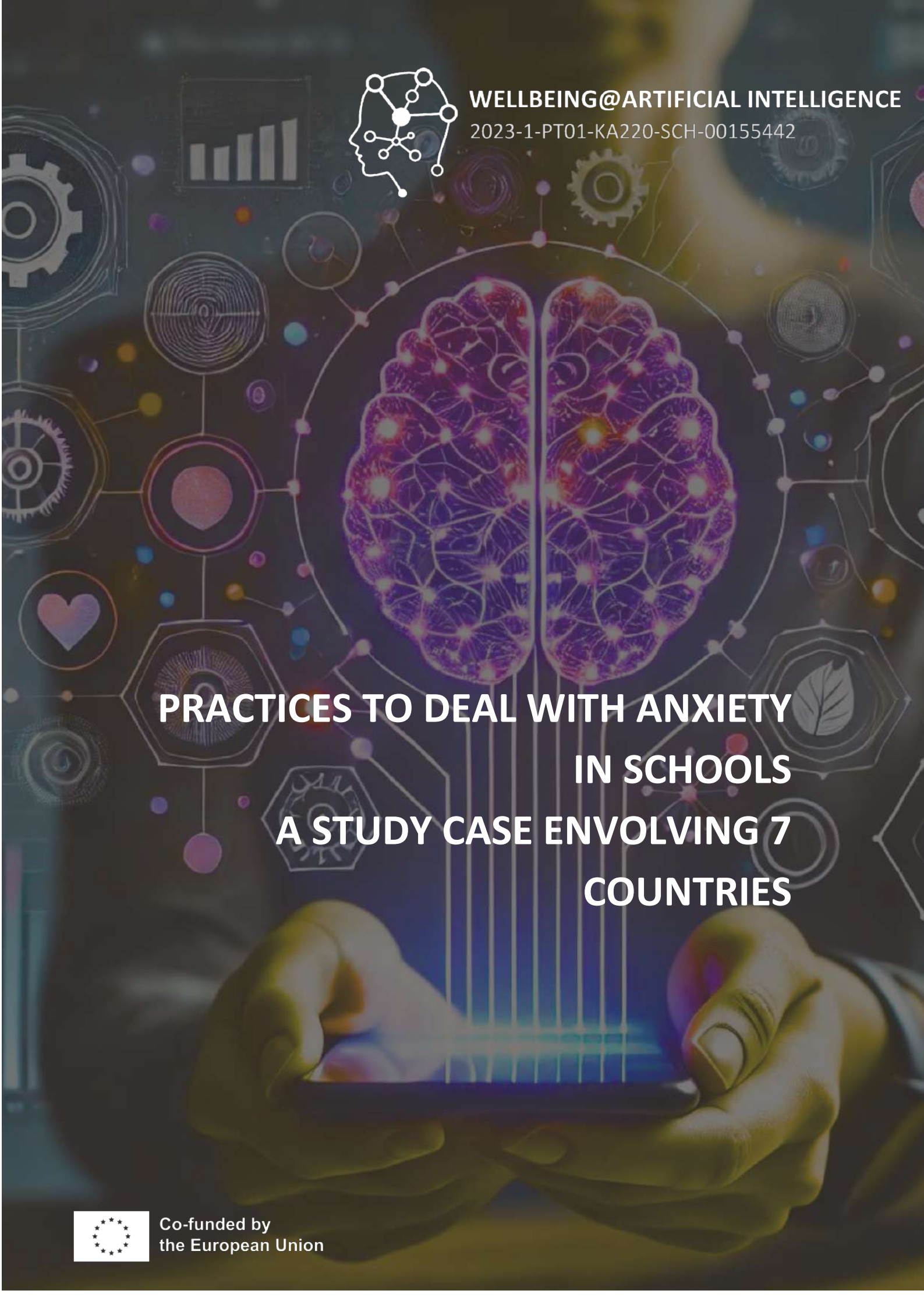


WELLBEING@ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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PRACTICES TO DEAL WITH ANXIETY IN SCHOOLS
A STUDY CASE ENVOLVING 7 COUNTRIES

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the European Union

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1. Background

The WAI (Wellbeing@Artificial Intelligence) project tackles an increasingly critical issue in education: the mental health of students, especially in relation to anxiety. European educational systems have seen a sharp rise in anxiety among students, exacerbated by the unique pressures of digital environments. As schools incorporate more digital tools and methodologies, the academic, social, and emotional landscape for students has transformed rapidly. While these tools have introduced numerous educational benefits, they have also increased demands on students, often creating an atmosphere where stress and anxiety are amplified. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these challenges by increasing students' isolation from peers and educators, further highlighting the need for accessible and effective mental health support mechanisms within educational systems. This context emphasizes the necessity of innovative approaches to help educators support their students' wellbeing, adapting to the evolving digital landscape in a manner that mitigates stress rather than contributes to it.

In response to these growing needs, the WAI consortium has brought together a diverse range of expertise, combining insights from higher education institutions, secondary schools, local governing bodies, and private technology enterprises across seven European countries. This multidisciplinary collaboration is designed to foster a holistic approach to understanding and addressing student anxiety within educational settings. The consortium includes partners with varied backgrounds in education, mental health, and technology, ensuring a comprehensive perspective on the needs, solutions, and potential challenges related to mental health in schools.

A primary goal of WAI is to provide educators with practical, AI-driven tools to support students' mental wellbeing effectively. Central to this effort is the creation of a Toolkit and an accompanying education program. The Toolkit will give teachers access to knowledge on mental health, alongside AI-based strategies that they can incorporate into their classrooms. This will include specific approaches for identifying and managing anxiety symptoms, helping teachers recognize and address student needs early on. Moreover, the education program aims to empower teachers with the skills needed to apply AI tools confidently and responsibly, promoting a safe and supportive environment for students.

Another essential component of WAI is the development of a Personal Assistant (PA) system that leverages AI to provide recommendations tailored to individual students. This recommendation system will be designed through a participatory approach, incorporating input from teachers, mental health experts, and AI developers to ensure it meets real classroom needs. The PA will utilize specific algorithms and data to offer guidance and resources that support student wellbeing, helping them manage anxiety more effectively. The system will be designed with a strong focus on ethical AI use, ensuring that its recommendations are transparent, respectful of privacy, and aligned

with sustainable practices in education. This approach not only supports students directly but also raises awareness among educational stakeholders about the positive role AI can play in mental health.

The WAI project ultimately aims to create a sustainable framework for incorporating AI tools into educational systems across Europe, addressing immediate mental health challenges while preparing for future needs. WAI aims to promote responsible AI integration in education through solutions that emphasize ethical use and data privacy. Additionally, the project's focus on awareness and training is intended to foster a broader understanding of how AI can support mental wellbeing, encouraging educational institutions to adopt these innovations thoughtfully. Through these combined efforts, WAI aims to make a meaningful contribution to educational technology and mental health, fostering healthier and more resilient learning environments.

2. Anxiety in School Environment: a theoretical approach

The OECD and European Commission report (OECD/European Union, 2022) states that symptoms of anxiety and depression among young people more than doubled in several European countries during the pandemic, emphasizing that mental health responses fall short of what is needed. In this context, anxiety, as a state oriented toward preparing for possible negative future events, presents itself as an issue that can be addressed in its early stages.

Anxiety disorders, collectively, are the most common type of mental disorder among young people, with an average global prevalence of 6.5% over various time periods (Polanczyk, Salum, Sugaya, Caye, & Rohde, 2015). Most population estimates based on diagnostic interviews indicate that around 5 to 10% of young people aged 6 to 18 meet diagnostic criteria for an anxiety disorder within a 12-month period (Canino et al., 2004; Vicente et al., 2012).

The prevalence of anxiety and depression varies by gender, being more common in females (Canals et al., 2019). There is a consensus that most mental disorders emerge around the age of 14. In particular, anxiety issues tend to appear early, with about 50% of anxiety disorders starting before age 18 and nearly 75% before age 25 (Solmi et al., 2022).

Adolescents' concerns are generally related to their self-perception. These young people may worry about academic performance and the pressure to excel academically, about how they are perceived by others, and about their body image, especially concerning the physical changes associated with growth. It is not always easy to identify anxiety in adolescents, as they tend to hide their thoughts and feelings (Weems, C. F., Costa, N. M., 2005).

Regardless of specific symptoms in adolescents, anxiety can negatively impact their thoughts, emotions, and physical health. This, in turn, can interfere with their ability to function both academically and socially. Some signs that may indicate this condition include constant worry about daily activities, withdrawal from friends and social activities, irritability or aggressiveness, academic difficulties or declining performance, reluctance to attend school, sleep problems, substance use, and a constant need for validation. Regardless of how anxiety manifests in adolescents, it can negatively affect their thoughts, emotions, and physical health, with consequences for academic and social performance (Essau et al., 2014; Rapee, M., Schniering, A., Hudson, L., 2009).

In the school context, and considering students aged 15 to 18, anxiety can limit students' cognitive development, as it diverts attention from teaching and learning activities. Some of the most frequent problems that students face, causing them anxiety, are related to academic performance, social environment, and the pressure they may feel due to the responsibility of making decisions that could affect their future. After the global pandemic years, issues related to environmental disasters, which have become more frequent in recent years, and the ongoing war in Europe, with the uncertainty of what the future holds, may be factors that increase anxiety levels in populations, particularly in young people due to their vulnerabilities in relation to their expectations for the future. Several studies point to anxiety as one of the main inhibitors of working memory, causing students to perform below their expected and actual capabilities (Moran, 2016; Lukasik, 2019). Preventing this condition is essential, as early

interventions can reduce the risk of future complications, such as more severe emotional disorders and negative impacts on learning.

In public health, preventive interventions are classified as universal, selective, and indicated (Piqueras, J. A., et al., 2024). In mental health, the selective approach is directed at groups with a higher risk of developing emotional disorders due to specific risk factors. The indicated approach is aimed at groups with mild but noticeable symptoms of an emotional disorder (Stockings EA, et al., 2016).

Teacher training plays a crucial role in the prevention and management of anxiety. Educators trained to identify signs of anxiety and implement appropriate strategies in the classroom can create a healthier and more supportive learning environment. Furthermore, educating teachers in mental health enables them to address emotional issues more effectively, contributing to students' well-being.

In this context, new technologies, especially artificial intelligence (AI), emerge as powerful tools to support both teachers and students. AI can be used to develop personalized support systems, such as virtual assistants that identify early signs of anxiety and offer intervention recommendations. Training teachers in emerging technologies, combined with training in mental health, allows the implementation of innovative solutions, such as AI platforms, that promote well-being and help create a more balanced and less stressful learning environment.

Information and Communication Technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have gained a prominent role in the management and provision of healthcare and social assistance, as part of digital health (dHealth) solutions. Due to recent technological developments, several researchers have designed innovative tools that improve accessibility and the quality of care for people with mental health issues (Caldeira, C., et al., 2018; Bucci S, Schwannauer M, Berry N., 2019). Mobile applications also appear to help users engage in health-promoting behaviors outside the clinical context (Carl JR, et al., 2022). In the mental health context, the potential of new technologies has gained attention, especially considering the sensitive aspects associated with managing depression and anxiety (McIntyre RS, et al., 2023; De Angel V, et al., 2022).

An increasing number of publications highlight the transformative potential of AI in education, particularly its ability to enhance personalized learning experiences and support diverse learning needs (Chen L, Chen P, Lin Z., 2020). AI can significantly contribute to students' well-being by offering personalized educational support, early detection of mental health issues, and interventions tailored to students' individual profiles. Developing a comprehensive toolkit is important for effectively implementing educational strategies. This toolkit would serve as a central resource, equipping educators with tools and guidelines to integrate AI into their teaching practices.

