert (2015) the kind of interactions that occur in the DLG have positive effects for transforming the classroom and school climate as well as the perceptions that students with trajectories of failure and exclusion have regarding the school, their classmates and their own capacities.

As mentioned above, DLG are also implemented as a SEA in the field of family education. Research has highlighted the contribution that this type of action is making to overcome educational exclusion of non-traditional adult learners. For instance, there is a connection between the participation of migrant women in the DLG and the improvement of both their skills and the academic results of their children (De Botton et. Al., 2014; Serrano & Mirceva, 2010). DLG have enabled women who did not have educational opportunities to become literate, gain a taste for reading, acquire the learning language of their children’s school and increase their employability. In addition, DLG have increased the learning opportunities of their children, as their participation in DLG bridges the learning processes between school and home.
Furthermore, these spaces for dialogue and knowledge have supposed a turning point in the lives of many underprivileged people who have increased participation in other activities and fields, overcoming social isolation and have become leaders of their communities (Flecha, 2015; Soler, 2015). DLG also help improve self-concept, self-esteem and recovery of people who have undergone profound situations of exclusion as homeless people living in extreme poverty or immigrant women in prison whom, for the first time in their lives, access spaces for dialogue, solidarity, recognition and learning through the DLG (Flecha & García, 2013; Pulido, 2015; Racionero-Plaza, 2015).

**d) Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts**

The last SEA included in this report is the Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts, which provides strategies to prevent and overcome situations of violence and conflict in schools. Evidence shows that violence is becoming a devastating reality that affect schools all around the world, and affects with particular intensity those social groups more at risk, including cultural minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities and LGBT students (Hong & Espelage, 2012; McGuire, Anderson, Toomey & Russell, 2010; Srabstein, 2015). For instance, available data (UNICEF, 2014) show that more than 1 in 3 students between 13 and 15 years old worldwide experience bullying on a regular basis. Dramatic consequences of suffering school violence have also been reported, targeting a wide range of negative physical and psychological aftereffects (Farrington, Loeber, Stallings & Ttofi, 2011). Furthermore, students who suffer violence in the school context are more likely to experience school dropout and failure (Durand, Schraiber, França-Junior & Barros, 2011). It is relevant to highlight how research that explores school violence does commonly not recognize violence against women (VAW) as part of the origin of this problem. Therefore, it makes the link between bullying and VAW more difficult to identify (Puigvert, 2014). This fact deserves attention, specially if we take into account that almost 70 million girls worldwide report having been victims of some form of physical violence since age 15 (UNICEF, 2014); this situation is perpetuated throughout the life cycle of women and it is estimated that the 35% of adult women worldwide have experienced VAW (WHO, 2013). International research not only identifies the serious problem posed by the emergence of increased VAW but also warns about the difficulties of many educators to recognize and act effectively to address this type of violence (Kärnä, Voeten, Poskiparta & Salmivalli, 2010).

Contributions on school violence have also emphasized the importance of involving the entire community in programs to create positive and supportive school climates and to ensure that
learning is framed in violence-free relationships (Oliver, Soler & Flecha, 2010; Olweus & Limber, 2010). Schools with community-based approaches that include the voices of the traditionally excluded members of the community are obtaining positive results in addressing this problem. In this regard, the Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts is grounded on community participation in spaces of dialogue in the school as a tool to prevent and solve conflicts (Flecha & Vargas, 2000). This model enables the emergence of a dialogue shared by students, teachers and community members with the aim of creating consensus on coexistence rules or procedures for the resolution of the specific conflicts in the school. Thus, the normative process –and the procedural ethic– becomes as important as the outcome of the process itself (Sen, 2011).

The Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts implies paying attention and addressing gender violence in schools based on the contributions of the research line on Preventive Socialization of Gender Violence (Gómez, 2014), developed by CREA. The research conducted within this line shows the social nature of attractiveness (Castro-Sandúa & Mara, 2014) and the existence of a link between attractiveness and violence (Valls, Puigvert & Duque, 2008). It means that there is a mainstream process of socialization –which is not the only one and does not affect everybody in the same way– that promotes attraction towards models of abuse, aggression, conflict and power relation. Meanwhile less attractiveness –or none– is promoted towards egalitarian relationships based on dialogue and respect. These studies suggest that when the perspective of attraction towards violence is used to analyse school violence, it becomes easier to get to the roots of the problem (Valls, Puigvert & Duque, 2008). The approach of Preventive Socialization of Gender Violence also takes into account and promotes preventive elements against VAW from early childhood, such as solid friendship, building ideals in relation to intimate relationships and the inclusion of the entire community to meet this challenge (Oliver, 2014). These two approaches –the Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts and the Preventive Socialization of Gender Violence– allows showing how the presence of the other women (De Botton, Puigvert & Sánchez, 2005) –women who belong to non-privileged sectors such as cultural minorities or with low educational backgrounds– and the inclusion in schools of males from cultural minorities (Gómez, Munte & Sorde, 2014) contribute to the identification and reduction of cultural prejudices, school violence and conflicts.

4.1.2. Transferability of Learning Communities to the Brazilian context

The Brazilian educational context reveals data that denounce the country’s social context permeated by
racial inequality, where black and indigenous people have historically been underserved populations. The affirmative action programs and laws for access, retention and success in education were created to correct this situation in the country. However, as Francis & Tannuri-Pianto (2012b) pointed out, actions to improve the quality of basic education also need to be developed. As can be noted in the data of the Pesquisa Nacional de Amostragem de Domicílios (National Household Sample Survey) (Brazil, 2013), although the elementary education is almost universalized among white (92.7%) and black (92.4%) students, attendance to high school shows a considerable advantage for white (63.6%) as compared to the black (49.5%) students, which means that there is repetition and dropout. In higher education, the attendance rates to courses reveal an advantage of more than the double for the white (23.5%) than for the total black population (10.8%). Thus, we can conclude that in the trajectory from elementary school to high school, the quality of education for white and black students is uneven, and this is an historical reality.

In the early 2000s, shortly after the establishment of the main laws of universalization of elementary education in Brazil, research conducted by Smith & Alves (2003) showed that such inequality was already noticed at that time, when the data of the Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) was analysed. In view of the performance data of white and black students and the quality of public schools of basic education where they had studied, the authors conclude that:

"(1) There is a big gap between white and black students, and to a lesser extent, between white and mixed race students in relation to school performance; and (2) the factors leading to effectiveness of education do not have equal distribution, as they favor mainly the school performance of the most privileged social groups, i.e., white students, contributing in most of the situations analysed to intensify rather than reduce differences between racial groups. We conclude this work considering that the change of this situation will depend on the implementation of public school policies to produce a fairer balance between efficiency and equity in education." (Emphasis added).

This situation is confirmed in the study by Coura (2010) which, once social data and data on the colour / race of students undergoing evaluation of the SAEB was disaggregated, evidenced that there was no significant difference in performance between white, mixed-race and black in the 4th grade of elementary school, but there was in the 8th grade; in high school, white students had, compared to mixed-race and black students, better performance in the examinations. After analysing the data, the author suggests that two measures could be taken to better monitor the situation of public education, via the evaluation system of basic education (SAEB): 1) analyse the coexistence and interaction practices in families and 2) analyse the internal practices in schools, in addition to infrastructure and management.

Such an educational framework of inequality and poor performance of public Brazilian basic education led the research group that would later become the Núcleo de Investigação e Ação Social e Educativa (Center for Social and Educational Research and Action) (NIASE / UFSCar) to seek in 2001 an alternative to
support schools with which they worked in the city of São Carlos. There were evidences that the transformation of schools into Learning Communities brought effectiveness together with equity, as well as solidarity; improved learning achievement for all indexes and, in addition, achieve those improvements in a good atmosphere of coexistence and respect, which seemed an excellent alternative.

In her post-doctoral research with CREA, Mello (2002) studied the Spanish context and their educational legislation as well as the theoretical and methodological foundations for transforming schools into Learning Communities (LC) (Elboj et al., 2002.); the goal was to determine whether the proposal would be feasible for the Brazilian context. At the time of that research, there were in Spain four schools consolidated as LC, which were studied, performing observations, interviews, focus groups and documentary analysis. At that time, three other schools joined the project. The process of starting and putting the project into operation in the three new schools was studied. After eight months of data collection, the context and the legislation of the two countries (Brazil and Spain) could be compared and it was concluded the possibility of implementing LC and SEA that they entail (interactive groups, mixed committees, tutored library, family education family and dialogic literary gatherings) to achieve education of the highest quality for all in the Brazilian context (Mello, 2003a; Mello & Elboj, 2004).

At the same time, Mello (2003b, 2003c) analysed the theoretical alternatives offered by the theory of dialogical learning (Aubert et. al., 2009) for the education of youth and adults, and developed fieldwork research with the Adult School La Verneda Saint-Martí (Sanchez, 1999) – the first LC in Spain. In La Verneda school, she focused on the Dialogic Literary Gatherings (Flecha, 1997), as one of the educational actions that improved communicative and reading skills of men and women who participated (Mello, 2003d). Finally, it is important to note that, during the postdoctoral stay, she also studied the Communicative Methodology developed by CREA and used in their research with vulnerable groups (Gómez, Latorre, Sánchez & Flecha, 2006; Flecha & Tellado, 2015).

