



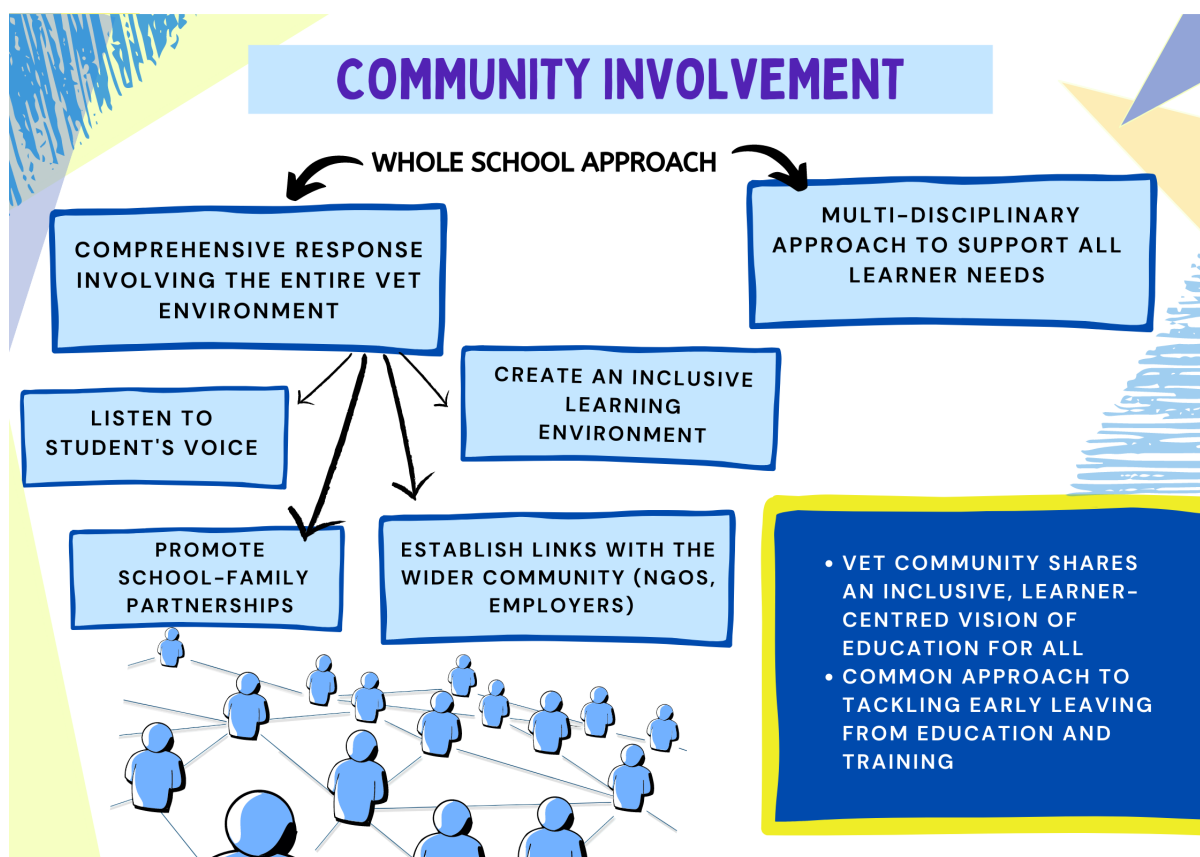
Community involvement

Problem statement

Addressed problem: Lack of community involvement

Personal, social, economic, educational, institutional, or family-related circumstances shape learners' **complex needs** and influence the probability of early leaving from education and training. The type of support a learner requires depends on their needs and specific circumstances. A learner may require a range of interventions on different dimensions simultaneously.

A comprehensive response to early leaving from education and training requires action from the entire VET community. This includes VET institution leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, trainers, parents and families, but also the employers involved in the work-based elements of the VET programmes. This means that VET institutions also need to cooperate with companies, external stakeholders, and the wider community.