In summary, preventing anxiety among students requires a multifaceted approach, and the role of teachers, allied with new technologies, is crucial to ensuring that young people receive the necessary support on their educational and emotional journey. In this context, the present project aims not only to address this issue but also to prevent its growing incidence, leveraging the potential of artificial intelligence (AI).

3. Global characterization of the educational system in the countries of the consortium members

This chapter presents the structures of education and training systems from pre-school to secondary education in the countries that make up the partnership: Portugal, Poland, Greece, Lithuania, France, Slovenia and Türkiye. For each country, the principles and organization of the education system will be presented, following the structure and ending with the qualification of teachers. The data presented come from various sources in which Eurostat data and Eurydice reports were privileged. Each partner complemented it with data they collected from official national documents.

3.1. FRANCE

3.1.1. Principles and organization

The institutional framework of the French education system is structured around various principles and organizations that ensure the implementation of educational policies. Here is a detailed presentation of this framework:

Founding Principles

Free Education: Public education is free, ensuring access to instruction for all children.
Secularism: Education is secular, meaning it is independent of religious influence, thereby ensuring state neutrality on matters of religion.
Compulsory Schooling: Education is compulsory for all children, whether French or foreign, residing in France, from the age of 3 to 16.

Ministry of National Education

The Ministry of National Education is the main authority responsible for education in France. It is tasked with defining, implementing, and managing national educational policy. Its responsibilities include:

- Developing school curricula.
- Managing teaching and administrative staff.
- Coordinating with other ministries and organizations to ensure coherent educational policies.

Academies

France is divided into academies, which are administrative subdivisions of the Ministry of National Education. Each academy is led by a rector, appointed by the President of the Republic, who represents the ministry at the local level. The main functions of the academies include:

- Implementing national directives.
- Managing schools within their jurisdiction.
- Overseeing and evaluating school and teacher performance.

Roles of Key Figures

1. School Director:
   1.1. Responsible for the day-to-day management of primary schools (maternelle and élémentaire).
   1.2. Supervises teaching and non-teaching staff.

1.3. Acts as the liaison between the school, parents, and academic authorities.
1.4. Manages the administrative and financial aspects of the school.

2. School Principal:
   2.1. Leads the collège and oversees teaching and administrative staff.
   2.2. Coordinates educational activities and ensures the implementation of the school curriculum.
   2.3. Manages relations with parents and external partners.
   2.4. Makes disciplinary decisions and ensures the smooth operation of the school.
3. Headmaster in High School:
   3.1. Oversees the overall management of the lycée, including general, technological, and vocational lycées.
   3.2. Supervises staff, curriculum, and educational activities.
   3.3. Acts as the liaison with parents, students, and academic authorities. Manages the financial and administrative aspects of the lycée.
4. Primary School Teacher:
   4.1. Teaches at the primary level (maternelle and élémentaire).
   4.2. Implements national curricula in their classroom.
   4.3. Assesses student progress and adjusts teaching methods to meet individual needs.
   4.4. Contributes to pedagogical management and coordination with the school director.
5. Secondary School Teacher:
   5.1. Teaches at the collège and lycée levels (including vocational lycées).
   5.2. Implements teaching programs and prepares students for examinations.
   5.3. Assesses student performance and adapts teaching methods accordingly.
   5.4. Collaborates with other educational staff and participates in school life.
6. Educational Advisor (Conseiller Principal d'Éducation – CPE):
   6.1. Manages student life within the lycée, including discipline and pastoral care.
   6.2. Oversees student attendance and behaviour and works to resolve conflicts and issues.
   6.3. Coordinates with teachers, parents, and administration to support students' well-being and academic success.
   6.4. Organizes and supervises extracurricular activities and ensures the smooth operation of student services.

Consultative and Regulatory Bodies

Several bodies participate in the regulation and consultation of the education sector:

- The Superior Council of Education (CSE): A consultative body that provides opinions on major educational policy directions.
- Academic Councils: Local structures that contribute to the development and evaluation of educational policies at the academic level.
- Technical Committees and Health and Safety Committees: Address issues related to staff working conditions and safety in educational institutions.

Partnerships and Cooperation

The institutional framework of education in France also includes partnerships with:

- Local Authorities: They contribute to the funding and material management of educational institutions.
- Parents' Associations: They play a consultative and participatory role in school councils and administrative boards.
- Businesses and Professional Organizations: Particularly involved in vocational and technological training.

Conclusion

The institutional framework of the French education system is designed to ensure quality education that is accessible to all, while respecting the principles of secularism and free education. Through a centralized organization at the Ministry of National Education, decentralized management at the academy level, and participatory partnerships, the French educational system aims to meet the educational needs of all students while preparing them to fully participate in society. Vocational school play a crucial role by providing a pathway for students to directly prepare for professional life. The roles of the school director, principal, headmaster, educational advisor (CPE), primary school teacher, and secondary school teacher are essential for the effective functioning and quality of education.

3.1.2. Structure

Educational Institutions

French educational institutions are divided into several levels, each with its own administrative structures:

- Preschools and Elementary Schools: Managed by a director, these institutions are responsible for the education of children aged 3 to 11.
- Junior high or middle school: : Managed by a principal, they cater to students aged 11 to 15.
- high school: Managed by a proviseur, they cater to students aged 15 to 18. Lyceés are divided into general, technological, and vocational tracks.
- Vocational school: Specialize in professional education, preparing students for specific careers through diplomas such as the CAP (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle) and the professional baccalaureate. They generally serve students aged 15 to 18 and are managed by a proviseur.

"Education at the high school level is organized into three main educational tracks: the general track, the technological track, and the vocational track. Three main categories of high schools are distinguished: – the general and technological high school; – the vocational high school; – the polyvalent high school, which combines programs from the two previous categories of high schools."

3.2. GREECE

3.2.1. Principles and organization

Primary education

Primary education includes pre-schools (compulsory for all 4-year-old children) and primary schools (Spans 6 years. It concerns children in the age range of 6-12 years old). All pre-schools and primary schools provide an optional all-day programme.

Secondary education

Secondary education includes two cycles of study:

1. Gymnasio

The first cycle is compulsory and corresponds to gymnasio (lower secondary school).

1.1. It lasts 3 years
1.2. It provides general education
1.3. It covers ages 12-15
1.4. It is a prerequisite for enrolling at general or vocational upper secondary schools
1.5. Parallel to imerisio (day) gymnasio, esperino (evening) gymnasio operates. Attendance starts at the age of 14 and lasts 3 years, as well.

2. Lykeio

The second cycle is the optional geniko or epangelmatiko lykeio (general or vocational upper secondary school).

2.1. It lasts 3 years
2.2. Pupils enrol at the age of 15
2.3. There are two different types:
2.3.1. Geniko (general) lykeio. It lasts 3 years and includes both common core subjects and optional subjects of specialisation
2.3.2. Epangelmatiko (vocational) lykeio. It offers two cycles of studies:
2.3.2.1. The secondary cycle
2.3.2.2. The optional post-secondary cycle, the so-called “apprenticeship class”.
2.4. Parallel to day lykeia, there are also:
2.4.1. Esperina genika (evening general) lykeia
2.4.2. Esperina epangelmatika (evening vocational) lykeia.

3. Second chance schools (SDE)

SDE are public and target persons aged 18 years or older, who have not completed the nine-year compulsory education and hold the primary school leaving certificate. Attendance lasts 2 years.

4. Post lower secondary vocational education and training, level 3

It is provided in:

4.1. Vocational training schools (ESK)
4.2. Vocational apprenticeship schools (EPAS) of the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED)

Attendance lasts 2 years and includes grades A and B. Holders of the lower secondary school graduation certificate, or equivalent, can enroll in grade A, without exams. ESK can be public or private, day or evening. EPAS are public.

5. Post-secondary vocational training, level 5

It is provided in:

5.1. Vocational training institutes (IEK)

5.2. Post-secondary cycle of studies - apprenticeship class

IEK provide initial vocational training to graduates from upper secondary schools, i.e. general upper secondary schools (GEL), vocational upper secondary schools (EPAL), as well as holders of equivalent certificates/degrees. Vocational training lasts 4-5 semesters. For EPAL graduates and holders of equivalent vocational certificates or degrees, vocational training may last 2-3 semesters. IEK may be public or private.

Post-secondary cycle of studies - apprenticeship class provides initial vocational training to graduates from upper secondary vocational schools, or holders of equivalent certificates or degrees, who have a basic level of knowledge, skills and competences. The post-secondary – apprenticeship programme lasts 11 months.

6. Higher education

Higher education is the last level of the formal education system. Most undergraduate degree programmes take 4 academic years of full-time study.

Postgraduate courses last from one to two years, while doctorates at least 3 years.

HE comprises:

6.1. The university sector (panepistimio):

6.1.1. Universities (AEI)

6.1.2. Technical Universities

6.1.3. The Athens School of Fine Arts (ASKT).

6.2. The technological sector:

6.2.1. Technologika ekpaideftika idrymata (technological educational institutes TEI)

6.2.2. The School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE).

It is noted that educational institutes have merged with higher education institutes (AEI).

7. Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning policy in Greece is part of a wider development plan. Law 4763/2020 aims at further reforming LLL structures and facilitating the implementation of LLL policy. The General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning and Youth plans the public policy of LLL and youth. Non-formal education can lead to certifications recognised at national level. Lifelong learning is mainly provided at:

7.1. Scholeia defteris efkairias (second chance schools - SDE)

7.2. Institouta epangelmatikis katartisis (vocational training institutes - IEK)

7.3. Epangelmatikes Scoles Katartisis and Epangelmatikes scholes Mathitias OAED (vocational training schools, ESK and vocational training apprentiship schools, EPAS of OAED)

7.4. Kentra dia viou mathisis (lifelong learning centres, KDVM)

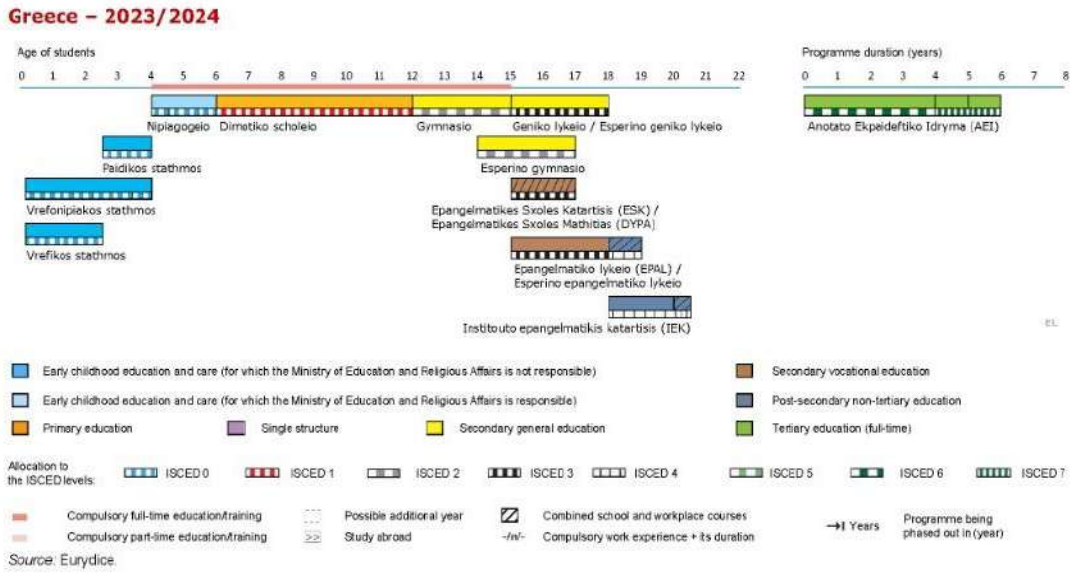
7.5. Kollegia (colleges).