With such baggage, in mid-2002, Mello (2004) returned to Brazil and created the Center for Research and Social and Educational Action (NIASE / UFSCar), with another university professor and two graduate students. Based on the joint studies, in late 2002, the team started to implement LC in elementary schools in the city of São Carlos, developed Dialogic Literary Gatherings in EJA (education of youth and adults) as well as projects for adult literacy and continuing education for adults and youth based on the dialogic learning. Over the years, the work of NIASE was consolidated into two areas: youth and adult education (EJA) and the transformation of primary schools into LC.

The team was strengthened with new university teachers and graduate and undergraduate students. Besides the university extension work, which was a channel to implement LC and the SEA in EJA, the NIASE team also started to conduct research on these issues in the Brazilian context, focusing primarily on the study of the effectiveness and transferability of LC and dialogic literary gatherings (Constantin, Marigo &
Moreira, 2011). The Communicative methodology developed by CREA (Gómez, Latorre, Sánchez & Flecha, 2006; Gomez; Puigvert & Flecha, 2011), became the principal methodology used in research by NIASE (Mello, 2009a).

The Dialogic Literary Gatherings were first implemented at the University of the Third Age, an institution for lifelong learning. It was later expanded to one high school, a preparatory course for entry into the university and some adult education classes in adult education schools and a community centre (Flecha & Mello, 2005). The studies conducted by NIASE showed improved instrumental learning by the participants (reading fluency and comprehension), and the development of respectful coexistence and solidarity among adult participants. The personal transformations of the participants, and their empowerment to participate in other contexts, were also reported (Gavioli & Mello, 2010; Marigo, Mello & Amorim, 2012).

Within the youth and adult education line of work, in addition to the Dialogic Literary Gatherings, NIASE developed from the beginning continuing education for teachers on dialogical learning, literacy, mathematics, digital inclusion and solidarity economy, topics supported by the theory of dialogic learning. Research conducted with teachers groups, youth and adult education students, women and men of solidarity economy, and women groups demonstrated that this theoretical perspective and its seven principles provided the bases to develop ways for teaching, learning and coexistence that benefit everyone, and empower people to transform their contexts (Salazar Jr. et al., 2005; Hori et al., 2005; Gonçalves, 2006; Mello & Larena, 2009; Franzet al., 2009; Pereira et al., 2010; Cherfem & Mello, 2010a; Cherfem & Mello, 2010b; Mello et al., 2010; Flecha & Mello, 2012).

From the beginning, NIASE / UFSCar also disseminated the project for transforming schools into LC, along with the municipal education network in the city of São Carlos. In 2003 the first school decided to start the process: managers, teachers and family unanimously approved the transformation. So all of them dreamed the school they wanted, and soon the project started to work. Mixed committees, a tutored library, dialogic literary gatherings for a group of adults who studied there at night, interactive groups in classrooms, and family education on IT were implemented (Mello, 2003). At the same time, NIASE started to conduct research to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's transformation into LC in the Brazilian context (Braga, 2004; Mello & Elboj, 2004). At the end of two years, having seen that the school was more respected by the surrounding community and by the families, that the quality of internal relations had improved among all educational agents and among students, and that instrumental learning also improved for all, two other local schools decided to start the transformation process (Mello, 2005). In 2007, with the objective of establishing indicators for the implementation of LC in Brazil, NIASE started a major research, funded by FAPESP (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo) and the CNPq (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico), in order to analyze the impacts of the transformation of schools into LC on students’ learning and school climate, taking into account the
different contexts and demands of schools (Mello, 2007-2009).

For two years, the research focused on each educational action developed in the schools, as well as on their results. Having the three studied schools very different populations attended and very different demands, it was concluded that transferability was possible into the three different contexts, where quality learning for all was achieved and coexistence improved among all educational agents and students (Mello, 2009b; Braga & Mello, 2009; Marigo et al., 2010; Mello, 2011; Mello, Braga & Gabassa, 2012; Braga & Mello, 2014).

As regards the Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG), it is relevant to highlight that the contact between children’s tutored library in the first LC, with the adults in adult education in the same school, who participated in DLG before their classes at night, resulted in the creation of a DLG for children and adolescents for the first time -until that moment, there is no notice that DLG had been implemented with children in Brazil. During the years 2005 and 2006 DLG conducted in the library and on weekends was investigated to assess their effectiveness (Girotto, 2007; Girotto & Mello, 2007).

Through the analysis of video recording of the activities, interviews with participating children, their families and teachers, and communicative focus groups with children, Girotto (2007) concluded that DLG is a very powerful educational action for literacy learning, as it improved fluency and reading comprehension of all; empowering children within the group, attentive listening and respect were other elements revealed by the research. This result stimulated schoolteachers to claim that the activity was developed within the classrooms during school time. The request was accepted and in 2007 DLG started to be implemented in classrooms and its impact started to be studied (Girotto, 2011). Based on the research conducted in two classrooms that implemented DLG with children, it was found that reading fluency and reading comprehension of all children increased; respectful coexistence among all was also learnt and the shyest and most intimidated children were empowered, according to the evidences collected through communicative observations, communicative focus groups and interviews with children, their teachers and families (Girotto & Mello, 2012a; Girotto & Mello 2012b). Also during this research, it was found that the dynamics applied to DLG also produced impact on learning and coexistence when they were used to discuss the classical works of art (Marigo, 2009); thus, the activity, later called Dialogic Arts Gathering has become widespread in other Brazilian LCs (Marigo, Logarezzi & Mello).

As regards another SEA, the Interactive Groups, these were analysed in Brazil by Rodrigues (2010), who concluded, based on the communicative observations, interviews and focus groups, that this form of class organization provides instrumental learning quality for everyone, with intensive development of solidarity among children (Mello, 2012; Rodrigues Moreira & Gabassa, 2012).

Research on diversity and racial issues in LC deserve particular attention. Did the transformation into LC
and the educational actions implemented in these schools, alter race relationships in schools? The research conducted based on communicative observations, focus groups and interviews with children, teachers and families, concluded that interactive groups, dialogic literary gatherings and tutored library helped in the improvement of instrumental learning, but also in empowering girls (Telles, 2010) and the identity of black children (Moreira, 2010; Constantino, 2010; Constantino & Mello, 2012).

Subsequent research that deepened in the topic including white and black teachers, Constantino (2014) detailed how the SEA helped overcome racism and to develop education regarding ethnic and race relationships in LC. The DLG was the educational action that stood out in the results. However, something that was evident was that without having the knowledge of the kind of racism that operates in Brazil, and how it operates, teachers and volunteers failed to intervene in key moments of the activities and interactions among children. Thus, the instrumental dimension of the dialogic learning about the historical and racial issues in Brazil was revealed to be strongly necessary to advance towards equality of differences (Constantino & Mello, 2013).

These results proved the effectiveness of LC in Brazil, accounting for its specific features, and therefore it has been transferable to the Brazilian context (Mello, Braga & Gabassa, 2012). As a result, Mello (2011-2012) went back to CREA to deepen in the knowledge of the theoretical and methodological basis of the work on LC. At that moment CREA was completing the INCLUD-ED project (Flecha; García; Gomez & Latorre, 2009; Flecha & Soler, 2013). She could study the project, and learn about the successful educational actions, a concept that was developed in the framework of this research.

Back in Brazil, NIASE / UFSCar accepted the partnership proposed by the Natura Institute (iN), an organization -belonging to the Natura cosmetics company-, which was dedicated to empowering the public basic education in the country. During 2012, NIASE members met monthly with the iN team, to perform a Pedagogical Gathering in relation to the LC and the Dialogic Learning. At the same time, the NIASE team developed a study requested by iN on educational experiences in Brazil (Mello, 2012). As part of this partnership, the coordinator of NIASE accompanied the iN team and other institutes to CREA, in the University of Barcelona, for a week visit to study learning communities and know schools as learning communities in that country. At that time, approximately 130 schools were already LC.

From 2013 the iN took direct partnership with CREA and, together with NIASE, designed and began the dissemination of the LC project in other cities and regions of Brazil (Alvarez, 2015). From 2013 to 2016, iN expanded and trained their team, created a virtual platform for communication with schools, governments, teachers, students and family members of LC, and expanded the project to 300 schools in different states of the country. In partnership with institutes and institutions of other 5 Latin American
countries, they increasingly expanded the project²⁰. In this context, NIASE has intervened with training when requested by iN and meetings and dialogues to disseminate and monitor LC in Latin America and Brazil.

As regards direct work in schools, NIASE continues giving direct support to schools in the area of São Carlos, and is currently dedicated to research on the transferability of Youth and Adult Education as Learning Community (Mello, 2013-2015). Ongoing data from the research show that absenteeism dropped significantly and enrollments continue growing throughout the year, opposite to the national trend of emptying the EJA classrooms in schools. Instrumental learning increased substantially, as well as student participation in school life and the creation of meaning in their lives (Mello, 2015).

