

Final conference of the project

Combating early school leaving in Serbia through effective drop out prevention and intervention measures at the school level

Belgrade, November 28th and 29th, 2016

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTERS



Mr Paul Downes is a Director of the Educational Disadvantage Centre, Senior Lecturer in Education (Psychology), Dublin City University, Ireland. He has been involved in various expert advisory roles for the European Commission in the areas of social inequalities, lifelong learning, second chance education and early school leaving and is a member of the Commission's Network of Experts on the Social Aspects of Education and Training (NESET I & II, 2011-16). He has published in the area of access to education in Europe, emotional supports for early school leaving prevention, parental involvement for early school leaving prevention in Europe, prevention of early school leaving through teacher education, poverty and social inclusion in primary school, etc. Since 2001, he has been a Lecturer in Education and Human Development at the St. Patrick's College, Dublin City University.

Mr Boris Jokić is a Scientific Associate in Centre for Educational Research and Development at Institute for Social Research in Zagreb. Since 2011, as a non-governmental representative, he has been a member of the EU Thematic Group on Early School Leaving within the EU 2020 Strategy, which has addressed the challenges of developing and implementing comprehensive policies to reduce early school leaving in member countries. He has looked at conditions for successful policies, focusing on data collection and monitoring, governance issues and cross-sectoral cooperation, and priorities for preventative, intervention and compensation measures. Further on, Mr Jokić was involved in the preparation of the European Commission report *A whole school approach to tackling early school leaving - Policy messages*, presenting the findings of the European Union's ET2020 Working Group on Schools Policy (2014-15).



Ms Marian Heeney is a member of the Senior Management Team of Tusla's Education Welfare Services. She defines targets, outcomes and performance indicators for the successful delivery of education welfare initiatives at the school level. She provides strategic plans, data, and advice and reports to both Tusla, Child and Family Agency and the Department of Education and Skills on all aspects of educational disadvantage and on the implementation of strategies to improve educational outcomes for children and young people. Also, she develops and implements comprehensive training programmes for staff working in education welfare and for school management. Before the Tusla Education Welfare Services, Ms Heeney was a principal teacher in a large girls' second level school, in South-East Ireland, with responsibility for leading teaching and learning, implementing curricular reform and managing teaching and non-teaching personnel.



Ms Laetitia Antonowicz has worked in more than 30 countries for UN organisations, bilateral and multilateral agencies, development banks and NGOs over the past 20 years. She specialises in an evaluation, sector reviews, policy and capacity development with a focus on education equity, education inclusion, quality and governance. As a regional consultant for UNICEF Regional Office (CEE CIS) in Geneva since 2012 she has supported 12 countries in the region, including Serbia, tackling the issue of out-of-school children, dropout and early school leaving through policy review and development, early warning systems, local and school level interventions, cross-sector roundtables, training of professionals and sharing practices. She authored the (forthcoming 2016) second volume of UNICEF Series on Education Participation and Dropout Prevention *Improving Education Participation: Policy and Practice Pointers for Enrolling All Children and Adolescents in School and Preventing Dropout*.

Ms Sheena Bell is the Regional Education Specialist based in UNICEF's Regional Office (CEECIS) in Geneva. Her work focusses on supporting countries to improve their monitoring systems to identify out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out. She also works with countries on the use of data and information to support schools, communities, and other stakeholders to develop targeted interventions to prevent early school leaving and to bring out-of-school children back into school. Previously, Sheena worked as the out-of-school children data focal point in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and was a key member of the global team leading the UNICEF-UIS Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. This initiative resulted in over 30 in-depth country reports on the data, barriers and policies related to out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out – as well as numerous follow-up programs, including specific work on improving monitoring systems in the CEE/CIS region.



Mr Dennis Van Gessel is working as a Senior Advisor for Analysis and Research at the Vocational Education and Training Division within the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. He has been a part of the Task Force within the Ministry of Education that reduced Early School Leaving successfully in the Netherlands. Within the team, he was supervising data collection, relevant research, evidence-based support of policy-making and the coordination of the making and maintenance of a solid data system that monitored early school leaving in the Netherlands over the years. Early School Leaving in the Netherlands was reduced highly since. On numerous occasions, Mr Van Gessel had the opportunity to present the Dutch approach on ESL to international delegations and monitor international developments in this domain. Before his appointment at the Dutch Ministry of Education, Mr Van Gessel worked for the National Statistical Bureaus of Canada and the Netherlands.

Mr Pedro Cunha has been Deputy Director General of the Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science since 2010. He is responsible for school improvement and social inclusion programmes and for after-school programs, lifelong guidance services, health education, and special needs services. He has also worked as school career counsellor and developed projects with at-risk youth. Mr Pedro Cunha managed community development programmes in deprived neighbourhoods and acted as Programme Director for the Aga Khan Foundation. Recently, he performed as a 'critical friend' for schools dealing with dropout, low achievement, and violence.