With Law 4763/2020 introduces the National System for Education and Training which is developed at along the lines of levels 3, 4 and 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). LLL structures included in the formal education system are Second Chance Schools (SDE) and Vocational Training Institutes (IEK). The reform provides for

the creation of post-secondary non-compulsory schools for ages between 16 to 23 (ESK and EPAS) which are included in the formal education system.
Lifelong learning Centres (KDVM) and colleges are part of the non-formal education system.

3.2.2. Structure

Structure of the national education system



Source: Eurydice.

3.3. LITHUANIA

3.3.1. Principles and organization

Lithuania's education system is more decentralized than centralized. Public authorities, municipalities, and educational institutions share responsibility for the quality of education provided. Education policy at the national level is set by the Seimas. It adopts laws and declarations on policy changes. The government in corporations and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (and other relevant ministries) also formulate and implement education policy and adopt and implement government legislation.

Pre-primary education is compulsory, and children must attend pre-primary education at 5. Education is compulsory until the age of 16, i.e. primary and lower secondary education is compulsory. Pupils' progress and achievements are assessed by standardized tests in Years 4 and 8.

Compulsory assessment of lower secondary attainment is carried out in Year 10 (in lower secondary schools in Year 2). Upper secondary education ends with compulsory matriculation examinations (matriculation exams), which are used to assess pupils' achievements to date and, if necessary, to enter higher education. During the last two years of upper secondary school, pupils are given some freedom in their subjects. This freedom is considerably extended in upper secondary and higher education.

The organization of grammar schools, secondary schools, and vocational training in Lithuania is governed by the following main pieces of legislation: Education Law (2011), Vocational Training Law (2018) and Government Decree: Rules for establishing a network of schools providing formal education programs (2011).

Orders of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport: Schedule of Primary, Primary, Secondary and Higher Education Programs (2015), Master Plan for Primary, Primary, Secondary and Higher Education Programs 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 (2023).), the Description of Formal Vocational Training Programs (2012), the Master Plan for Vocational Training Programs 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 (2023), the Description of Procedures for Sequential Learning in General Education Programs (2012), the Concept of Non-traditional Education (2010).

- Early childhood education and care
- Pre-school education
- Pre-primary education
- General education
- Primary education
- Lower secondary education
- Upper secondary education
- Non-formal education for children

3.3.2. Structure

According to the Constitution, primary education is compulsory for all children from the age of 7 until the age of 16. Some children start primary education when they turn 6. Lower secondary education covers children aged 11 (10) to 16 (15), and upper secondary education includes children aged 17 (16) to 19 (18).

Early childhood education and care

In Lithuania, pre-school education and care services are divided into two parts. The first part is non-compulsory pre-school education (as an exception. Pre-primary education is for children from birth until they start attending a pre-primary education program (around 6 years of age). The compulsory pre-school year is the second part of pre-school education and care provision. Children must start pre-primary education in the calendar year they turn 6 years old. Parents may decide to admit their children to pre-primary education a year earlier, but not before age 5. Pre-primary education lasts one year and aims to prepare children for primary education.

Pre-primary education is provided by state and municipal kindergartens and private pre-primary education institutions and can be provided by various general education schools.

Pre-primary education is provided in accordance with the General Pre-primary Curriculum.

Pre-primary education from birth to 2 years inclusive is classified at ISCED level 010. Pre-school education from the age of 3 years and pre-primary education is classified at ISCED level 020.

General education

1. Primary Education

Primary education is a compulsory four-year program of study (covering grades 1-4), leading to primary education. It is the first stage of formal education and is the link between pre-primary and primary education. According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011), primary education is classified at ISCED level 1. Primary education is provided by the following types of schools: Primary schools (providing pre-primary, pre-primary and primary education); elementary schools (providing primary education); pro-gymnasiums (providing the first part of the primary curriculum, or the first part of the primary curriculum and the primary curriculum); primary schools (implementing a primary education program or a primary education program and a primary education program); secondary schools (implementing a secondary education program or a secondary education program and a primary education program or a secondary education program, a primary education program and a primary education program); schools with alternative education systems (Waldorf schools, also known as Rudolf Steiner schools, Maria Montessori schools, Shin'ichi Suzuki schools, or schools of traditional religious denominations and communities, which provide a general or adapted primary curriculum for pupils, based on the concept of an alternative education system approved by the Minister for Education, Science and Sport); special education schools (implementing pre-school, pre-primary, primary, primary and secondary education programs); adult education center's (implementing pre-school, pre-primary, primary, primary and secondary education programs); multi-purpose schools (implementing pre-primary and/or primary education programs;

Primary education is governed by the following legislation: Education Law (2011), Government of the Republic of Lithuania Resolution "On the Approval of the Rules for the Establishment of the Network of Schools Implementing Formal Education Programs" (2011), Ministerial Orders including those related to the Description of Primary, Primary, and Secondary Curricula (2015), and the Description of the Procedures of Sequential Learning in the Framework of the General Education Program (2012), General Curricula for Primary and Primary Education (2008), General Curricula, General Curricula for Gymnasiums and Secondary Schools for the academic years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 (2023), the Concept of Non-Formal Education for Children (2012), the Concept of Non-Traditional Education (2010), the Concept of Talent Education in Lithuania based on the Suzuki Model (2005).), the Concept of Montessori Pedagogical Education in Lithuania (2004), the Concept of Waldorf Pedagogy (2004), and the Concept of Education according to the Jesuit Pedagogical Training (2008).

2. Lower Secondary Education

In Lithuania, lower secondary education is classified as ISCED level 2. It is the second stage of formal education, implemented through a six-year gymnasium curriculum. The second part of the lower secondary curriculum may include modules from vocational training programs that will count towards continuing education in vocational training programs.

Lower secondary education aims to provide a person with the foundations for moral, socio-cultural, and civic maturity, as well as general and technological literacy, to develop a national identity, to foster the intention and ability to make decisions and choices and to pursue further education.

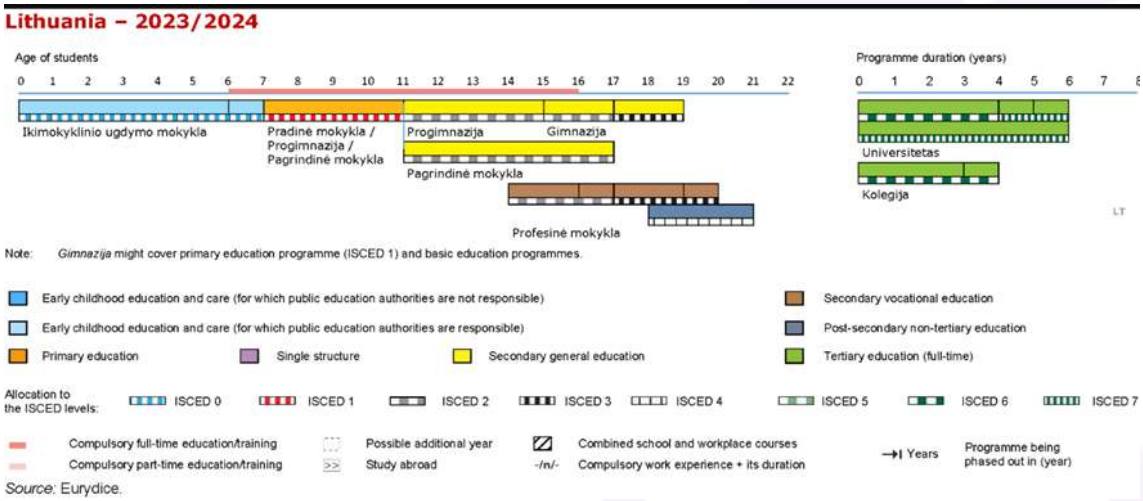
Institutions providing lower secondary education include pre-primary schools, grammar schools, and gymnasiums. Vocational training schools may also provide lower secondary education and a vocational training program.

3. Upper Secondary Education

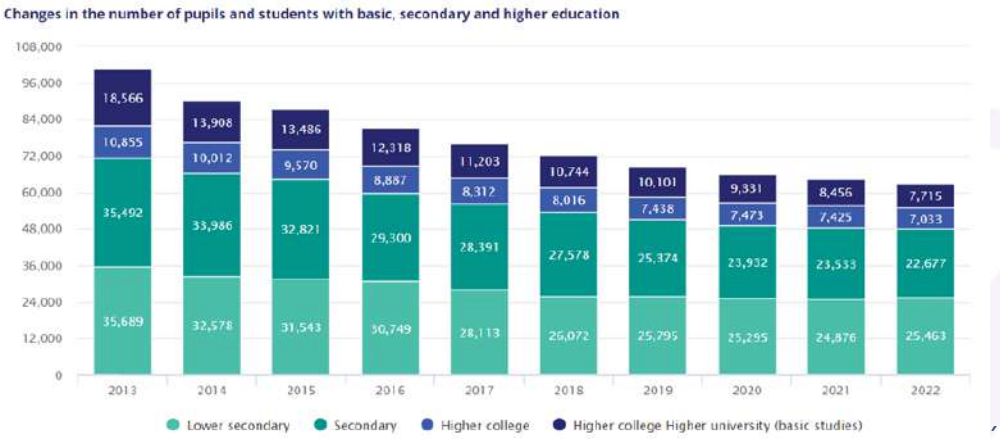
In Lithuania, upper-secondary education is classified as ISCED level 3. Secondary education is obtained through a two-year secondary education program. The curriculum consists of compulsory and elective general education subjects and possible vocational training modules.

Secondary education aims to help individuals acquire general academic, socio-cultural, and technological literacy, moral, national, and civic maturity, and the foundations of professional competence.

Secondary education programs are implemented in secondary schools. Vocational schools may also provide secondary education together with a vocational training program.

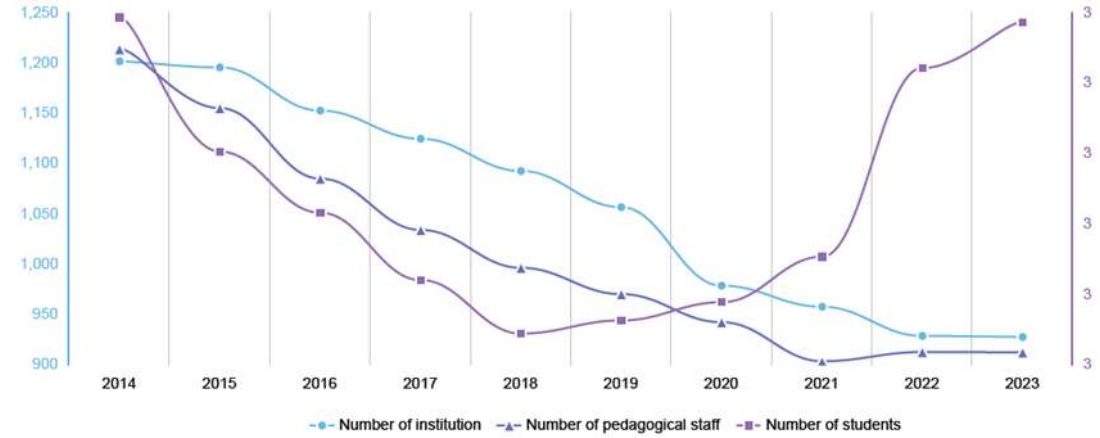


In 2022, compared to 2021, the number of general schools decreased from 957 to 910 (still no such data for 2023-2024, but tendencies are the same). At the beginning of the 2022–2023 school year, 344.5 thousand students were educated according to general education programmes. in 2022, lower secondary education certificates in general schools were received by 25.3 thousand students (in 2021, 24.8 thousand), upper secondary – 20.1 thousand (in 2021, 19.8 thousand). More than two thirds of general school-leavers (72.3 per cent) continued their education in the country's education establishments in the same year: 38.5 per cent – in universities, 21.4 per cent – in colleges, 12.3 per cent – in vocational schools.