Thus, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of the transferability of LC for Brazil is proven for both elementary school and adult and youth education (EJA). The current object of research is their transferability to early childhood education and high school. In addition, some successful educational actions (interactive groups and dialogic literary gatherings) have also been implemented at UFSCar to analyze whether they can contribute to overcome weaknesses of affirmative action.

Here we present potentially successful strategies identified under the Saleacom Project in Spain, Hungary, USA, New Zealand, Australia and Brazil, identifying the results that these actions are contributing to tackle inequalities identified in the respective national contexts.

²⁰ www.comunidadedeaprendizagem.com
4.2. Drom Kotar Mestipen Roma Women's Association: promoting educational and labour inclusion of Roma women

If the Roma community has traditionally had to face situations of discrimination and marginalization, the Roma woman has especially suffered from being subject to a triple exclusion: gender, ethnicity and educational (Sordé, Flecha & Alexiu, 2013). Given this situation, one strategy that has proven to have a positive impact on the various forms of exclusion affecting these women is the associationism. Roma associations are proposing multiple alternatives to overcome these barriers, movement in which Roma women are playing a very important role (Sordé, 2006). In this regard, various scientific researches (Flecha, 2015) have highlighted the impact generated by the Drom Kotar Mestipen Roma Women's Association (DKM). DKM is a non-profit organization founded in Barcelona in 1999 by a group of Roma and non-Roma women struggling to achieve equality, non-discrimination and solidarity between women from different cultures. The projects arising from DKM focus on education, social and cultural participation in the labor market as a way of overcoming inequality and exclusion suffered by Roma women. This association organizes itself horizontally through asamblies based on an egalitarian dialogue and on the equality of differences as principles (Flecha, 2000). This type of organization enables the demands and needs of the non-academic Roma women be at the center of the feminist debate, which traditionally was reserved only for middle class and academic women. Thus, DKM is located in the dialogical feminist movement (Puigvert, 2001) placing the voices of traditionally excluded women at the center of decision making.

Moreover, DKM has been a platform to include the voices of Roma people in the projects aimed at overcoming inequalities suffered by this group. For instance, from this association three projects funded by the European Commission have been coordinated: 1) ROM-ACT. Widening Roma women’s access to non-formal and informal learning validation systems. (2013-2014), aimed at expanding and improving access to the systems of accreditation of non-formal and informal learning of Roma women in Europe; 2) ROM-UP. The inclusion of Roma through quality successful educational experiences (2012-2013), aimed at implementing Successful Educational Actions for adult Roma with low educational levels and 3) EDUCA-ROM. Inclusive teaching material for adults: the Roma (2005-2007), with the aim of creating inclusive educational materials relating to Roma population in four European countries.

This project has been highlighted by various scientific researches (Munté, Serradell & Sordé, 2011) and has been included to SIOR\(^\text{21}\), the first repository on science social impact, for the political impact it has generated. Specifically, *Workalò* has promoted the Roma community to be institutionally recognized by the Catalan Parliament (2001), the Spanish Government (Spanish Congress, 2005) and also the European Parliament (2005).

Among the initiatives organized by DKM, two have been highlighted by their contribution to the improvement of educational and labor exclusion of Roma women: 1) Roma students Meetings and 2) Training for Roma women (free time monitor and assistant in schools canteens).

**Roma Students Meetings**

This action is a response to the high rates of absenteeism and school failure among Roma children and also to the lack of referents and solitude Roma women endure when they access to post-compulsory education or higher education. In this regard, the Roma Students Meetings generate an intergenerational space for Roma women of all ages and socioeconomic levels where they feel free to share ideas and search for solutions to overcome educational exclusion suffered by the Roma woman. Moreover, in the meetings Roma women with successful academic and professional paths are invited providing positive role models for girls and young Roma women. The positive impact caused by this action in relation to the breakdown of prejudices; the decline in absenteeism, the increased motivation and educational expectations, or the empowerment processes have been identified in several studies (Ruiz, Girbés, Tellado, 2015).

**Training for Roma women (assistant education courses).**

Another of actions launched by the DKM in the area of labor inclusion is offering free of charge training through which the women involved can obtain accreditation as free time monitor and assistant in schools canteen. These courses are aimed to women without educational qualifications, unemployed and residents in deprived areas. Once they have completed the course, participants receive an official certificate, which allow them to work as assistants in different school areas such as school canteens or extracurricular activities. This initiative has the dual objective of increasing the employability and training of these women while the presence of the Roma women is included in the educative centers.

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4.3 ‘Tanoda’ afterschool program and complex local territorial development programs

As dropout is strongly connected to social disadvantages and to poverty, and Roma students are the most affected, most of the experts agree on the importance of intersectional approach including policy of education and social policy to tackle the problem. It is essential to intervene in the early childhood and to provide services for the most disadvantaged families. This is the moment when the parental involvement in early childhood intervention is a key factor to start compensating the disadvantages. A comprehensive pre-school and school enabling differentiated pedagogy (Grenier & Moldoveanu, 2011)\textsuperscript{22}, followed by the interventions in early years, would strengthen the effect of compensation. Besides the school, the support of families is still very important in preventing children from dropping out. The schools, typically the vocational schools developing an alarm system should be able to detect the early signs of risk of dropout and to prevent the most affected vulnerable adolescents from leaving the school using appropriate interventions. In this regard, we have identified two potential successful educational actions: 1) the ‘Tanoda’ afterschool program and 2) complex local territorial development programs.

‘Tanoda’ afterschool program

Second chance type programs provide support for the most disadvantaged students and young people who are at risk of dropout or have already dropped out from school. In Hungary, the main type of such second chance intervention is the “Tanoda”, an after school program for young children, mostly between 10 and 14, but also open to younger and older children. Other second chance programs provide training to help students obtain the next level school degree, mostly high school degree by teaching children using non-formal educational methodologies.

“Tanodas” were set up as an answer to the dysfunctional workings of the mainstream educational system, where the most disadvantaged children did not receive adequate support for their achievements and for their social mobility. “The purpose of the Tanoda program is to help

\textsuperscript{22} Differentiated pedagogy is thought to improve children’s learning by considering children as principal actors in their own intellectual development. Differentiated pedagogy is also thought to facilitate children’s integration in school, especially recently arrived refugees and immigrant children’s integration, given that teachers who use differentiated pedagogy are supposed to adapt their practices to their students’ personal backgrounds and characteristics (e.g. different language abilities, learning styles, interests, values, etc.). (source: N. Grenier, M. Moldoveanu: Differentiated Pedagogy: A New Teaching Model In Multiethnic Elementary School Settings In Quebec, Canada, http://library.iated.org/view/GRENIER2011DIF)
children who do not have the conditions neither in their families nor in their schools to obtain a successful school career and further education.”

According to the final study of “Tanoda research” from 2013 (Németh, 2013) the majority of children attending Tanoda programs are Roma children living in disadvantaged conditions. More than one third of Roma children commute between their home and the school. As is reported (Németh, 2013): “70% of children from Tanodas arrive from segregated schools where the rate of Roma children in schools is higher than 25%, and among the children arriving from segregated schools, 18% of Roma children attend schools with a rate higher than 50%. If the homogeneity of the school is not counted on ethnicity, but on social situation, 80% of children come from poor families”.

Children’s accounts tell us that they value that in the Tanoda, they experience tolerance, inclusion, a feeling of security, a light and cool, family-like atmosphere, and targeted attention to individuals and community development. This compensates children for the feelings of isolation and loneliness they often experience in their schools. Children appreciate that play and study are not separated but are jointly present in the Tanoda. This atmosphere enables the development of children’s motivation to study and also the self-regulation of their learning. Thus children love to go to Tanodas, they take their siblings along, and still visit once in secondary schools.

Parents also value highly the targeted attention their children receive in Tanodas. They unanimously claim that since their child attended the Tanoda, his or her self-esteem and self-confidence has greatly improved. In the most disadvantaged micro-regions and settlements, as parents explained, Tanodas are the only institutions enabling children to access cultural programs like theatres, summer camps or excursions. In many Tanodas, there are trainings and programs for parents, too, and they can also get help in looking for jobs from the staff of Tanodas. Tanodas have a relationship with local governments, with minority self-governments, with NGOs, with local schools and other institutions. Instead of long-term partnership, this cooperation is mainly linked to concrete programs. Still, especially in small settlements, Tanodas are multifunctional, partly social and partly cultural community centres with a crucial role for the accumulation of social capital.

23 Tanoda program sztenderd 2013 http://palyazat.gov.hu/download/40591/Tanoda_program_sztenderd.doc

24 In 2007, the government selected 33 micro-regions which are the most underdeveloped and in which 10% of the population live, based on the classification according to the complex indicator made by Hungarian Central Statistical Office.
A cardinal problem is that Tanodas cannot provide specialized teachers in every subject due to financial reasons: teachers are hired without specialized qualifications or even without general teacher’s qualifications.

**Complex local territorial development programs**

At the start of the 2000s, complex local territorial development programs with an integrated approach to be launched against child poverty in the 33 most disadvantaged micro-regions. The main goals of the intervention have been to improve the situation of people facing socio-economic disadvantages, with a focus on the inclusion of the Roma; to reduce segregation both in housing and in education; to create local jobs and revitalize the local economy and to identify and address the main service-related local bottlenecks in educational, social, employment, health and housing services in an integrated and complex way, along with focus on nutrition, after school programs for youth, the provision of digital services and community development. Among the different areas of interventions, education, including services to prevent children from dropping out, has been one of the most important areas.