Beneficiaries

- 📄 Early leavers from education and training
- 📄 Learners at risk of early leaving from education and training
- 📄 VET students (school-based learning) 📄 VET students (work-based learning)
- 📄 Migrants / refugees

All learners can benefit from community involvement in their education and training. The aim is to ensure each learner is supported in the most appropriate way to achieve their educational goals. Involving key stakeholders from within the VET institution and beyond can be useful for young people at risk of early leaving from education and training or who have already dropped out and, in particular, for:

- Young people with a high level of disengagement and possibly also [complex barriers to learning](#) (e.g. health issues, poverty, etc.);
- Young people who lack motivation to continue learning and who may have a low appreciation of the value of learning;
- Young people who have low self-esteem and a lack of longer-term perspective for themselves.

Addressing the problem

How can the entire VET community be involved in the prevention of early leaving?

The following tips are offered to policy makers and practitioners involved in the design and delivery of VET. The information is also based on Cedefop research into successful measures and inspired by the European Commission's 'whole school approach', which aims to create a multidisciplinary framework to support all learners' needs, foster a shared institutional culture, and position education as a continuum - from the home, through primary and secondary education, and beyond.

In practice, this approach requires strong leadership and governance, as well as a strategic vision grounded in an inclusive, learner-centred concept of education for all.

For the VET context, this perspective is further developed into a "whole community approach", which extends beyond the school setting to include actors that shape the wider environment of learners, teachers, and families. These include employers, NGOs, social and health services, and creative communities, all of whom play a role in supporting learner engagement and preventing early leaving.

Tip 1: Prepare a development / action plan that foresees the involvement of the entire VET community

At the VET institution level, a development / action plan is an important feature of the continuous improvement process. It can be used for monitoring and self-evaluation of practices and processes.

A VET institution development / action plan that aims to involve the entire VET community should, at a minimum:

- Be developed and implemented collaboratively by the whole VET community,

- including learners, parents and families, as well as trainers, employers, multi-professional teams, and external local services;
- Be based on shared goals and responsibilities with clearly defined roles for all actors involved;
 - Include targets and measures that address the underlying causes of early leaving from education and training;
 - Include support measures for VET staff (initial and continuing professional development);

Specify the key outcomes and targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe. For the purpose of these plans, collaborative digital planning and tracking platforms can support stakeholder involvement in co-developing the action plan and monitoring its implementation in real time. Digital dashboards and data analytics can further help translate targets into measurable indicators and evaluate the institution's progress in practical terms.

Tip 2: Create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment

Engaging the entire VET community, both within the institution and beyond, requires creating safe, welcoming, and caring learning environments. Such environments promote student engagement, stimulate motivation and commitment to learning, and encourage individuals to develop to their full potential while fostering a strong sense of belonging.

Welcoming and [inclusive environments](#) can be achieved by:

- Offering sports and/or cultural activities that help create a positive climate and foster a sense of belonging among all learners;
- Creating shared spaces that promote diversity, including virtual spaces and hybrid community events, enabling participation for learners in remote areas or those with limited resources;
- Encouraging the use of shared facilities and spaces to strengthen relationships between teachers, trainers, learners, and parents;
- Ensuring that all learners have access to teachers, trainers and other professionals who can support their educational and personal development needs;
- Actively celebrating learner achievement and progress;
- Ensuring that anti-bullying and conflict resolution strategies are in place, including digital reporting tools and referral mechanisms to prevent and address harmful behaviours in both physical and virtual environments;
- Engaging staff and learners in institutional surveys and evaluations, for example, through digital "school climate" surveys, that allow learners, staff, and parents to provide anonymous feedback and inform continuous improvement.