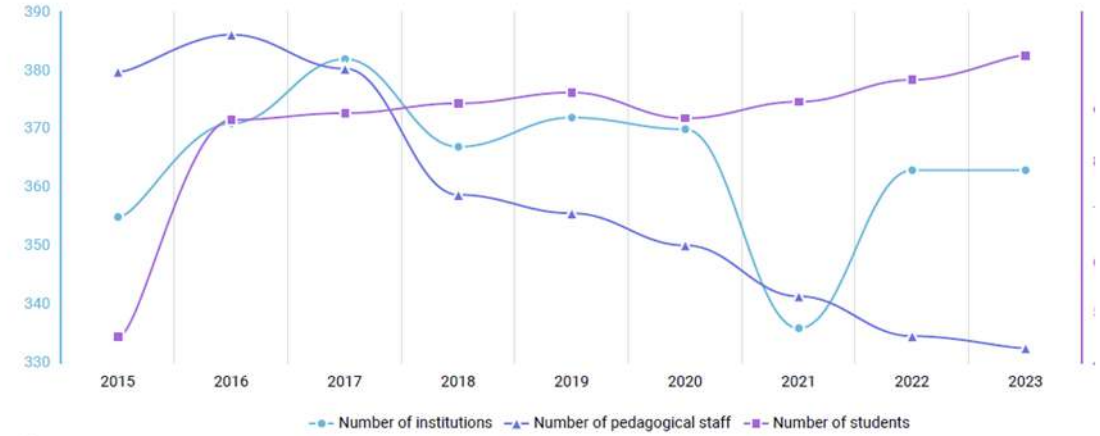
Adapted from https://osp.stat.gov.lt/svietimas

General education institutions data



*Working at the main workplace

Non-formal education institutions data



Number of schools/students in Lithuania (historical data)

		Number of educational institutions | units	Number of pupils and students | persons
Total by educational establishment	2022-2023	999	473698
	2021-2022	1063	460349
	2020-2021	1085	458868
	2019-2020	1168	459443
	2018-2019	1204	467759
General school	2022-2023	910	344560
	2021-2022	957	330262
	2020-2021	977	327022
	2019-2020	1056	325677
	2018-2019	1089	322344

3.4. POLAND

3.4.1. Principles and organization

Full-time compulsory education lasts for 9 years. It comprises the last year of pre-school education and 8 years of primary school education.

In the Polish educational legislation full-time compulsory schooling and part-time compulsory education are defined as follows:

- Full-time compulsory schooling
  - Obligation to attend school by pupils aged 7-15 years.
- Part-time compulsory education
  - Obligation to continue education in some form for pupils aged 15-18;
  - May be implemented either in school settings (a student attends secondary school) or in non-school settings (e.g. a student follows vocational training offered by employers).

3.4.2. Structure

ECEC

1. Institutions for children aged 0-3 years:

1.1. crèche (żłobek)

1.2. kids' club (klub dziecięcy).

Attending a crèche/club is not obligatory, these institutions are not part of education system as they are supervised by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.

2. Institutions for children aged 3-6 years:

2.1. nursery school (przedszkole)

2.2. pre-school class in a primary school (oddział przedszkolny w szkole podstawowej)

2.3. pre-school unit (zespół wychowania przedszkolnego)

2.4. pre-school centre (punkt przedszkolny).

Pre-school education is optional for 3-, 4- and 5-year-old children and obligatory for 6-year-olds. Every 3-, 4- and 5-year-old, however, has an entitlement to a place in a pre-primary setting in his/her community.

Compulsory education starts at the age of 7 in grade one of the primary school. All 6-year-olds have to attend a pre-school institution for one year in order to acquire basic skills before they start school.

Primary education (ISCED 1+2)

Primary education comprises 8 years of primary school (8-year single structure education) which is compulsory for all pupils (typically) aged 7-15. It includes:

1. grades 1-3 (early school education)
2. grades 4-8 (teaching by subject).

At the end of grade 8 of primary school pupils take a compulsory external examination – 8th grader's exam. The results of the exam together with end of school achievement influence admission to secondary schools.

Secondary education (ISCED 3)

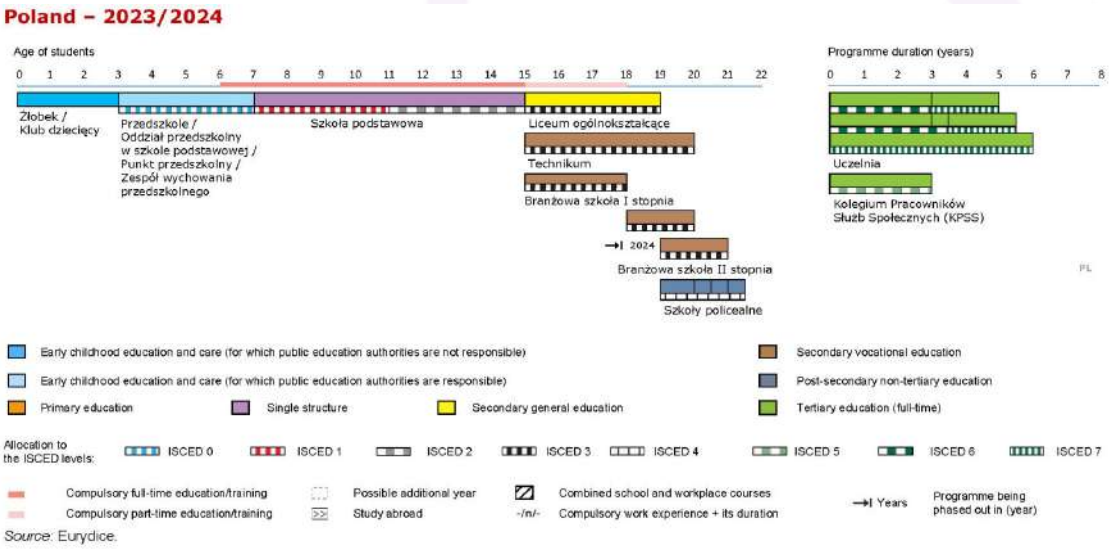
Although this stage of education is not compulsory (or in fact compulsory part-time up to the age of 18, either in school or non-school setting), a vast majority of students continues education in secondary schools.

The structure of secondary education (ISCED 3) includes the following types of schools:

1. 4-year general secondary school (liceum ogólnokształcące) [ISCED 344]
2. 5-year technical secondary school (technikum) [ISCED 354]
3. 3-year Stage I sectoral vocational school (branżowa szkoła I stopnia) [ISCED 353]
4. 2-year Stage II sectoral vocational school (branżowa szkoła II stopnia) [ISCED 354].

Examinations

Graduates of general secondary schools and technical secondary schools may take the external secondary school leaving examination (egzamin maturalny) to obtain the certificate (świadectwo maturalne), which gives access to higher education. This possibility is also open to graduates of the Stage II sectoral vocational schools.
Students of vocational schools - sectoral vocational schools and technical upper secondary schools - take the obligatory vocational examinations and upon passing these exams they receive a vocational diploma.



The education system in Poland has undergone many changes in curriculum, management, administration, and structure since the system's transformation in 1989. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Science introduced e-learning. As a result, schools in Poland had to transfer learning from school to home several times to curb the increase in infections between 2020 and 2021. Public expenditure on education and upbringing amounted to 106.3 billion zloty in 2022, which accounted for 4.3 percent of the Polish gross domestic product.

Table 1. Pre-primary education
As of 30 September

SPECIFICATION a – 2022/23 b – 2023/24		Establishments	Sections	Children
Total	**a**	**22505**	**76002**	**1534212**
	b	**22505**	**76276**	**1512017**
Nursery schools	a	13756	60538	1249173
	b	13888	60788	1228695
Pre-primary sections in primary schools	a	7305	14020	260235
	b	7218	14089	260026
Pre-primary education units	a	45	45	664
	b	37	37	522
Pre-primary centres	a	1399	1399	24140
	b	1362	1362	22774

Chart 1. Pre-primary education in urban and rural areas
As of 30 September

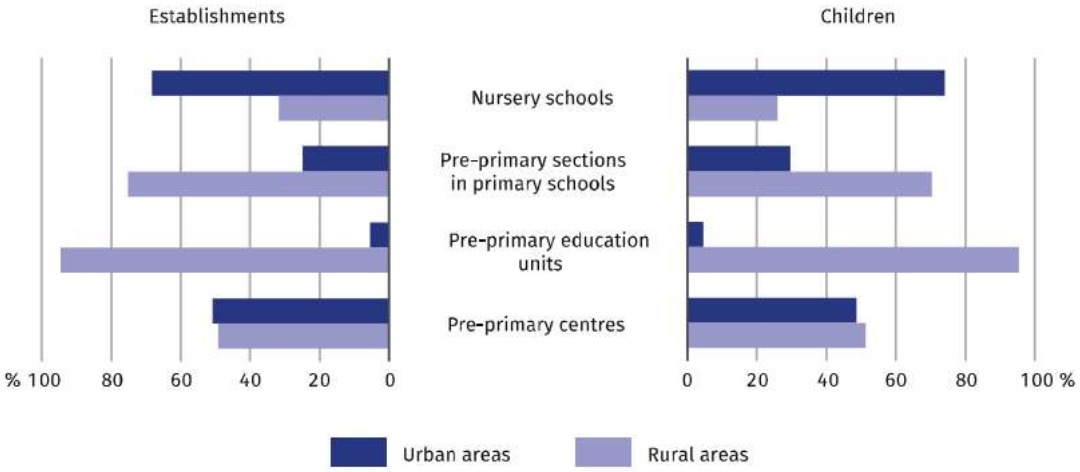


Table 2. Primary schools for children and youth
As of 30 September

SPECIFICATION a – 2022/23 b – 2023/24		Schools	Sections	Pupils		Graduates	
				total	of which girls	total	of which girls
Total	**a**	**14073**	**184105**	**3122826**	**1510787**	**512489**	**252618**
	b	**14000**	**180881**	**3007434**	**1451572**	·	·
of which:							
Branch schools	a	186	742	7523	3617	322	159
	b	167	680	7073	3423	·	·
Art schools [a]	a	55	612	10210	6252	488	297
	b	55	659	11200	6880	·	·
Special schools	a	951	15005	51830	17568	6970	2389
	b	947	15649	53456	17890	·	·

a Not leading to professional certification.

Table 3. Post-primary schools for youth
As of 30 September

SPECIFICATION a – 2022/23 b – 2023/24		Schools	Sections	Students		Graduates	
				total	of which females	total	of which females
Total	**a**	**6819**	**70693**	**1671187**	**816920**	**330430**	**166819**
	b	**6935**	**76518**	**1818934**	**888209**	.	.
Special job-training schools	a	560	3813	12713	4924	2868	1135
	b	565	3897	12483	4733	.	.
Stage I sectoral vocational schools	a	1672	9257	195097	63930	46799	15261
	b	1695	10259	217499	72405	.	.
Stage II sectoral vocational schools	a	226	585	11375	3167	1372	399
	b	261	766	12973	3832	.	.
General secondary schools	a	2398	27646	726386	455213	159937	101861
	b	2449	30173	806123	501589	.	.
Technical secondary schools	a	1861	28603	711140	277608	117346	46546
	b	1858	30612	755167	293021	.	.
General art schools [a]	a	102	789	14476	12078	2108	1617
	b	107	811	14689	12629	.	.

a Leading to professional certification

Table 4. Post-secondary schools
As of 30 September

SPECIFICATION	2022/23	2023/24
Schools	1287	1248
Sections	9932	10130
Students	234817	243129
of which females	168275	173466
Graduates	68788	.
of which females	53349	.