According to Kende (2015), the school integration of Roma and non-Roma children is a very sensitive political issue. In most cases regarding the resentment of the majority of the society, neither the attractive pedagogical program of the school, nor the scientifically justified arguments can influence prejudices. The acceptance of Roma children by the majority of the society takes a long time and a lot of professional support is needed. It was an important experience in the local development programs how difficult it is to change the approach of mainstream social and educational institutions and how fragile all the results prove to be when the political atmosphere or the regulations change. This type of program is especially vulnerable as it is developed by local experts who strongly depend on local decision makers. Thus in many cases even if they have a professional idea about a program, they cannot develop it if the local decision makers do not agree. Regarding the educational part of these local programs, the activities mainly focused on filling the deficit of local schools, but these extra services are unsustainable after the program ends.

**4.4 Generative teachers serving CLCC**

The work Arnetha Ball develops from the Center for the study of Race, Ethnicity and Language (CREAL) at Stanford University is focused on giving answer to the situation of inequality to which students with Latino, African American, Pacific Islander and American Indian backgrounds are suffering in the urban schools in USA. These underserved students have been
traditionally segregated in low quality schools (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012) with teachers who feel underprepared to teach students from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Ball, 2013; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005). Ball (2011) uses the term *Culturally and Linguistically Complex Classrooms (CLCCs)* to describe the learning environments that are created when these students come together in segregated classrooms, which are usually identified to have low academic achievement, high dropout rates, and low college graduation rates among low-income culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Among the factors that lead to this situation, one contributing factor to these trends is the disconnection between the backgrounds of the students and the teachers who teach them. Among the factors that hinder teachers to serve CLCCs properly, it has been highlighted the homogeneity of their origins – the majority of the teachers continue to be monolingual and middle class- and the lack of confidence in their ability to interact with students and families from diverse backgrounds (Duhon & Manson, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Willms, 2006). According to Anthony and Ball (2011), addressing educational inequalities involves to 1) increase teachers’ knowledge of theory and best practices, 2) to broaden their knowledge of students’ cultural practices and values, 3) to assist teachers in replacing their feelings of insecurity with feelings of agency, advocacy and efficacy.

**Generative teachers and the Model of Generative Change**

In order to achieve an optimal professional development, Ball (2009) proposes applying the perspective of *generativity* to the training of teachers for diversity through courses that allow change teachers’ conceptions of themselves as teachers and as learners. Starting from Erikson’s contributions (1980) regarding the stages of psychosocial development, the concept of *generativity* refers to the stage in which the subjects strive to create or nurture things that will outlast, contributing to positive changes that benefit others. Grounded on the notion of *generativity* is built the Model of Generative Change which refers to:

> Process of self-perpetuating change wherein a teacher’s pedagogical practices are inspired and influenced by the instructional approaches and theory that he or she is exposed to in a professional development program [...] Knowledge becomes generative when the teacher continues that learning by making connections with his or her students’ knowledge and needs and begins planning the teaching based on what he or she is learning (Ball, 2009, P.47).
The Model of Generative Change recovers the notions of language and culture as powerful tools in works of authors such as Vygotsky (1978) and Wertsch (1985). It provides a framework to guide the organization of instruction in professional development programs aimed at achieving highly skilled teaching force that has the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed to ensure excellent education for all students. Figure 1 exposed below illustrates the strategic use of language used both for the teachers’ professional development and the students’ generative development. It particularly stands out the use of writing as a pedagogical tool for reflection, introspection, and critique both within the professional development of teachers and within CLCCs. This approach involves contemplate CLCCs as dynamic communities in which oral and written discourses are strategically planned and y it is aimed at creating environments where cognitive activity is enhanced by the introduction of new information and by the application of that new knowledge.

Figure 1. Model of generative change: The processes through which teachers and students develop voice, generativity, and efficacy in their thinking and practice (Ball, 2009, P. 66).

Ball (2009, p.66) highlights the importance of applying new knowledge in CLCCs considering two elements: 1) teacher knowledge is linked to student knowledge on an ongoing basis and 2) classroom activities are designed to facilitate generative thinking and problem solving on the part of teachers and students alike. This concept provides a transformative perspective of education as through change of classroom discourses and practices students traditionally underserved can adopt developing perspectives toward generativity. Furthermore, the Model of
Generative Change enlightens processes of cognitive change – metacognitive awareness, ideological becoming, internalization, and generativity – that take place within the individual’s zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). These processes of cognitive change – first experienced by teachers and secondly by their students – are facilitated by the strategic use of multiple literacies in the course and particularly engaging learners in the use of extended writing. Thus, the, Model of Generative Change is developed through 4 phases (Ball, 2009):

**Phase 1:** emphasizes the use of reflection through the narrativization of personal experiences that motivate increased metacognitive awareness concerning the critical role of literacies in teachers’ lives and in the lives of others. Engagement with this guided reflection results in an increased sense of personal awakening.

**Phase 2:** emphasizes the use of guided introspection that requires teachers (and their students) to look within themselves to determine their role within the teaching/learning community. Teachers are engaged in serious discussions and extended writing about important issues related to diversity and literacy, activities were designed to facilitate the process of ideological becoming, which resulted in an increased sense of agency.

**Phase 3:** the classroom community focused on facilitating internalization through critiques of course readings and through the analysis of action research projects that teachers selected to work on to increase their sense of advocacy. The teachers developed action research projects focusing on the literacy practices of their students, which culminated in plans for implementation. Later, teachers asked their students to conduct ethnographies of community literacy practices and other research projects that linked classroom learning with their communities. It requires teachers and students to formulate questions that were of real interest to them.

**Phase 4:** learners combined theory, best practices, and actual work in communities with diverse populations in ways that facilitated their own theory posing and generative thinking. During this process, they wrote and talked not only about opportunities, challenges, and perceived need for changes but also about the actions they took as they implemented their plans. This process resulted in an increased sense of efficacy and the development of their voices on important issues of diversity.

**Improvements achieved**

The results indicate that this model has an impact on both the professional development of teachers and on student outcomes. It happens because teachers’ modeling this kind of generative thinking with their students inspire the students to become generative thinkers as well. Through the process described, teachers learn more about their students through children’s writing; they integrate that new knowledge with their existing knowledge and used that combined knowledge to solve classroom problems. Furthermore, students feel how their teachers encourage them to explore a deeper understanding of their textbooks, to use critical thinking and to link content area topics to their life experiences. They also learnt how to pose queries that challenged their peers and the authoritative voices of the textbooks, and to engage in community building through participation in after-school clubs and community-based organizations. Thus, the Model of Generative Change allows considering teachers as transformative intellectuals.
(Giroux, 1988). These inputs represent a significant contribution to the area of studies that have tackled the professional development on teachers’ instruction (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Franke, Carpenter, Levi & Fennema, 2001; Sarason, 1996) providing relevant knowledge on effective measures in the preparation of teachers to work in CLCCs.

4.5. Leadership for social justice and equity

The main two contributions from the University of Auckland are both centred in how we can improve the situation of Maori community in New Zealand. The first contribution, called Maori Achievement Collaborative (MAC project), is related to how, through a culturally responsive leadership and school leadership Maori people are empowering themselves and creating new opportunities for Maori community. The second one, called widening participation: ‘First in the Family’ students succeeding in universities (FIFU), is centred in analysing how Maori and Pasifika Islanders students are attending to the University for the first time in their families, and also in how other cultural minority groups are also entering in the university in South Africa, United States and Australia.

In both cases the contributions are based in critical race theory, critical pedagogy, applied critical leadership, culturally responsive leadership, leadership for social justice and equity and effective leadership for Maori and Pasifika population. The implementation of both projects has had a common qualitative approach, based in indigenous methodologies and participatory action schemes, where Maori and Pasifika Islanders have been the protagonists of the successful stories.

The MAC and FIFU projects are directly related with the impact of social justice and educational equity on leadership in a multicultural context. In that sense, cultural and linguistic roles play a key point in how to improve social justice through a critical conception of leadership in a global society.

MAC project

This Project bridge Maori knowledge sourced from leaders of schools where there is a prevalence of Maori best practices. The research is located in mainstream educational contexts in order to lift Maori academic achievement. The data from the project shows how leaders and leadership practices (from an Applied Critical Leadership approach) could challenge the status quo and promote strategies resulting in equitable educational outcomes for Maori.
Through an Applied Critical Leadership approach six regional MACs clusters in New Zealand have been analysed (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012; Santamaria, Santamaria, Weber & Pearson, 2015). This approach is a combination of Critical race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998), Critical Multiculturalism (May & Sleeter, 2010), Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1997) and Transformative Leadership (Shields, 2010).

Approximately sixty educational Maori leaders participate in the MAC project from six different regional areas. The MACs leadership characteristics and practices provide exemplars for those seeking innovation and improvement to school leadership, professional development and practice for improvement in diverse contexts (Santamaria et al., 2015).