Tip 3: Listen to the student 'voice'

It is important all learners are given the opportunity to express their views on their learning experience. They should also be able to contribute to institutional

decision-making. Empowering learners in this way has a strong impact on their engagement in both school life and in-company training, as well as on their motivation to learn. Formal mechanisms include school councils as well as school surveys and evaluations. Digital tools - such as virtual meetings, assemblies, and online student council platforms - can be used to ensure participation, including for learners and families who lack the time or resources to attend in-person events. Digital dashboards and surveys can enable learners and their families to provide feedback or vote on decisions related to both the school- and work-based elements of their curriculum, as well as administrative and organisational aspects of student life. These tools can be offered in multiple languages, thereby enhancing accessibility to learners and families with migrant and diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Less formal mechanisms may also be needed to reach marginalised learners and those at risk of disengagement (e.g. [one-on-one sessions](#), [small group work](#), and [motivational project-based activities](#)).

Tip 4: Establish links with the wider community

Establishing links with the wider community offers mutual benefits for young people, VET institutions and, the community as a whole. This includes building connections with local NGOs representing minority and vulnerable groups at risk, as well as other stakeholders such as employers.

Collaboration with local NGOs, social services, and other community organisations representing minority and/or vulnerable groups can help ensure that providers are better prepared to support young people at risk of early leaving. Information about these community actors should be easily accessible through dedicated online platforms and repositories, ensuring effective dissemination and uptake.

Building partnerships between VET institutions and local employers can help facilitate the transition from education to work. Employers can support VET institutions in a variety of ways, including by offering:

- Career talks, site visits, or virtual workplace tours;
- Work experience, taster sessions and platforms, including AI-powered close-to-real simulations
- Equipment and other resources donations;
- Up-to-date information about careers in their sectors, supported by digital tools tracking real-time labour market data;
- Shared digital platforms for community coordination and for facilitating the recruitment of learners into work-based learning opportunities during their VET programmes.

Tip 5: Support VET teachers and trainers to understand early leaving from education and training

Through initial and continuing professional development (CPD), all teachers and trainers should have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the factors

contributing to early leaving from education and training. This includes developing their ability to assess the diverse needs of individual learners and determine the most appropriate interventions. Teachers and trainers should also have opportunities to strengthen their skills in addressing educational disadvantage, diversity, conflict resolution, and bullying. Supporting their professional development is essential and can include, but is not limited to:

- Opportunities to work in multi-professional teams - either in physical or virtual environments - to develop the skills needed to collaborate effectively with different professionals and understand the complementarity of their contributions;
- Access to a range of teaching methods, tools, and online CPD platforms to foster more inclusive classroom environments, support conflict resolution, and implement diversity-sensitive pedagogical practices;
- Collaboration between VET teachers, trainers, and other professionals to promote peer-to-peer learning and mutual support.

Tip 6: Promote school-family partnerships

Actively engaging parents in their child's education and personal development can play a crucial role in reducing the risk of early leaving. School-family partnerships can be fostered in multiple ways, including:




- Promoting parental participation in school decision-making - through formal mechanisms such as parent associations, parent councils, and consultations, as well as through less formal approaches to ensure all parents' voices are heard, including collaborations with local NGOs or community organisations. Multilingual school communication platforms can ensure families from diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds can access and engage with school communications. Online participation mechanisms and digital parent portals can further enhance inclusion and keep families continuously and transparently involved.
- Creating designated spaces for parents and families to strengthen partnerships. Participation in formal and informal school activities provides parents opportunities to develop new skills, build positive relationships with the school and other parents, increase self-confidence, and gain a deeper understanding of school life and the curriculum.
- Leveraging parents as resources - parents can support one another and contribute to the school community. For example, parents could be invited to share their professional expertise through talks or guidance activities.

Building school-family partnerships based on trust and mutual respect helps identify families with high levels of need. Targeted outreach measures can then be deployed, such as assigning a key school worker to engage directly with individual families facing complex challenges.