3.5. PORTUGAL

3.5.1. Principles and organization

Education in Portugal is organized in accordance with the democratic principles established in the Constitution of the Republic (1976), namely the freedom to teach and learn, as well as the rights of citizens and the State's duties in this area. These same principles were the basis of the Education Law (1986), which defines the objectives, structures and modes of educational organization.

The Ministry of Education (ME) is the government agency responsible for defining, coordinating, implementing and evaluating the national policy relating to the education system (pre-school, basic, secondary and extra-school education), as well as for the articulation of the policy of education with qualification and professional training policies.

The school network is organized into school Groups (Agrupamentos), which have their own administration and management bodies.

3.5.2. Structure

Compulsory education lasts for 12 years, between the ages of six and 18 (ISCED 3). Public education tends to be free and universal from the age of four.

The Portuguese education system is divided as follows:

1. Pre-school education (ISCED 0)

Pre-school education covers children aged three to compulsory school age (six years). Attending pre-school education is optional, recognizing the primacy of the family's role in early childhood education. However, the network of establishments has been expanding within a generalized service availability policy. Provision for children under three, with a special focus on childcare (ISCED 010) (nursery), is not part of the education system.

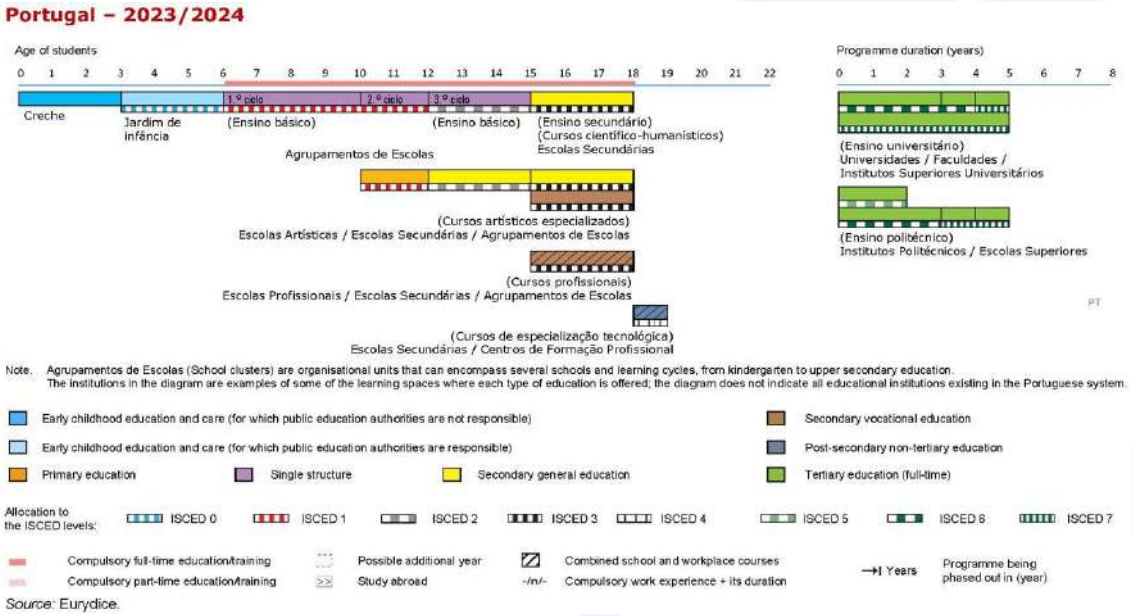
2. Basic education (ISCED 1 and 2)

Basic education is universal, mandatory, free and lasts for nine years. It is divided into three sequential cycles; each must complete and build on the above from a global perspective: the first cycle (ISCED 1) corresponds to the first four years of schooling (1st to 4th grades). The second cycle (ISCED 1) corresponds to the following two years (fifth and sixth year). The third cycle (ISCED 2) lasts for three years and corresponds to lower secondary education (grades seven to nine).

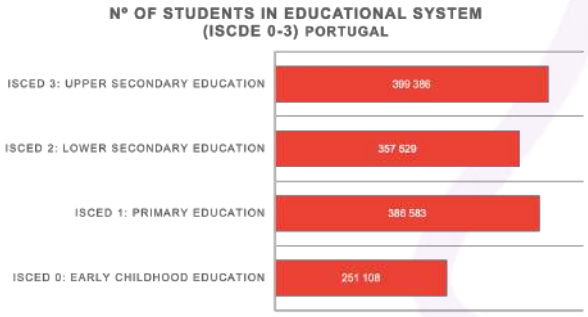
3. Upper High School (ISCED 3)

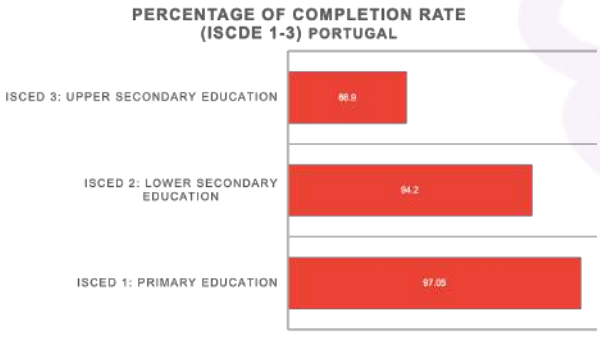
Secondary education lasts three years and corresponds to grades 10, 11 and 12 of secondary education high school, organized in different modalities. Some are aimed at further studies, others via dual certification (academic and professional), the latter combining general, technical and work placement training. The permeability between the different paths is guaranteed, as well as access through all the higher education through national examinations.

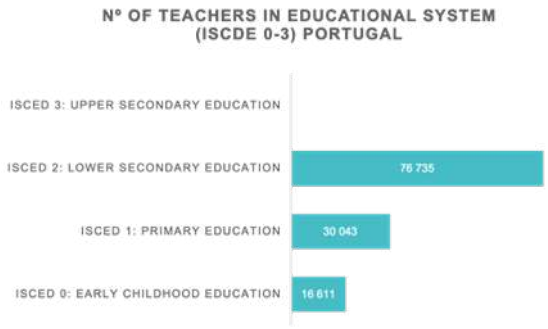
The following chart shows the structure of the Portuguese education system, framing the levels that are the object of this study (ISCED 2 and 3).



Adapted from https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/portugal/overview on December, 2023.






Nº OF TEACHERS IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM
(ISCDE 0-3) PORTUGAL
ISCED 3: UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION
ISCED 2: LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION
76 735
ISCED 1: PRIMARY EDUCATION
30 043
ISCED 0: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
16 611

3.6. SLOVENIA

3.6.1. Principles and organization

The education system of the Republic of Slovenia is organised as a public service rendered by public and private institutions that provide officially recognized or accredited programmes.

By law, public schools are secular and the school space is autonomous.

The state acts as founder of public:

1. Upper secondary schools
2. Short cycle higher education colleges
3. Higher education institutions
4. Educational institutions for SEN children
5. Residence halls for students, and
6. Supporting professional institutes in education.

The municipality acts as founder of public:

1. Kindergartens
2. Basic schools (single-structure primary and lower secondary education)
3. Residence halls for pupils
4. Music schools, and
5. Adult education organisations.

Public institutions are state controlled by appointment of representatives to governance bodies, public funding, salary system, adoption of common rules and guidelines of public service, centrally adopted curricula, etc. The providers of public service are under the supervision of the school inspectorate.

The governance body of public kindergartens and schools is the council and the management body is the head teacher, who is also a pedagogical leader. Teachers enjoy professional autonomy and the head teacher has the autonomy in accordance with requirements to employ teachers of their own choice.

As specified by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, there is a guarantee of freedom of choice in education and autonomy of higher education institutions.

Minority provision

The language of instruction is Slovenian. Members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in ethnically mixed areas have the right to education in their respective languages. The Constitution also protects the status and gives special rights to members of the Roma community.

Legal entitlement to preschool education

Children in Slovenia are legally entitled to a place in a kindergarten (vrtec) from the age of 11 months (end of childcare leave) to the age of compulsory schooling. The steering document of public pre-school education is the Kindergarten curriculum.

Extended basic school programme

All basic schools have to provide free-of-charge non-compulsory activities of the extended programme, namely remedial and supplementary lessons, extracurricular interest activities, non-compulsory optional subjects, as well as morning care (grade 1) and after-school classes (grades 1 to 5). A wide majority of pupils attend the activities.

The programme is provided by qualified teachers in line with officially adopted educational guidelines and concepts.

National assessment

At the end of grades 6 and 9, pupils undertake the compulsory national assessment in three subjects. The main objective is to improve the quality of teaching and learning, thereby also ensuring a higher quality of knowledge and competences of pupils. Results do not influence the marks, but have some impact on the educational path of pupils. The future status and impact of the national assessment are currently under debate.

Music education

A well-developed network of publicly funded music schools provides music and ballet lessons to enthusiastic pupils who in turn do not have to take one of two compulsory optional subjects.

Inclusive approach for SEN children

The provision of special needs education in Slovenia embraces the multi-track approach to inclusion: kindergartens and schools tend to children with special needs by way of inclusion and special classes, and there are special education institutions, as well.

Late tracking

Tracking of students begins in upper secondary education, typically at the age of 15. Students may choose freely among general and vocational programmes. If the number of candidates exceeds the number of places, schools may limit enrolment in the first year.

High-stakes exams at the end of upper secondary education

At the end of upper secondary education, students take final exams. In two and three-year vocational programmes, the student completes their studies with a school leaving examination. At successfully completing the end of four years upper secondary general and technical education programme, students take general *matura* or vocational *matura*. *Matura* is a national external examination. Students who pass *matura* may enroll in tertiary study programmes.

Officially recognised informal adult education programmes

There is considerable diversity of adult education programmes and institutions. Besides formal programmes, there are also officially recognized informal programmes targeted at special groups of adults, in particular those who need to improve their basic competences or literacy skills or who are trying to integrate in society and need help.

Tertiary education

In Slovenia, almost half of all people aged 19 to 24 is enrolled in tertiary education. Majority of them (75.6 % in 2021/22) do not pay tuition fees. The public agency for quality assurance in higher education (SQAA) was founded in 2009 and Registered in the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (EQUAR) in 2013. SQAA is a part of the European system of quality assurance in higher education since 2013, its roles include accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes and external evaluation of higher education institutions and study programmes.

Challenges

- Early school leaving is a rare phenomenon in Slovenia, with 3.1 % of early school leavers in 2021, the second-best result in EU. Nevertheless, the share of early school leavers among foreign-born children has been considerably higher (8.7 % in 2020).
- Low literacy scores (24.9 % below level 2,) of adults in PIAAC are well below the sought-after level of literacy. The younger generations scored relatively better.
- Tertiary attainment among 30 to 34-year-olds has risen considerably in the last decade, from 37.9 % in 2011 to 49.2 % in 2021. However, the difference between young males and females in tertiary educational attainment is striking, namely only 37.7 % of males in this age group have graduated from tertiary education as opposed to 62.9 % of females.

Teaching profession

Education staff at kindergartens and schools have to hold relevant educational qualifications (ISCED 6 for preschool teachers and certain teachers of practical subjects in VET, ISCED 7 for other teachers), relevant pedagogical educational qualification and they have to pass the state professional examination for education staff.
Continuous professional development is a right and a duty for all educational staff and attending programmes of CPD is a prerequisite for promotion to professional titles (Mentor, Advisor, Councilor and Higher Councilor).

3.6.2. Structure

Stages of the education system

The Slovenian education system is organised into several levels of education.

Preschool education

Preschool education (*predšolska vzgoja*) is optional, and encompasses the centre-based early general pre-school education and care. Children can enrol as early as at the age of 11 months and attend it until they start basic school.