**FIFU project**

It is about pioneers, about population who are first in their families to go to university. The people who participate are at risk of failure and of dropping out (especially in their first year of study). The project has a national strategic perspective implying South Africa, Australia, USA, Canada and New Zealand. Each of these nations has as objective to increase the rate of students in the university before 2020. This project has been identified good practices for university teaching and student support systems towards enhanced first in the family students succeeding in universities. At the same time it has been promoted critical innovative thinking about this global challenge of Higher Education and Research.

The analysis of leadership practices trough both projects and also in a global context, highlights some key elements that promotes cultural and linguistic diversity and academic achievement from early childhood to higher education; a) culturally and linguistically diverse school leaders and leadership toward academic achievement; b) engaging cross-cultural and international research communities; c) indigenous and critical race research methodologies; d) concrete leadership in Maori, Pasifika and Indigenous contexts in New Zealand; e) widening participation for students who are the first in family to attend University.

Leadership practices based on these characteristics have positive impact on student achievement. But traditional leadership preparation programs have given token consideration to social justice concerns. Cambron-McCabe (2005) analysed the importance of social justice discourse in the educational administration field, highlighting their importance in the university to prepare school leaders for social justice critique. In a similar way, Santamaria (2014) affirmed how educational leadership for social justice and equity is the primary leadership
response to inclusive and equitable education. She identified nine common leadership characteristics through the leaders, using a critical race theory lens when they practice leadership for social justice.

Educational leaders, as for instance the leaders from the Maori community working in MAC, are experiencing the need to apply practical transformative models to overcome inequalities against Maori people. Applied Critical Leadership in Education provides these teachers with innovative tools to apply with their students, encouraging educational challenges totally necessary for change (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012).

4.6. Exceptional teachers in high poverty areas

This section summarises the literature review on one of the research fields developed by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) as regards successful actions that can contribute to overcome the inequalities of historically excluded groups. Specifically, it will focus on the National Exceptional Teachers for Disadvantaged Schools (NETDS) programme.

The context of inequalities, disadvantaged schools and teacher training in Australia

In the last decade, a decrease in school performance in Australia has been identified, and particularly a distressing increase in the ‘achievement gap’ affecting students from low SES backgrounds (Gonski, 2012) has been observed. The PISA 2012 results indicate that by Year 9, students in the lowest SES quartile are two and a half years behind those in the highest quartile (OECD, 2013).

This situation has intensified the debate on the need for improved teacher quality throughout the schooling system, particularly within the schools with the greatest academic needs (Lampert, Burnett & Davie, 2012). There is widespread agreement that outstanding teachers are a vital element in improving disadvantaged students’ educational outcomes and can make a difference in their lives: a large body of research suggests that ‘good teaching’ outweighs other variables such as class size or composition (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Ladson-Billings, 2008; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Sanders & Horn, 1994; Sanders & Rivers, 1996) and that teachers themselves account for about 30 percent of variance in student achievement (Hattie, 2003). According to Darling-Hammond (2006c) students who have highly effective teachers for three consecutive years score as much as 50 percentile points higher on achievement tests than those who have ineffective teachers for the same amount of time.
However, as tends to occur across the globe, in Australia the least experienced and least prepared teachers are often employed in the schools that serve high-poverty communities (Lampert & Burnett, 2015). Teacher graduates in the top quartile of academic scores are far less likely to accept positions in schools whose students have a low socio-economic status (SES) (Darling-Hammond, 2006b; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), and the rate of burnout and turnover of teachers in these schools is high (Burnett & Lampert, 2014); high-quality graduates accepting such positions leave high poverty schools after a relatively short periods of employment (Delpit, 2012).

In the Australian context, these schools exist in urban, rural, regional and remote settings, some of which have high populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Pacifica, refugee, and underemployed mainstream white residents. These schools are often difficult to staff, and because they can be challenging environments, teachers are retained for much shorter periods, either because as they feel unprepared, or because they perceive these schools as a place to teach until they can get something better (Lampert & Burnett, 2014).

This context evidences the need for the most effective teachers to work in the schools that need them most, which entails that these schools must attract effective teachers, but also the teachers must also be better prepared to teach within them and better supported once they do. For instance, Sleeter (2008) writes about the lack of awareness middle-class teachers have of students who come from cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds different from their own and with which they may be unfamiliar and ill prepared to teach. This is an example of the growing body of academic literature critiquing how poorly the mostly middle-class teaching workforce is equipped to engage with low SES and culturally diverse students (Sleeter & Grant 2003; Cochran-Smith et al. 2004).

Internationally, research suggests that effective teachers for high poverty schools require deep theoretical understanding as well as the capacity to function across three well-substantiated areas: deep content knowledge, well-tuned pedagogical skills, and demonstrated attributes that prove their understanding and commitment to social justice. These separate, though interrelated, fields are well documented in the scholarly research on teaching in urban schools (Obidah & Howard, 2005), culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant teaching (Sleeter, 2008; Villegas, 2007), teaching against the grain (Cochran-Smith, 1991) and teaching for social justice (Price, 2012; Villegas, 2007). Particularly, a contextualization of poverty is an important
step in identifying solutions to the persistent gaps in how teachers are prepared to teach in schools where they can make a lasting difference (Burnett & Lampert, 2016). Initial teacher education (ITE) solutions need to take into account that, despite similarities within OECD countries, differences are also evident between and within different countries, which shows the complexity of this disadvantage.

In Australia, the research on teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (who make up the poorest of the Australian population) also focuses on knowledges, skills and attributes. Various researchers have noted that the vast ‘gap’ between non-Indigenous and Indigenous outcomes in education cannot be closed without significant changes in teaching methods. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children must receive a combination of challenging curriculum equal to that provided to more privileged non-Indigenous Australians (Sarra, 2011) and well-informed teaching pedagogies (Price, 2012). And above all, they must have teachers who have high expectations and a belief that their students can achieve, without the deficit presuppositions (some might even say racism) that leads to poor educational programs (Luke et al., 2013).

Taking into account this context, in Australia and internationally, a series of initiatives have been designed to address teacher education for high-poverty schools, such as the Australian Disadvantaged Schools project (Connell, 1991), which provided one of the first “compensatory” models for teaching disadvantaged and was established across Australia in 1974 in order to specifically address the educational disadvantages experienced by students from low socio-economic backgrounds. There exist other numerous approaches aimed at this goal, such as explicit strategies to attract and support high-quality principals, school leaders and teachers to schools in disadvantaged communities. Policy initiatives across North America, Europe and the Asia Pacific, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) in the United States and the Australian Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (2010), as well as reports from Canada (Levin, 2004) and the UK (Aldridge et al. 2011) are teacher education programs to specifically prepare quality teachers for work in high poverty schools that have emerged as a proof of The existing overall agreement for the need of developments in this area.

Among these initiatives, we are focusing on the Exceptional Teachers for Disadvantaged Schools (NETDS) project, which takes into account the experiences previously mentioned. NETDS is an innovative, theory-based, and grounded work being done by established scholars who are interrogating how teacher education can prepare teachers to work in challenging and
diverse high-poverty settings (Lampert & Burnett, 2016). The focus of NETDS has been how to best mediate the learnings, beliefs and attitude change of a cohort of the highest academically achieving preservice teachers, preparing them to intervene successfully in schools with high numbers of disadvantaged children (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Pacifica and refugee children, as well as children from other disadvantaged families) and with low test scores.

The National Exceptional Teachers for Disadvantaged Schools (NETDS) program

The National Exceptional Teachers for Disadvantaged Schools (NETDS) project was created by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), as a large-scale, national partnership between universities and Departments of Education, partially supported by philanthropic funding (Burnett & Lampert, 2016).

The NETDS began in June 2010 with the aim of developing an Australian university-based teacher education program specifically focusing on the preparation of high quality teachers for the disadvantaged school sector (Burnett & Lampert, 2011). Therefore, it responds to the described context of increased concern on the role of quality teaching for students' academic outcomes (Lampert & Burnett, 2011) and studies that state the need to prepare high-quality teachers in a more effective way to work in disadvantaged schools (Howard & Aleman, 2008).

NETDS aims at breaking with the above-mentioned trend that places the least experienced teachers or the teacher graduates with the poorest academic test scores with the neediest students (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Grossman & Loeb, 2010). For this purpose, the NETDS creates a pathway for the highest quality pre-service teachers to be more fully prepared, professionally and personally, for teaching in such low-SES settings (Lampert & Burnett, 2014). Three different stages can be identified in this program: the selection phase, the theoretical training phase and the practicum phase (Burnett & Lampert, 2011). The objective is to equip cohorts of high-quality pre-service teachers with new sets of skills and understandings of disadvantage and, ultimately, to encourage them to select employment in schools where they could make a real difference.