Expected outcomes

When the entire VET community embraces an inclusive, learner-centred vision of education and adopts a shared approach to preventing early leaving from education and training, the

following outcomes can be expected at individual, institutional, and system levels:

		
INDIVIDUAL	INSTITUTIONAL	SYSTEM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, health, psychological, and economic challenges addressed holistically, involving the school community and external stakeholders where appropriate • Improved well-being • Development of a positive self-image • Fostering a positive attitude towards learning, education and training • Improved access to career information, guidance, and employer connections through digital platforms and databases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved information sharing and collaboration among VET teachers, trainers, parents, and other relevant stakeholders to coordinate interventions effectively • Targeted measures/interventions identified and tailored to the learner’s individual needs • Enhanced monitoring of learner progress • Creation of welcoming and inclusive learning environments, promoting engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging • Deepened understanding by VET practitioners of educational disadvantage and factors contributing to disengagement and early leaving • Better understanding for parents of the curriculum, education and training pathways, and their children’s experiences • More inclusive family engagement, facilitated by digital tools that overcome language and scheduling barriers • Better-prepared staff supported through accessible online professional development (CPD) and AI-enabled tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interconnected services and stakeholders collaborating toward shared goals for learner retention and inclusion • Education and training system able to meet diverse learner needs through coordinated, multi-stakeholder responses • More inclusive and equitable education and training system • Interoperable digital platforms enabling real-time data sharing among stakeholders • Richer, detailed data on learner engagement and community participation to support evidence-based policy and decision-making

Related protective factors



Education achievement and attendance



Health and well-being



Inclusive environment



Positive relationships in the workplace and in the classroom



Supportive family environment

Related resources

Statistics and data

 [Statistics and data](#)

Professionals involved in tackling ELET at school and community level

A variety of professionals play a role in tackling early leaving from education and training (ELET) in Europe: school heads, teachers, career counsellors, psychologists and therapists, social workers, youth workers, nurses, and speech and language specialists. In most countries, school heads and teachers are the key professionals responsible for tackling early leaving.

 Austria  Belgium  Bulgaria  Croatia  Cyprus  Czechia  Denmark

 Estonia  EU level  Finland  France  Germany  Greece  Hungary

 Iceland  Ireland  Italy  Latvia  Lithuania  Luxembourg  Malta

 Netherlands  Norway  Poland  Portugal  Romania  Slovakia

 Slovenia  Spain  Sweden  Türkiye  United Kingdom

Good practices

 Good practice

Integrated Pedagogical System - Integrált Pedagógiai Rendszer (IPR)

The Integrated pedagogical System in Hungary is a national programme that aims to enhance inclusive education. It requires the involvement and cooperation of teachers and external stakeholders. Schools participating in the programme report positive outcomes in classroom management, student autonomy, teacher-student relationships.

 Hungary

 Good practice

Crafts Square

Piazza dei Mestieri

In Italy, 'Crafts Square' offers young people, unemployed young people and adults with an alternative educational offer with a good balance between practical and theoretical courses. The environment created by the 'Craft Square' aims to ensure learners feel understood, supported and valued.

 Italy

 Good practice

VerA - Prevention of Training Dropout

Retired trained professionals volunteer their time and experience to support apprentices as part of a mentors scheme in Germany.

 Good practice

Invest in talent

Invest in Talent offers a combined offer of: internships, work, education, affordable housing, coaching for vulnerable young people to reduce dropout rates and support sustainable career perspectives.

 **Germany**

 Good practice

Orienta4YEL

Supporting educational and social inclusion of young early leavers and those at risk of early leaving through mechanisms of orientation and tutorial action.

 **Germany**  **Portugal**  **Romania**

 **Spain**  **United Kingdom**

 **Netherlands**

 Good practice

Early School Workers (ESW)

Erasmus+ project “Early School Workers” was designed and carried out to provide VET teachers and schools with guidelines and tools to support learners from becoming early school leavers and increase the employability of youngsters while fostering their active role in the society.