Compulsory basic education

Compulsory basic education (*obvezno osnovnošolsko izobraževanje*) is organized in a single-structure nine-year basic school attended by pupils aged 6 to 15 years.

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education (srednješolsko izobraževanje) takes 2 to 5 years (typical age of students: 15-19). Educational programmes include vocational, professional and gimnazija (general) programmes.

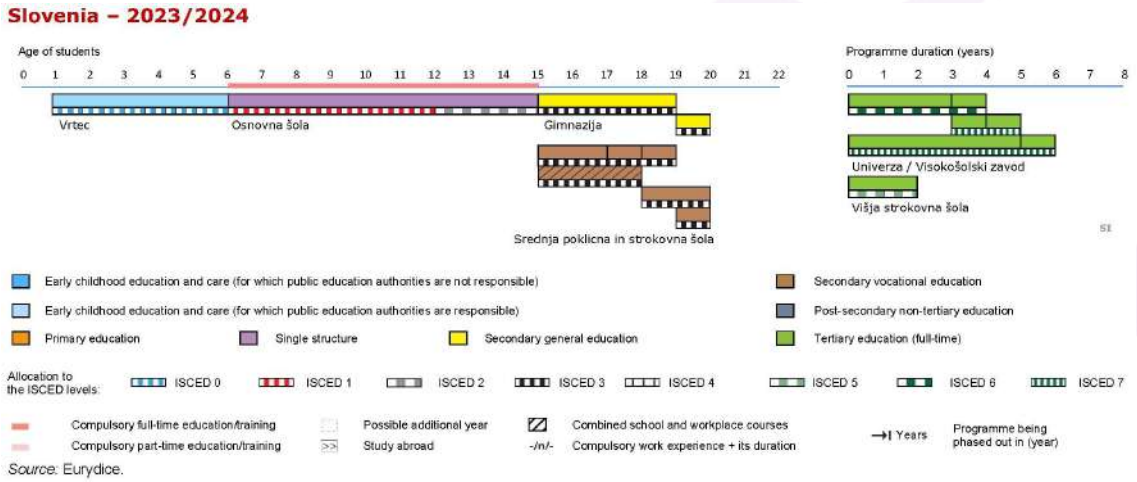
Tertiary education

Tertiary education (*terciarno izobraževanje*) includes short-cycle higher vocational education (*višje strokovno izobraževanje*) and higher education (*visokošolsko izobraževanje*) study programmes. First-cycle higher education programmes encompass professional and academic study programmes (typical age of students: 19-22). Short-cycle higher vocational education is provided by higher vocational colleges that offer two-year vocational education (typical age of students: 19-21). The first, second and third cycle study programmes are offered by public or private universities and single higher education institutions.

Adult education

Adult education (*izobraževanje odraslih*) is marked by its considerable diversity of programmes and institutions.

Structure of the national education system



Source: Eurydice.

3.7. TÜRKİYE

3.7.1. Principle and organization

Education in Türkiye is governed by a national system which was established in accordance with the Atatürk's Reforms. It is a state-supervised system designed to produce a skillful professional class for the social and economic institutes of the nation. The Ministry of National Education (MEB) runs educational administration of the country and is responsible for drawing up curricula, coordinating the work of official, private and voluntary organizations, designing and building schools, developing educational materials and so on. The Supreme Council of National Education discusses and decides on curricula and regulations prepared by the Ministry. In the provinces, educational affairs are organized by the Directorates of National Education appointed by the Minister, but working under the direction of the provincial governor.
The central government is responsible for all educational expenses of the public, about 10% of the general budget is allocated for national education.
The academic calendar generally begins in mid-September and extends through to mid-June, with some variations between urban and rural areas. The school day usually have a morning and an afternoon session, but in overcrowded schools there is a split session. Schools are in session for five days a week (Monday to Friday) in a total of 35-40 hours. There is a two week winter break between January - February, and one week at mid of each semester. Universities usually organize the academic year into two semesters, usually between October - January and between February/March - June/July.

3.7.2. Structure

The Turkish Education System is organized on the basis of ;

- Constitution of the Turkish Republic
- Laws Regulating Education
- Government Programmes
- Development plans
- National Education Councils

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) conducts educational activities on a central level in the Republic of Türkiye.
The cycles of education is made up of Early Childhood, Primary and Lower Secondary, Upper Secondary and Higher Education.
The first stage is a 4-year primary school (1^{st}, 2^{nd}, 3^{rd} and 4^{th} grade), the second stage is a 4-year lower secondary school (5^{th}, 6^{th}, 7^{th} and 8^{th} grade) and third-tier, four-year is an upper secondary school (9^{th}, 10^{th}, 11^{th} and 12^{th} grade). In addition, early childhood education is also compulsory along with the primary and secondary education for the individuals who are in need of special education.
Onwards the 2012-13 academic year compulsory education in Turkey increased to 12 years and is divided into three stages.
The first stage is 4 years of primary school (1^{st}, 2^{nd}, 3^{rd} and 4^{th} grade), the second stage is 4 years of secondary school (5^{th}, 6^{th}, 7^{th} and 8^{th} grade) and the third stage is 4-year high school (9^{th}, 10^{th}, 11^{th} and 12^{th} grade).

Stages of the education system

Kindersgarten - pre primary (ISCED 0)

Early Childhood Education in our country covers the Nursery and Day Care Centres for children of 0-36 months, which operates under the auspices of the General Directorate of Children Services of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services. In addition, there are early childhood educational centres in special education kindergartens, which operate under the auspices of the General Directorate of the Special Education and Guidance Services for 0-36-month-old children who are in need of special education.
Children aged 57-68 months are enrolled in kindergarten, nursery class and practice classes as of the end of September of the year in which the registration is made. After the registration of children residing in the registration area of the school and starting primary school in the next academic year, 36-56 months old children can be registered in kindergarten and practice classes, and 45-56 months old children in kindergarten classes with sufficient physical facilities. (Regulation on Preschool Education and Primary Education Institutions). Article 11-5/a). Pre-school education is carried out under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education, General Directorate of Basic Education.

Primary education (ISCED 1)

Primary education is compulsory for all boys and girls at the age of 5,5, and is given free of charge in public schools. These schools provide eight (4+4) years of education. Primary school education covers children of 69 months and 10 year-old and is the responsibility of the General Directorate of Basic Education, the Ministry of National Education. In addition, early childhood education is also compulsory along with the primary and secondary education for the students who are in need of special education. Turkish, mathematics, social studies, science, civics and human rights, the history of the Turkish Republic and Atatürk's reforms, a foreign language (English, or German), individual and group activities, religious culture and ethics, art/handicraft, music, physical education, traffic safety and first aid, are subjects of the primary level. There are 34.656 students in primary schools. Also private schools have primary levels.

Secondary education (ISCED 2)

Secondary education, namely religious school and secondary school, covers children of 10 to 14 years old. The actions of the General Directorate of Basic Education and Secondary Education and religious secondary schools are carried out under the responsibility of the General Directorate of Religious Education in the Ministry. In addition, early childhood education is also compulsory along with the primary and secondary education for the students who are in need of special education.

Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)

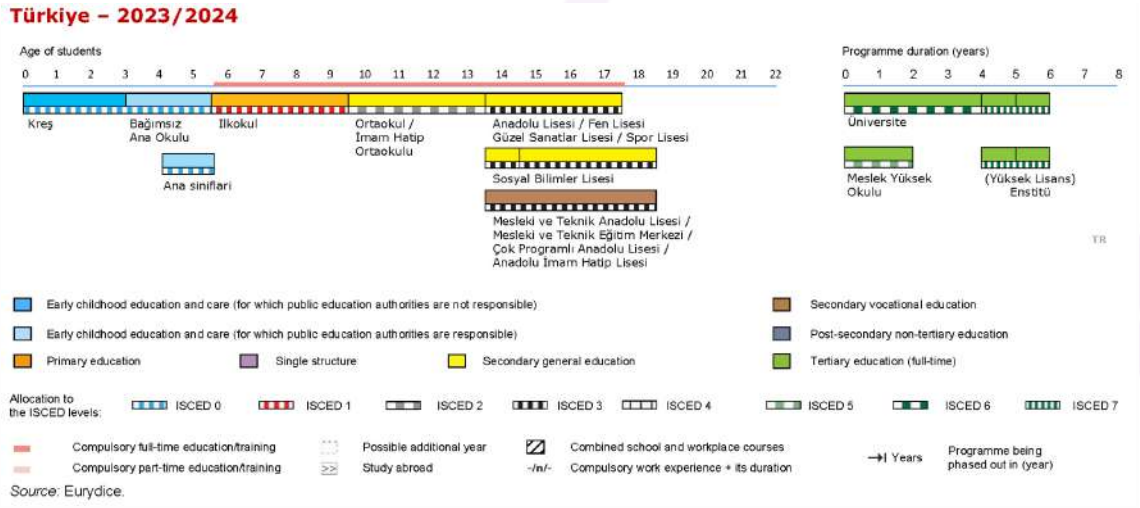
Upper Secondary Education covers Anatolian High School, Science High School, School of Fine Arts, Sports High School, School of Social Sciences, the Anatolian Religious High Schools and High Schools conducting vocational and technical programs. Such training is aimed at children aged 14 to 18 years and at those who are above 18 in Vocational Education Centres and it is the responsibility of General Directorate of Secondary Education, the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education and General

Directorate of Religious Education. Furthermore, schools conducting special training programs for the training of persons with disabilities and special educational institutions are under the responsibility of the General Directorate of Secondary and High School Level and Special Education and Guidance Services.
In addition, the education of the individuals with special needs are carried out at Special Vocational Education Centres, Special Education Vocational Schools and at Special Education Vocational Practice Schools, all of which are run by General Directorate of the Special Education and Guidance Services of the Ministry of National Education.

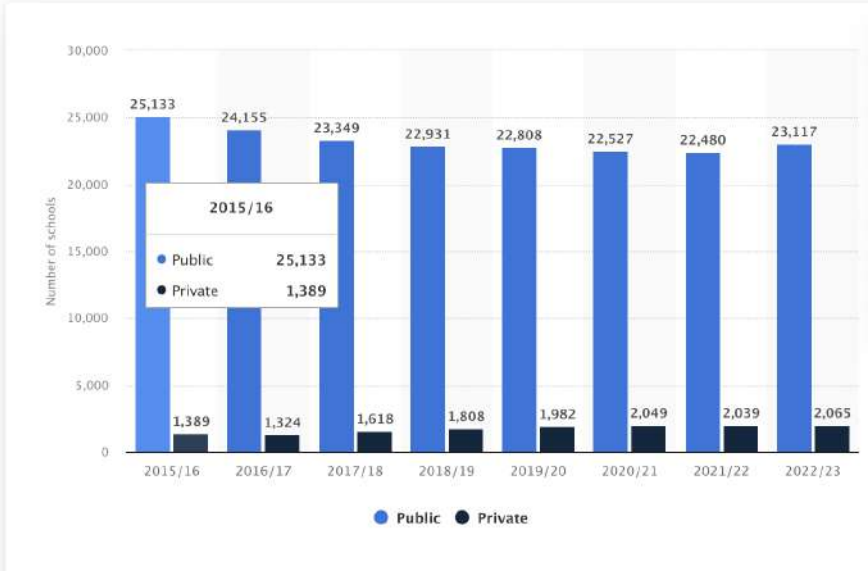
Higher education (ISCED 5, ISCED 6, ISCED 7)

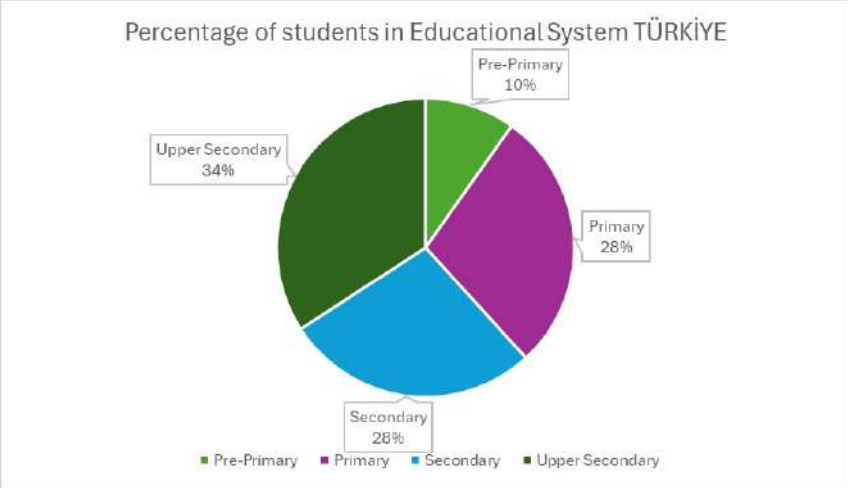
Higher education is not compulsory in Türkiye. Students have to pass a two-stage university entrance exam (TYT-AYT). According to the point he/she gets from the exam, can choose a department and a university.
Universities, faculties, institutes, higher education schools, conservatories, vocational higher education schools, police and military academies and colleges, and application-research centers are considered as Higher Education institutions.Universities, faculties and institutes of four-year higher education schools are founded by Law, while the two-year vocational schools, departments and divisions are established by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK).

