

# Integrative Report (WP1)

## Lessons and policy implications

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## PARTNERS INVOLVED

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## NOTES ON AUTHORSHIP

Several authors have contributed different parts of this integrative report. Authorship is indicated via footnotes attached to section headlines.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / ABSTRACT

This report summarizes and integrates all findings from ISOTIS Working Package 1 – Inequality at various stages of the educational career. Inequality in educational achievement by family socioeconomic status (SES) exist in most countries in the world and are particularly pronounced in Europe. SES gaps emerge early in life and are largely persistent throughout school. While SES-achievement inequality is largely persistent, migration-related achievement inequality depends on the national context and is frequently a timing issue as many migrant children catch up in school. Yet, educational policies must be informed by ethnic peculiarities in the specific national context.

Early investments in children before they go to school will pay off in terms of reducing inequality. Our analyses show that both targeted and universal ECEC interventions/policies help disadvantaged children to catch up and to alleviate early educational inequality, although, it remains unclear which approach is ultimately the most efficient policy strategy for reducing achievement inequality. Nonetheless, the contemporary landscape of European ECEC systems show room for improvement in terms of equal opportunities. There is a pronounced variation in ECEC utilization inequality by SES across European countries and that variation is largely independent of overall coverage levels. Thus, policy should aim at reducing access hurdles for socioeconomic disadvantaged families and minority group families. Moreover, ethnic minority groups and families with migration background are structurally more reluctant than majority/native families to enrol their children in early ECEC. Some but not all of these disparities are attributable to migrant families' lower socioeconomic resources. Thus, ECEC policies must be aware and sensitive to different values and cultural expectations of minority groups in relation to early childhood education and care.

When it comes to general educational policies and reforms in relation to educational systems, we found that those reforms and policy changes frequently do not seem to have the intended effects of reducing SES and migration-related educational inequalities. In fact, many reforms seem to have unintended side effects of increasing educational inequality. As we argue in the report, this points to problems with regard to the implementation of reforms. Thus, policies should implement measures to reduce negative side effects of reforms. Most importantly, 'targeted' efforts may ensure that disadvantaged groups are more effectively reached by policies. Moreover, standardization in rules and organisation of school systems may additionally offset negative side effects. Also, our findings point to occasional trade-off relationships between reducing socioeconomic and reducing migration-related educational inequality. Thus, policy makers should be aware of possible goal conflicts and the need to prioritize.

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**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT  
TO TACKLE INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY**



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