 **Belgium**  **Germany**  **Italy**

 **Spain**  **United Kingdom**

Tools

 Tools

SOS-Network: Social Inclusion of students/learners with special needs into mainstream VET and labour market

The SOS network is a practitioner’s community which contributes to the social inclusiveness of disadvantaged learners or those with special needs. The website is a platform for teachers, trainers and other professionals from all over Europe who share good practices and experiences of inclusive education.

International

 Tools

Guidelines for Teachers - P2Peer Tutoring

The ‘Guidelines for Teachers – P2Peer Tutoring’ handbook is aimed at practitioners in secondary VET. The guidelines include “do’s and don’ts” and similar practical information to assist practitioners in their daily communication with learners.

 **Italy**  **Romania**  **Türkiye**

 **United Kingdom**

 Tools

Reaching out to all learners: a resource pack for

 Tools

Need for all Youngsters

Brug for alle Unge, (BFAU)

supporting inclusive education

From the IBE-UNESCO series 'Training tools for curriculum development'

The 'Training tools for curriculum development' resource pack provides a framework to support the development of inclusive schools and classrooms. It provides guidance to support teachers on how to engage all learners.

International

The Danish initiative 'Need for all Youngsters' included national initiatives to raise awareness of the educational system, in particular VET, amongst parents from ethnic minorities.

 **Denmark**

 **Tools**

Concept and Materials - involve parents, improve school

The Involve Parents, Improve school toolkit provides practical solutions to teachers on how to improve parent involvement in school activities.

 **Denmark**  **France**  **Germany**

 **Iceland**  **Ireland**  **Poland**

 **Portugal**  **Spain**  **Türkiye**

 **United Kingdom**

 **Tools**

Parents' toolkit

Mallette des parents

In France, the 'Parent's Toolkit' (mallette des parents) provides examples of how to increase parental participation in school life. The toolkit contains tools for educational teams to organise and facilitate discussions with parents.

 **France**

 **Tools**

European Network Against Bullying in Learning resource pack

The ENABLE resource pack contains training material for teachers and youth leaders/peer supporters, lesson plans, activities and resources, campaign ideas for schools, information for parents, and implementation guidelines.

 **Belgium**  **Croatia**  **Denmark**

 **Greece**  **Hungary**  **Portugal**

 **Tools**

DIDO - Dropping-in the dropouts toolkit

The DIDO toolkit contains practical tools aimed at preventing dropout in adult education.

 **Belgium**  **Denmark**  **Finland**

 **Netherlands**  **Portugal**


 **Switzerland**

Publications

 Publications

Towards a differentiated, holistic and systemic approach to parental involvement in Europe for early school leaving prevention

The RESL.eu project conducted a survey to explore the opinions of school personnel about the factors increasing the risk of early leaving, and the adequacy of the measures and policies in place to tackle this phenomenon. It covered seven countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

Download the report  [here](#).

 **EU level**

 Publications

A Longitudinal Study of Educational Trajectories of Youth at Risk of Early School Leaving

The paper presents the findings of the longitudinal qualitative study of the educational trajectories of youth at risk of early school leaving in seven EU member-states.

This publication focuses particularly on the perspectives of young people under study.

 **Austria**  **Belgium**  **Hungary**

 **Netherlands**  **Poland**

 **Portugal**  **Spain**  **Sweden**

 **United Kingdom**

 Publications

Immigrant background and expected early school leaving in Europe: evidence from PISA

This technical brief analyses the relationship between immigrant status and educational expectations in PISA. Migration flows from outside and within the EU have increased in recent years, and this has raised the attention of policy makers and the general public, with special interests on the implications that those flows can have on, among other, the education system and the labour markets.

 Publications

Natives and immigrants enrolled in Spanish intermediate vocational education and training: a comparative study

Antoni Cerdà-Navarro, Francesca Salvà-Mut, Rubén Comas-Forgas & Mercè Morey-López

This article looks at the differences and similarities between Spanish-born and immigrant students enrolled in the first year of Intermediate Vocational Education (IVET) programmes in Spain.