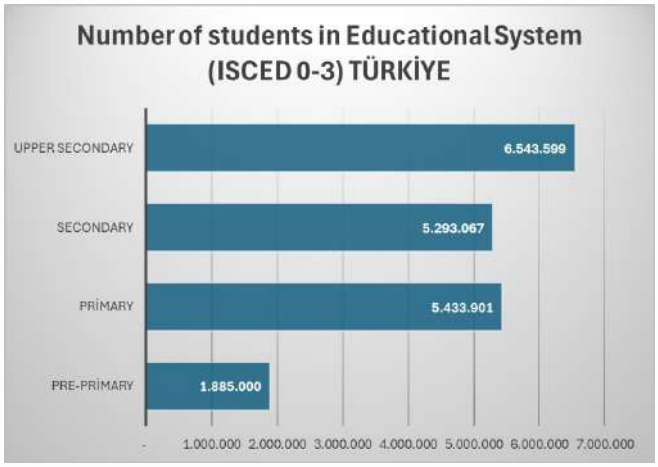
Structure of the National Education System



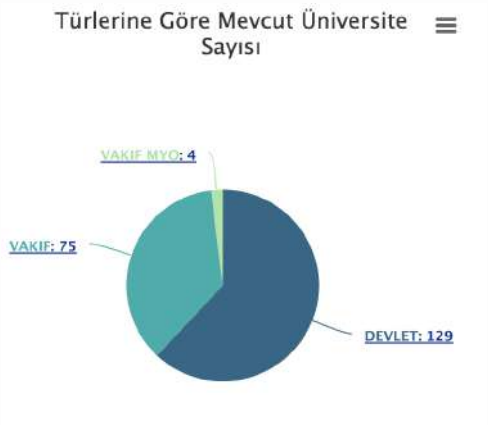
Number of primary schools in Turkey from 2015/16 to 2022/23, by type of school



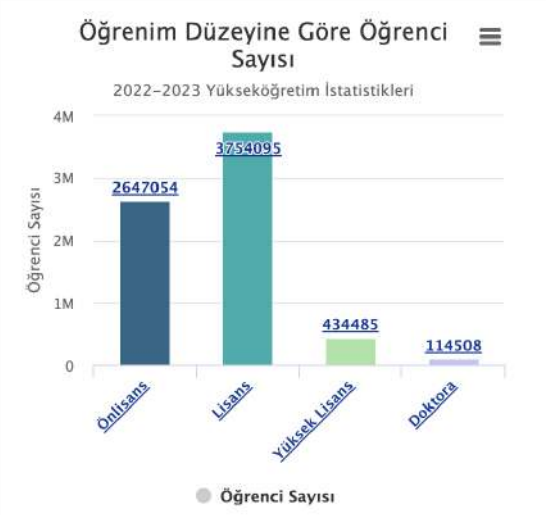




Number of Universities by type (State&Private)



Number of Students at Higher education by their level



4. Anxiety approaches in the schools from 7 countries

An observational study was designed for data collection. The methodology is described below and was used by all partners in the 7 countries.

Population, sample and recruitment

The target population for the study "Practices for Dealing with Anxiety in Schools – A Case Study Involving 7 Countries" includes adult education professionals working in the countries involved: Portugal, Greece, Lithuania, France, Poland, Slovenia, and Turkey. The sample was a convenience sample, consisting of professionals from secondary schools partners of the project or whose administration has agreed to participate in the project.The study aimed to include at least four education professionals from each country. Education professionals from schools whose administration authorizes participation and who express interest in collaborating were recruited. Information on the study was given, and written informed consent obtained prior to any data collection. Data collection and processing take place in each country and no data was shared except as included in this report.

Data Collection, Handling and Storage

The data collection and analysis started in February 2024 and was concluded in July of the same year. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in the local languages by one of the project researchers, as translated from the original interview guide proposal in English and presented in the Annex. 6.1 Basic information about the schools and the roles of participating professionals were also collected. The interviews could be audio-recorded, with the participant's express consent, for later transcription and information extraction. The recordings were destroyed after processing.
The collected data will be used solely for research and development purposes, in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Law No. 58/2019 of August 8, and may be used until the end of the WAI project, scheduled for 2026. All personal information collected will be strictly confidential and securely stored, accessible only to the researchers. The identification of participants will not be stored after the interview and will only be known to the researchers conducting the interviews. The data will be stored, transcribed and processed. The audio recordings will be irretrievably destroyed after transcription. The extracted data will be combined for the study report without including any identifying information.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to the principles of the Helsinki Declaration and GDPR. The study was submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Porto (Portugal) and received a report of acceptance on 25th January 2024 (230/CEFMUP/2024, Annex 6.2). Participants were informed about the study and signed an informed consent form before participating. The participant information sheet and consent form were translated to local from the english model presented in annex 6.3.

4.1. FRANCE

4.1.1. Institutional national framework

The French Educational System

The French educational system is based on a centralized organization, structured into several levels ranging from preschool to higher education. It is founded on fundamental republican principles: secularism, free education, and compulsory schooling until the age of 16.

1. Institutional Organization
   - 1.1. National Supervision
     - 1.1.1. The Ministry of National Education and Youth defines the main guidelines for the education system, school curricula, and national examinations.
     - 1.1.2. The standardization of organizational principles, content, and assessments ensures equal opportunities for all students, whether in mainland France or overseas territories.
   - 1.2. Local Structures
     - 1.2.1. Rectorates: Local representatives of the ministry, responsible for implementing national policies in each academic region. Each rector ensures the application of directives within their area.
     - 1.2.2. Local authorities: They play a key role in the material and financial management of schools:
       - 1.2.2.1. Municipalities manage primary schools (infrastructure, canteens, transportation).
       - 1.2.2.2. Departments manage middle schools.
       - 1.2.2.3. Regions are responsible for high schools, especially vocational schools.
2. Levels of Education
   - 2.1. Primary Education
     - 2.1.1. Preschool (Cycle 1: Early Learning):
       - 2.1.1.1. Age: 3 to 6 years old (Petite Section, Moyenne Section, Grande Section).
       - 2.1.1.2. Objectives: Develop children's social, linguistic, and motor skills.
     - 2.1.2. Elementary School (Cycles 2 and 3: Fundamental Learning and Consolidation):
       - 2.1.2.1. Age: 6 to 11 years old (CP to CM2).
       - 2.1.2.2. Objectives: Acquire basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as knowledge in science, history, and geography.
   - 2.2. Secondary Education
     - 2.2.1. Middle Schools (Cycles 3 and 4: Consolidation and Development)
       - 2.2.1.1. Age: 11 to 15 years old (6^{th} to 9^{th} grade).
       - 2.2.1.2. Structure: Four levels (6^{th}, 5th, 4^{th}, 3^{rd}).
       - 2.2.1.3. Diploma: National Diploma of Lower Secondary Education (DNB) at the end of 9^{th} grade.
       - 2.2.1.4. Objectives: Deepen knowledge and prepare students to choose their pathway in high school (general, technological, or vocational).
     - 2.2.2. High Schools (Cycles of Orientation and Specialization)
       - 2.2.2.1. Age: 15 to 18 years old (10^{th} to 12^{th} grade).
       - 2.2.2.2. Main Pathways:

- General High School: Prepares students for theoretical higher education.
  - Students choose three specializations in 11th grade, then keep two in 12th grade (e.g., mathematics, economic and social sciences, history-geography, etc.).
- Technological High School: Prepares students for higher education in applied fields (healthcare, management, industrial sciences).
- Vocational High School: Prepares students for direct entry into the workforce with diplomas like the CAP or Bac Pro.

2.2.2.3. Diploma: Baccalaureate (general, technological, or vocational).

3. High School Reforms

3.1. General and Technological High School Reform (2021)

3.1.1. Objectives: Modernize education, diversify pathways, and better prepare students for higher education and the workforce.

3.1.2. Key Measures:

3.1.2.1. Elimination of traditional streams (L, ES, S) and introduction of a specialization system.

3.1.2.2. Strengthening continuous assessment in the final Baccalaureate grade.

3.1.2.3. Enhanced guidance through the Parcoursup platform.

3.2. Vocational High School Reform (2023)

3.2.1. Objectives: Enhance vocational education and improve the integration of young people into the workforce.

3.2.2. Key Measures:

3.2.2.1. Extended periods of workplace training (PFMP) with better supervision.

3.2.2.2. Financial compensation for internships starting in the first year.

3.2.2.3. Programs tailored to local labor market needs, such as eco-tourism or renewable energy sectors.

3.2.2.4. Strengthened pathways to higher education (BTS, professional licenses).

4. Higher Education

4.1. General Structure (LMD)

The French university system follows the European LMD framework: Licence, Master, Doctorate.