First, the program identifies the highest achieving undergraduates studying to be teachers within mainstream Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses in Australian universities. The selection is

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based on their proven academic performance over the first 2 years of their 4-year Bachelor of Education degree. Then, these students are invited to enrol in a specialised modified curriculum designed by the NETDS during their 3rd and 4th year practicums or field placements. This curriculum has the purpose of it enabling participants to develop a deeper understanding of how poverty affects educational outcomes; for this purpose, pre-service teachers are taught to understand the social contexts of education, including poverty issues, issues related to urban schooling as well as remote and regional area schooling, and pedagogical research associated with educational disadvantage (Lampert & Burnett, 2016; Burnett & Lampert, 2011). Particularly, the NETDS cohort is offered a targeted 3rd year tutorial in socio-cultural studies, and regular opportunities to participate in professional conferences with experienced teachers. Utilising a ‘just-in-time’ responsive curriculum cycle, NETDS addresses the needs of the cohort as they arise. Alongside the teaching of crucial theory on issues such as schooling, poverty, disadvantage, and social justice NETDS participants are asked to identify areas as they require specialised information or guidance. Students are then offered expert workshops or seminars to address the need, as in a session on behaviour management led by expert principals of National Partnership schools in low socio-economic communities. Sessions are generally scheduled immediately prior to the cohort going on practicum, enabling immediate opportunities to practise new skills and behaviours.

Third, these exceptional pre-service teachers are exposed to key disadvantaged urban, regional and remote school settings. The program provides a supported and scaffolded practicum experience in a network of partner low-SES schools. By working closely with partner schools and government, the program also channels these exceptional pre-service teachers into employment in schools where they will have the greatest impact. Each practicum is followed by an informal debrief session where strategies are discussed.

In sum, this NETDS specialised curriculum combines theoretical training on the topics that explain the marginalisation of disadvantaged schools and those that overcome them, with students’ in-depth experience of teaching in disadvantaged urban and regional school settings, pairing NETDS participants with expert teachers.

**Improvements achieved**

The program’s initial results have been remarkable, with over 90% of graduates employed as teachers in low-SES schools (Lampert & Burnett, 2014). In addition, many graduates secure full-time employment in low socio-economic status schools before they graduate, and school
partners grew from 3 in 2009 to approximately 50 in 2014\textsuperscript{26}. In 2008, prior to the graduation of our first group, only 35\% of our top graduates ended up in such high-poverty settings. For these graduates, what used to be the least preferred schools are now their first choice of employment (Burnett & Lampert, 2014).

The analysis of the project outcomes also point out three evidences that are contributions for further debate and research on this field: 1) These that are quality teachers for disadvantaged schools must have a particular 'passion' for teaching in disadvantaged schools; 2) knowledge of low-SES contexts is crucial to success; 3) though there might be a set of personal qualities or characteristics (such as resilience) that are desirable for such teachers to possess, high academic achievement is equally important in identifying high-quality teachers for the schools that need them most. A high grade point average has proven a strong measure of success, with principals regularly commending the ability of NETDS students to teach deep knowledge in complex classrooms. Most surprising has been evidence suggesting that a belief in social justice can be taught; though some of the students began the program with passion for social justice, for others it grew as they gained knowledge, skills and confidence in their ability to make a difference. In this regard, we know about ‘default’ moments, when teachers revert to attitudes towards their students or families that the NETDS program has helped them to recognize as ‘deficit’ thinking. The emphasis given within the program on providing them with the skills to recognize these moments, and importantly, to ask for help, means that we can intervene.

Because of the excellent results of the NETDS program, the Education Department has taken the program seriously, offering access to data and consulting on issues such as quality teaching. Additionally, the project has been listed in two federal government submissions to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group 2014 as a successful and significant model of high poverty teacher education\textsuperscript{27}.

In 2013, the program also started collaborations with Social Ventures Australia (NGO focused on overcoming disadvantage in Australia) and Origin Foundation (a philanthropic foundation supporting programs that use education to help break the cycle of disadvantage of young people in Australia), to expand the model’s reach nationally, its impact, and ensure its long-term sustainability; five universities are currently involved in the program, training teachers to teach disadvantaged youth (Burnett, Lampert, Patton & Comber, 2014). Three components were defined to achieve such objectives: 1) the managed scaling of NETDS to 6 Faculties / Schools

\textsuperscript{26} https://www.qut.edu.au/education/about/projects/national-exceptional-teachers-for-disadvantaged-schools

\textsuperscript{27} https://www.qut.edu.au/education/about/projects/national-exceptional-teachers-for-disadvantaged-schools
of Education over 3.5 years, graduating up to 210 new high-achieving highly- prepared teachers working in the low SES schooling sector annually; 2) the continued development of the existing ‘flagship’ NETDS program including the extension of mentoring to graduate NETDS teachers; and 3) the development of a scholarly network that emphasizes long-term research and evaluation of impact across a national network targeting teacher education for high-poverty schools.

Research on the progress of the program will continue to be conducted, including the longitudinal perspective of the students’ experiences. A current interest of research is the students’ their leadership and the impact of quality teaching in these settings.

4.7. Affirmative Actions in Higher Educations in Brazil

This literature review provides relevant contributions about Affirmative Actions in Brazil, as it presents the characteristics and types of racism presents in this country, paying special attention to the traditionally excluded populations: black population (afro-descendant) and indigenous population.

The context of inequalities in Brazil: racial inequality affecting black and indigenous population

Brazil has its origin in the process of Portuguese colonization, based first on the slavery of native peoples, and followed by the slavery of African peoples (Ianni, 2000, 2004a, 2004b). Its history disregarded for long time the construction of racial and social inequalities, which lead to the dramatic statistical data we find today. The racialization of relationships produced, furthermore, a huge impact on gender issues. The arrival of European immigrants, and later oriental immigrants, to substitute the workforce of black slaves followed the same logic previously stablished as regards racialization of relationships. In the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century the policies implemented by the Brazilian government to finance European and Asiatic immigration entailed a process to whiten the Brazilian population by promoting miscegenation. Therefore, opposite to segregation, a policy of miscegenation was promoted, based on attributing better quality to the white race, which prevailed over the black race; miscegenation was supposed to whiten the population within some decades.

In this way, the ideology of whitening that still exists today was established by means of a particular type of racism, which base the opportunities of individuals based on the colour of their skin (Ianni, 2004a; Fernandes, 1965). Together with the ideology of whitening, the mith of racial equality was also stablished, which holds the idea that miscegenation of the Brazilian population made overcome racism and tensions
among white, black and indigenous peoples, and established a harmonious coexistence (Ianni, 2004a). The reality created and inherited from this process still needs to be overcome in Brazil (Sansone, 1998; Cicalo, 2014). This justifies the collection of population data by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), a governmental body, taking into account the self-reported classification of population into *branco* (white); *preto* (black), *pardo* (mixed-race), which together make the broader category of *negro* (black) people; *amarelo* (yellow) (for Asian descendants) and *indígena* (indigenous) (Loveman, Muniz & Bailey, 2012).

Racial inequality has affected black people as regards different social rights (Andrews, 2014; Bailey, 2004; De Haan & Thorat, 2012), such as employment (Chadarevian, 2011), infant mortality (Wood, De Carvalho & Horta, 2010), health services (Maio & Monteiro, 2005; Chadarevian, 2011), and schooling (De Carvalho & Waltenberg, F.D., 2015).

Scientific works and statistics on inequalities in Brazil show that *social class* and *gender* seem to be crossed by racial issues. Some recent data about inequalities illustrate this idea. The Brazilian population is composed by approximately 50% of black population (black and mixed-race), 49% of white population, and 1% of indigenous and oriental people. The *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilio* (PNAD) (Brazil, 2013), shows the racial bias of poverty and wealth in the country: 75% of the population within the wealthiest 1% of Brazil are white people.

As regards the presence in educational centres, in the *educação fundamental* (basic education), *ensino médio* (high school) and *ensino superior* (higher education), for individuals aged between 6 and 24:

- Rates of access to *ensino fundamental* are practically the same and show almost universal access for white (92,7%) and black (92,4%) students;
- There is a remarkable advantage for white students (63,3%) as compared to black students (49,5%) as regards presence in *ensino médio*;
- The percentage of access to *ensino superior* for white students (23,5%) is more than the double than access of black students (10,8%).

Although in the last ten years, and thanks to the policies for university access and study grant, the access of black population into the universities has increased the 230% (Brazil, 2013), there is still much to be done: in 2013 only 23,3% of the white population aged between 25 and 35 attended universities, but for the black population the numbers were still more alarming, as only 8,4% of the black population of this age studied in the university.

For this reason, the black movement is claiming the need to adopt self-reporting, following the IBGE classification, when collecting different social data, in order to advance in mapping inequalities and
proposing corrective policies. This classification is being used by different bodies within the countries and for the public policy makers (Loveman, Muniz & Bailey, 2012).

As regards the indigenous peoples, policies developed in Brazil since the arrival of the Portuguese went from extermination and slavery to taking their land, acculturation and, later, policies for preservation and protection. Until 1988, the indigenous people were tutored by the state, and did not even had the right to leave the country without permission. In the process of assimilation that started in the country, the different forms of resistance manifested by the indigenous people were qualified as aggressive and indolent, promoting explicit racism with adjectives such as “irrational” or “prejudiced”. These policies contributed to make native populations invisible for many years and, for many residents in cities, to deny their own identities to escape from preconceptions.