 **Spain**

 Publications

Recommendations on inclusive education

Based on the COFACE Disability S.H.I.F.T. guide for a meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families. COFACE Families Europe is a pluralistic network of civil society associations representing the interests of all families.










According to article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), signed and adopted by the European Union and all its Member States, and of its General Comment No. 4, State parties must ensure the realisation of the right of persons with disabilities to education through an inclusive education system at all levels, including pre-schools, primary, secondary and tertiary education, vocational training and lifelong learning, extracurricular and social activities, and for all students, including persons with disabilities.

 Publications

Parental involvement for early school leaving prevention

Report pointing towards a differentiated, holistic, and systemic approach in Europe

This review is based on an analysis of EU Commission and Council documents on early school leaving (ESL) and social inclusion, a dialogue and ongoing consultation process with the 10 municipalities engaged in the Urbact - PREVENT project and it interrogates international research relevant to this area.

-  **Belgium**  **Bulgaria**  **Czechia**
-  **Estonia**  **France**  **Germany**
-  **Italy**  **Netherlands**  **Spain**
-  **Sweden**

 Publications

Pathways to School Success

Replacing the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving

This Council Recommendation aims to provide a framework which serves as a reference tool for national, regional and local policy makers and practitioners in education and training which can inspire a systemic policy response to ensure better educational outcomes for all learners.

 Publications

Teaching basic skills: Citizenship

New EC teaching guide for citizenship

The European Education and Culture Executive Agency of the European Commission has published a new set of thematic guides for teaching basic skills. These guides support the European Commission's Basic Skills Action Plan, and aim to boost teaching and learning, support educators and enable supportive environments.

 EU level

 Publications

A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and well-being in schools in the EU

Overview report

This report reviews international evidence on promoting mental health and well-being and preventing bullying in schools, with the aim of supporting safer, more inclusive learning environments across Europe.

 EU level

 EU level

 Publications

Whole-school and whole-system approaches

Pathways to school success - Policy brief

This policy brief makes the case for whole-school and whole-system approaches as the essential governance and organisational foundation for sustainable education reform.

 EU level

 Publications

Social and emotional learning

Pathways to school success - Policy brief

This policy brief focuses on social and emotional learning (SEL) as a key component of children's well-being, resilience, and academic success, helping learners develop skills such as managing emotions, building relationships, and making responsible decisions.

 EU level

 Publications

Local governance for inclusion

Pathways to school success - Policy brief

This policy brief examines the role of local authorities in supporting school success across the EU.

 EU level

 Publications

Authentic learner engagement

Pathways to school success - Policy brief

This policy brief focuses on learner engagement as a fundamental driver of

 Publications

Key role of parents

Pathways to school success - Policy brief

This policy brief examines the role of parental engagement in supporting children's learning, well-being, and

school success, well-being, and democratic participation.

 **EU level**

inclusion, and its potential to reduce socioeconomic gaps in educational outcomes.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

Child, Adolescent and Youth Mental Health in the 21st Century

OECD Report

This report highlights a decade-long decline in the mental health and well-being of young people (aged 10–24) across OECD member states, showcasing that deteriorating youth mental health is a structural trend, present even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

International

Quick wins

 **Quick win**

Listening to the student 'voice'

Listen to the student 'voice' – give learners the chance to express their views about issues relating to their learning and welfare. Different approaches can be introduced at a low cost and be highly effective.

 **Portugal**

 **Quick win**

Create opportunities for informal interactions between students and VET provider staff


Creating opportunities for informal interactions between learners and staff can help build trust and create positive relationships.

 **Poland**  **Portugal**

 **Quick win**

Keeping in touch with young drop-outs

Keep in touch: create a platform to coordinate the activities of the main stakeholders working in the field of early leaving in your area.

 **France**  **Luxembourg**

Source URL: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/en/tools/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/intervention-approaches/community-involvement>