The demographic data of 2010 showed an indigenous Brazilian population of 896,817 individuals, distributed among 305 ethnic groups, speaking 274 different languages. Out of this population, 37.4% spoke their own language in their homes, and 17.5% did not speak Portuguese (FUNAI, 2011). In the last years, some isolated indigenous peoples -which had not yet have contact with non-indigenous- were found, and become to be part of the map of indigenous populations in Brazil (9 indigenous lands inhabited by indigenous groups recently contacted, such as Zo'é, Awá Guajá, Avá Canoeiro, Akun'tsu, Canôe, Piripkura, Arara da TI Cachoeira Seca, Araweté, Suruwahá and Yanomami, among others).

The Federal Constitution of 1988, entitled Constituição Cidadã (Citizen Constitution), is the main document of the Brazilian legal framework of public policy for correcting inequalities. It was stablished after 21 years of military dictatorship in the country, based on the struggle of different social movements and a wide dialogue among different sectors of the Brazilian society. The new Carta Magna brought, among other improvements, the right to freedom of religion; the right for indigenous peoples to land demarcation, self-determination and specific education; and equal rights for men and women, including the right of property ownership for women.

The sequence of actions, laws and norms that made real the constitutional rights, as well as the participation of Brazil in world conferences and its adhesion to different treaties and international goals, made the 1990 decade a moment when changes for overcoming inequalities were reflected in concrete actions. Saffioti (1995) points out the importance of the mobilization promoted by the Brazilian government for the participation of their representatives in the IV World Conference on Women. In that decade is specially worth highlighting the year 1996, when the new Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Brasileira (Law of Directives and Bases of Brazilian Education) (Brazil, 1996) was published. It assumed universalization of ensino fundamental, guaranteed early childhood education, the right to specific education for the indigenous peoples, the expansion of ensino médio, of ensino profissionalizante (vocational training), and access to university, following the Jacques Delors report (UNESCO, 1996).
Htun (2004) highlights that the beginning of the 2000s also brought important advancements for the country. Affirmative action policies for racial equality were made possible as a result of the World Conference on Racism, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, due to the pressure of the black movement and the fact that the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso welcomed the demands.

The advancements started with the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso were further developed in the government of president Lula (Lima, 2010). With an elected government having declared its commitment with reducing social, racial and gender inequalities, Brazil adopted from 2002 different public policies that made possible important advancements: poverty reduction, increase of access to all levels of education, access to health, employment and generation of income. Social programs to complement income were created connected to food allowance for children in schools and for systematic attendance to health centres.

However, in the ensino básico, the expansion of the educational systems, free of charge as guaranteed by the state, along with programs such as governmental income supplement, still did not guarantee enhancing the success of students of different disadvantaged groups (Martaleto, 2012). Students from families with lower income and beneficiaries of income supplement programs still had lower school performance on state and national tests in 2009. However, a significant drop in absenteeism in schools has been observed (Camargo & Pazello, 2014). As regards school performance, a similar phenomenon is observed in relation to students who compete in national exams to enter university in the period 2003-2013 (Oak & Waltenberg, 2015).

In the context of education policy, in the first decade of the 2000s inequality evidenced in census data led the black and indigenous movements question the absence of content and references to the history and culture of their people in the curriculum of each level of education. The mobilization generated led to the creation of specific agencies within the government ministries, and in 2003, the Federal Law 10.639 was published, which stablished as mandatory teaching the culture and history of Africa and Afro-Brazilian at all educational levels. In 2008, the indigenous movement succeeded in its claims and the Law 11,645 was published in Brazil, mandating teaching the diversity of cultures and the history of the indigenous peoples of Brazil (Guimarães, 2015).

As regards affirmative action entering university, since 2001, several public universities have adopted systems of quotas or place reservation with social and racial perspective (Cicalo, 2013; Mendes Junior, 2014; Weller & Silveira, 2008; Heringer & Honorato, 2015).

Having traced this brief historical and contextual framework of Brazil, as follows we highlight two avenues of research and action to overcome inequalities on which NIASE/UFSCar has been working: affirmative action for admission and permanence of the black and indigenous
populations in Brazilian universities, and the transformation of schools into learning communities.

Affirmative Actions in Higher Educations addressing racial inequality in Brazil

Following we will focus on the evolution of affirmative action policies in education, specifically in terms of access, retention and successful learning of the historically marginalized populations in universities in Brazil. Addressing this issue, Moses (2010, p. 213) retrieves the legislation and judicial decisions, 1968-2009, which are the frame of Brazilian affirmative action policies for access to universities:

- 2001: State Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro announced 40% of admission slots in state universities would be reserved for Black and pardo students and 50% of state university slots for public school graduates (Telles, 2004).
- 2003: Rio state legislature reduced quotas: 20% for public school students, 5% for physically disabled, and 20% for Blacks as opposed to the previous 40% for Black and pardo students (Telles, 2004).
- 2004: Programa Universidade Para Todos (ProUni) set aside percentage of scholarships in private higher education institutions for indigenous students (Human Rights Council, 2009).
- 2009: 48 public universities in more than 20 states adopt affirmative action for Afro-Brazilians, indigenous Brazilians, and public school students (United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 2009).
- 2009: The State University of Rio de Janeiro’s quota program was held unconstitutional by a state tribunal (Lloyd, 2009).”

The systematization provided by the author allows observing the economic and racial disputes that permeate affirmative action in higher education in the country since the first experience of its implementation. Between 2000-2003, the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) operationalized, first, quota places for students graduated in public schools (social perspective), followed by quotas for black and indigenous (racial perspective). Of the 40% quota originally proposed for black students, this university
fell racial quotas to 20% by court decision. The questioning to the UERJ, a public university, came from the Federation of Private Institutions of Higher Education.

It is important here to outline one aspect of the relationship between public and private in Brazil: public implies total gratuity of services provided to users, either in education or health. In the early 2000s, the public basic education massively concentrated the poorest white and black, mixed-race and indigenous students, while the private system massively received white with the highest income (Vasconcelos Medeiros, de Deus e Mello Neto & Macedo Gomes, 2016). In higher education, the ratio was reversed: students from the private basic education system, belonging to more affluent social groups and mostly white, were massively entering the public universities; while the poorest whites, blacks, mixed-race and indigenous attended private universities (ANDIFES, 2011; IBGE, 2011). It is also worth highlighting that the private system counts legally with public funds for its operation.

In response to these early disputes between private and public sectors, the federal government decided to reorganize the funding given to the private system, conditioning the receipt of funds to the provision of full and partial scholarships for low-income students and for black, mixed-race and indigenous students. In this way, the Programa Universidade Para Todos (University for All Program) (ProUni) was created, leading the private system offering vacancies. Since 2004, within ProUni, the candidates egressed from the public or private high school system whose family income per person is 1.5 times the minimum wage can request full scholarship along with private institutions of their interest; for partial scholarship there exist other indices according their financial situations. Therefore, this is a socially oriented policy (Casali & De Mattos, 2015).

Based on the reviewed literature, it can be stated that, from 2001, a strong debate and permanent dispute has been raised over the racial quota (Bayma, 2012; Francis & Tannuri-Pianto, 2015; Schwartzman, 2012; Dos Santos, Cavalleiro, Da Silva Barbosa & Ribeiro, 2008), while the social quota policies (by income and/or public school origin) had wide acceptance within the public opinion - the debate in this case is between public interests and private sector, as commented.

In 2004, the first public university belonging to the federal system, the University of Brasilia (UnB), also began to implement social and racial quotas for vacancies, but with an admission model different from that used by UERJ (Tavolaro, 2008). Among the state and federal public institutions, every year different universities started to implement their own systems, always governed by federal or state rules that guarantee their legality. By the year 2009, among the 48 public higher education institutions already implementing their own affirmative action programs, at least another nine federal universities, in addition to UnB, had established quotas for the admission of students coming from public schools, and for black (black and mixed-race) and indigenous students (Francis & Tannuri-Pianto, 2012a). Among them, the Universidade Federal de São Carlos (UFSCar) proposed a daring model.
This is important to focus particularly on the presence of indigenous peoples in higher education, because of its specificities. Their presence in higher education courses before the first decade of the 2000s generally involved few individuals, those who underwent intensive process of assimilation by religious congregations. The history of several of them is known, who were taken from their families as children, taken to boarding schools and subjected to Jesuit education, educated to be priests. Several of them, when they reached adulthood, chose to leave the religious life and entered the academic life. The admission in higher education as an action of identity recognition, and not of its negation, has as a framework the Diretrizes para a Política Nacional de Educação Escolar Indígena (Guidelines to the National Policy on Indigenous Education), of the MEC (1992) and the Resolution 03 of the CNE (1999). From that moment, having a policy for establishing indigenous schools where their own cultures were taught, a series of teacher training courses were organised and offered by NGOs. But as a specific degree -and, therefore, higher education course-, the first experience that has been recorded started in 2002 at the State University of Mato Grosso (Silva & Santos, 2012). Since then, the model of specific indigenous groups for teacher training is one of the models in operation in the country. As regards the inclusion of indigenous people in regular courses of universities, UERJ started a process to assign specific quotas in its institutional policy. Since then, several universities have done the same, in different forms, but generally reserving places in degree courses. In the case of UFSCar, its policy was proposed for the entry of indigenous students in all the degrees.

Both the gradual expansion of quota systems and place reservations in federal public institutions of higher education, and the growing debate about rights, and specifically, the right to education in the country, created the context that made possible that in 2012 president Dilma Russef created Law No. 12,711 / 2012 (known as Quota Act), aimed at all public institutions of higher education at a federal level, which made mandatory the system of quota reservation for graduates of the public school system (a progressive implementation was established, starting with 20% reserved seats until they reach 50% of total vacancies of each institution). Among these reserved spaces, vacancies for blacks, mixed-race and indigenous students (PPI) must be reserved, according to the census proportion.

The viability of the Quota Act, with regard to access to higher education, was guaranteed by the previous deployment two national instruments: the ENEM, Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (National High School Exam), which evaluates all students graduating from high school, and issue an accreditation of completion and a performance score (created in 1998 and modified gradually), and the SiSU, Sistema de Seleção Unificada (Unified Selection System) (created in 2009), to which the universities adhere freely, using the score of ENEM so that candidates to vacancies are distributed in the courses of the federal institutions of higher education (IFES) according to their performance and classification.

After the implementation of the SiSU and the Quota Act the public school population is increasingly
demanding IFES courses. In 2015, there were a total of 8.4 million registrations in SiSU (MEC, 2015); public state universities, faculties and institutes have joined the SiSU. By signing up in SiSU, candidates to vacancies can choose which group to compete for, according to the Quota Act and the Decree no. 7824 (Brazil, 2012b), and the Regulatory Ordinance no. 18 of 11 October 2012 (Brazil, 2012c) which respectively regulates and implements the law.

The Quota Law divides the vacancies into "free competition" (50% of seats for each course) and those with "high school attended entirely in the public education system" (50% of seats). For the High Schools of the Public Network group there is internal breakdown of 25% for those with family income lower than 1.5 times the minimum wage and 25% for those with per capita family income higher than 1.5 minimum salaries. Within the second sub-category level (income), are there four quota groups: for those with income per capita lower (<) than 1.5 wages, quota I-a is dedicated to mixed-race, black and indigenous (PPI), and I-b quota is for yellow population (oriental) and white; for those with income per capita higher (> ) than 1.5 wages, quota II-a is dedicated to black, mixed-race and indigenous (PPI), and II-b quota is for yellow population (oriental) and white.

In the case some of these types of places are not used by some of these groups, they are redistributed among the other groups and, once exhausted the possibilities for filling these places with the reallocation of these groups, vacancies may be occupied by other students. Each institution of higher education follows the SiSU system, which distribute and reallocate vacancies. These mechanisms present in the Quota Act eased discussions on racial quotas. The federal judiciary system assessed positively the legality of these mechanisms. Thus, by 2017, all federal institutions of higher education are required to establish quotas for the 50% of their places, according to the law, while the state public institutions can base on it to implement quota systems, but without obligation.

Regarding the feasibility of Quota Act from the point of view of the permanence of low-income students (per capita income less than 1.5 times the minimum wage), the former instrument created by the federal government was the National Plan for Student Assistance (PNAES) - (Decree 7234/2010). The PNAES is a financing system to support the permanence of low-income students, based on "measures seeking to combat situations of repetition and dropout" (MEC, 2015). The Plan provides assistance to: student housing, food, transportation, health, digital inclusion, culture, sports, childcare and educational support. For indigenous students there is, in addition, a specific grant so-called "permanence". It is up to each educational institution to design, monitor and report the activities and use of funds and results.

As for the performance results of students included in the quota system during their university trajectory, some research indicates that there is no significant difference in the performance of students entering by quotas and those opting for free competition (Mendes Junior, 2014; De Souza, Brandalise, 2014; Francis; Tannuri-Pianto, 2012b).
Considering all the above, it can be said that both the ProUni in the private system and the SiSU and quotas in the public system, have allowed the expansion and democratization of access to higher education in Brazil. However, it is noteworthy that, in the one case as in the other, research indicates weaknesses and limits. In the case of ProUni, it is noted the need to deepen the research conducted (Casali & Matos) and, in the case of the Quota Act, corrections are identified to be made as soon as possible (Vasconcelos Medeiros, de Deus e Mello Neto & Macedo Gomes, 2016).

Casali & Matos (2015, p.707), in a recent review of studies conducted about ProUni, concluded that it has been a successful program:

In the diversity of their approaches and positions, these studies corroborate the perception of ProUni as a program that promotes access and permanence in higher education, raises the standard of cultural and social life of the beneficiaries, increasing the chances of success in their education and in their professional lives. This means recognizing that the ProUni is a reference, a framework for the implementation of a public policy of affirmative action, respected and accepted on the federal, state and municipal levels, despite the contradictions it is going through, as is the case of resignation tax, the limits to improve the quality and the lack of monitoring of performance of the students who benefit from the program.

Vasconcelos Medeiros, de Deus and Mello Neto & Macedo Gomes (2016, p. 13-14), in their research on data of application to SiSU in recent years, compared with data from ENEM (ENEM, Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio) and IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), pointed out some distortions of the Quota Act and suggest corrections to be made:

"distortion associated with the income criterion; the need to ensure technical (and legal) conditions in the concomitant competition within the reserve groups and the general competition, so that the groups with vacancies reservation do not find cutoff scores higher than those without reserve; the reservation of places for students with family income higher than 1.5 minimum wages per capita tends to create a low-competition area; the differences between the percentage of PPI in the composition of the general population of Federative Units and the percentage of PPI in the composition of the population benefited from the Quota Law, which can generate differences between the number of vacancies proportional necessary and the number of vacancies offered; the grouping of PPI as the only group that tends to generate disparities in States with concentration of one of the races and increase the difficulties for members of indigenous and/or quilombola communities, which have lower educational levels (Lopes, 2011; INEP, 2012). Finally, as noted above, the potential that has the self-declaration to facilitate the action of people that can make a misuse of race issues."
Such points of the Quota Act need to be improved so that it has greater effectiveness at the moment it will be evaluated. The law foresees that in 2021 a broad debate will decide its continuity in the case of: (a) the effectiveness of the law and (b) data on inequality that still justify it, or its removal, in case of: (a) it has not been effective to ensure entry and quality education for the target groups; (b) it has overcome the inequalities addressed to an extent that it is no longer necessary.

Either way, as shown by Francis & Tannuri-Pianto (2012b), it is clear that without quota policy to enter and remain in higher education, historically marginalized groups do not have their rights guaranteed and inequalities would not be overcome. They warn that other affirmative action policies for the same groups and attention to the quality of basic education must be part of future actions.

5. Conclusions

This Report presents an extensive literature review of research on educational and social inequalities affecting traditionally underserved groups in Europe, and actions that contribute to reinvert these inequalities. Information has been retrieved from journals indexed in scientific databases (i.e. WoS, SCOPUS), relevant books and research reports. Furthermore, scientific discussions and exchanges during the secondments within the SALEACOM project have enriched the common knowledge on the successful educational actions and relevant strategies implemented in Spain, Hungary, USA, New Zealand, Australia and Brazil.

The scientific literature widely demonstrate the cycles of exclusion that Roma and non-European migrant in Europe suffer, and the interconnection of inequalities affecting the Roma population in Spain and Central and Eastern Europe. Various institutional mechanisms and prevalent prejudice are found to exist, perpetuating the segregation of Roma students in education, such as referral into education in special schools, streaming, tracking and early selection on the basis of abilities. In turn, the quality of education in schools and classes catering for Roma students is often of lower quality, blocking the progression of Roma students into secondary and vocational education. The contributions made by the Center for Policy Studies (CPS) of the Central European University stand out, regarding the experiences with educational policies aimed to tackle these inequalities.

The literature review has also demonstrated that there is plenty of available knowledge and data in regards to strategies and actions globally implemented in schools, classrooms, learning environments and communities to address inequalities faced by traditionally undeserved population. Previous research has allowed to identify initiatives that have demonstrated
containing universal components and that can be transferred across contexts, generating successful results (Successful Educational Actions) such as Educative and Decisive participation of the community; Interactive Groups; Dialogic Literary Gatherings; and the Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts. In this sense, evidence have been provided on how, through its implementation in Learning Communities, they are contributing to overcome educational and social exclusion of many underprivileged children and communities in the European context. Yet emergent literature pays attention to the transferability process of Successful Educational Actions and Learning Communities to various countries such as Brazil. Other relevant initiatives refer to specific vulnerable groups such as Roma students. This is the case of 'Tanoda' afterschool program in Hungary or the meetings of the Drom Kotar Mestipen Roma Women’s Association. These initiatives have common features with projects targeting other groups in a very different context, such as the critical leadership for social justice and equity approach developed by the University of Auckland, New Zealand, which is providing outstanding benefits for Maori and Pasifika population. Other strategies with a successful approach are those focusing the professional development of teachers. In this sense, the literature points out the model of Generative Change developed by the Department of Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Language at Stanford University and the NETDS program carried out by the University of Technology of Queensland in the Australian context. Finally, we have identified Affirmative Action in higher education as one of the strategies to overcome ethnic and racial inequalities suffered historically by marginalized groups in Brazil. The design of the continuity of the affirmative action policies in the university, counting with an intense participation of students to define alternatives to the weaknesses that have been found, seem to be pertinent to make a university for all.

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