4.1.1. Licence (Bachelor's Degree – Bac +3): General or professional training (180 ECTS credits).

4.1.2. Master (Bac +5): Advanced specialization (120 additional ECTS credits).

4.1.3. Doctorate (Bac +8): Research-focused education culminating in a dissertation.

4.2. Short Programs

4.2.1. BTS (Higher Technician Certificate): A 2-year professional program after high school (Bac +2).

4.2.2. BUT (Bachelor of Technology): Replaced the DUT in 2021, a 3-year professional program (Bac +3).

4.3. Grandes Écoles

4.3.1. Preparatory Classes (CPGE): Two-year programs preparing for competitive exams for Grandes Écoles.

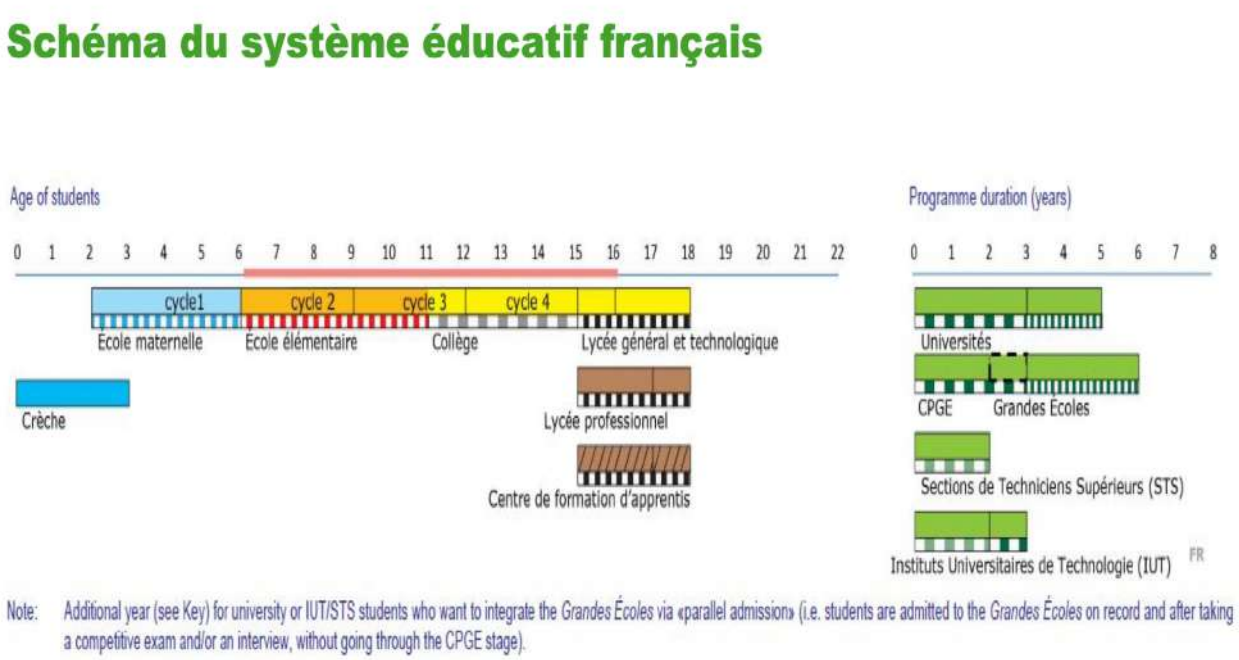
4.3.2. Grandes Écoles: Prestigious institutions (Sciences Po, École Polytechnique, HEC) offering specialized education.

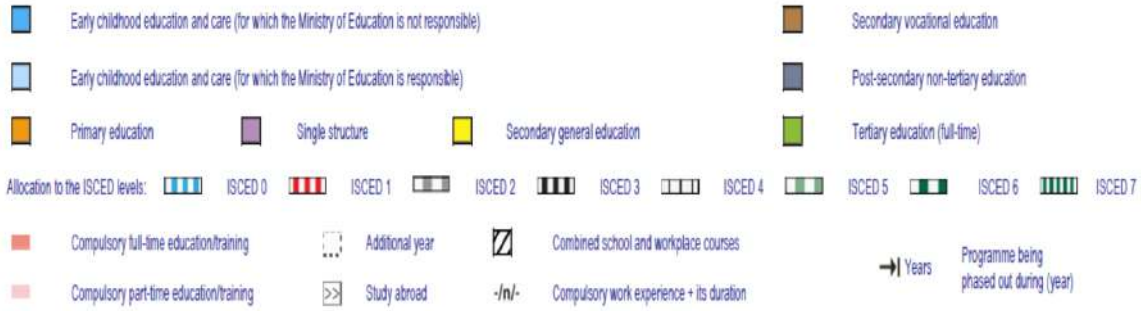
4.4. Continuing Education

Available throughout life for adults wishing to resume studies or train in a specific field.

5. Summary of Education Levels

Level	Age	Key Cycle or Diploma
Preschool	3 to 6 years	Cycle 1: Early Learning
Elementary School	6 to 11 years	Cycles 2 and 3: Fundamentals and Consolidation
Middle School	11 to 15 years	National Diploma of Lower Secondary Education (DNB)
High School	15 to 18 years	Baccalaureate (general, technological, vocational)
Higher Education	18 years and above	Licence, Master, Doctorate, BTS, BUT, etc.





The French educational system offers continuity between levels and a variety of pathways suited to the needs and ambitions of students, ensuring high-quality education for all.

4.1.2. Description of the school

Vocational school

We are a vocational high school, Vocational high schools in France are specialized educational establishments designed to prepare students for direct entry into the job market through targeted vocational training. These institutions aim to meet a number of key objectives within the framework of secondary education.

The main objective of vocational high schools is to provide students with practical, specialized skills in line with the requirements of the industrial sector. This is achieved through a program that integrates practical training with theoretical instruction, ensuring that students acquire the skills needed for a variety of professions. The courses on offer lead to recognized qualifications such as the Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP) and the Baccalauréat Professionnel, which are essential for securing employment and progressing in specific careers.

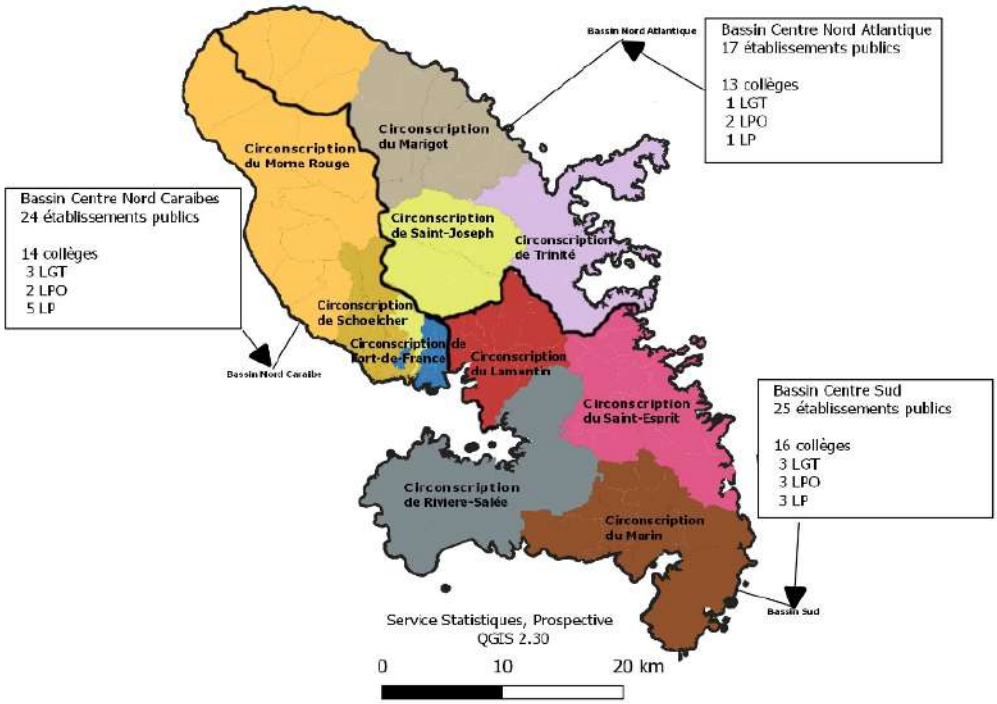
Vocational high schools also place a strong emphasis on enhancing students' employability by preparing them for the immediate demands of the job market. This includes not only technical skills, but also essential cross-disciplinary skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving, which are crucial to success in any professional environment. The curriculum is constantly updated to reflect current industry standards and technological advances, ensuring that students receive a relevant and modern education.

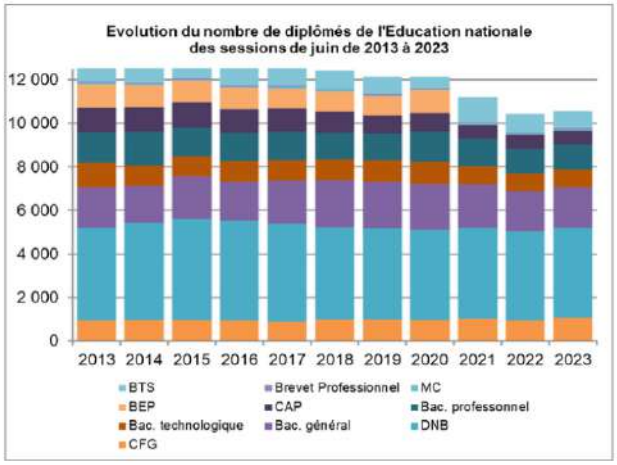
In addition to technical education, vocational high schools offer substantial career support and advice. This includes providing guidance to help students navigate their career choices and facilitating connections with employers through internships and apprenticeships. These experiences are key to bridging the gap between academic learning and practical application, improving students' preparation for employment straight out of high school. Vocational high schools also place great emphasis on inclusiveness and support for diverse students. By offering individualized assistance and adapting the curriculum to meet different learning needs, these schools strive to create an equitable educational environment that supports all students in realizing their full potential.

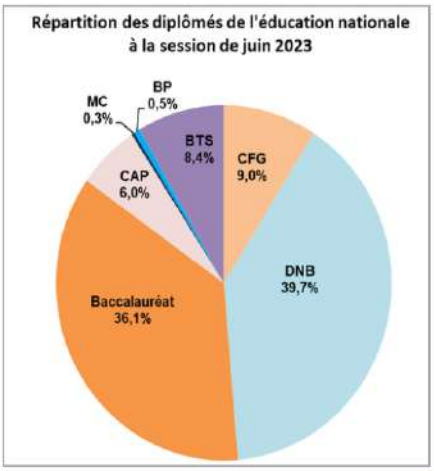
COLLEGES, LYCÉES DANS L'ACADÉMIE

- 66 établissements du 2nd degré public répartis sur 3 bassins de formation (cf. Carte ci-dessous)
- 19 établissements du second degré privé dont 5 hors contrat

BASSINS ET CIRCONSCRIPTIONS DU SECTEUR PUBLIC







3 BASSINS DE FORMATIONS
ANNÉE SCOLAIRE 2023-2024

auxquels sont rattachés les établissements du second degré public de l'Académie

66 ÉTABLISSEMENTS

	BASSIN CENTRE NORD CARAIBE	BASSIN CENTRE SUD	BASSIN CENTRE NORD ATLANTIQUE	TOTAL
CLG	14	16	13	43
LGT	3	3	1	7
LPO	2	3	2	7
LP	5	3	1	9
TOTAL ÉTABLISSEMENTS	**24**	**25**	**17**	**66**
PROPORTION PAR BASSIN (%)	**36,4%**	**37,9%**	**25,8%**	**100,0%**

Source RAMSESE

29 184 ÉLÈVES

	CENTRE NORD ATLANTIQUE	CENTRE NORD CARAIBE	CENTRE SUD	TOTAL
CLG	3664	4646	5867	14177
LGT	1025	3361	1700	6086
LP	575	2003	1154	3732
LPO	973	1059	2327	4359
TOTAL ÉLÈVES	**6237**	**11069**	**11048**	**28354**
PROPORTION PAR BASSIN (%)	**22,0%**	**39,0%**	**39,0%**	**100,0%**

Source : SCOLARITE - Constat second degré 2023-2024

4.1.3. Concrete measures - strategies and projects

Concrete measures – strategies and projects

Our Academy, guided by its academic project, implements a variety of strategies and initiatives to enhance the educational experience. These initiatives align with national policies while addressing the specific socio-economic, cultural, and environmental challenges of the region. Particular emphasis is placed on student well-being, mental health, and social-emotional learning to promote holistic development.

1. Concrete Measures – Strategies and Projects of the National Education System

At the national level, France's Ministry of National Education has launched ambitious strategies to modernize and strengthen the educational system while promoting equity and inclusion

1.1. Pedagogical Modernization

1.1.1. Strengthening Fundamental Skills:

1.1.1.1. Implementation of the "Reading Plan" to improve literacy, writing, and numeracy skills.

1.1.1.2. Focus on national assessments of French and mathematics proficiency in primary and middle school.
1.1.2. Digital Transformation:
1.1.2.1. Integration of digital tools into classrooms to facilitate personalized learning.
1.1.2.2. Development of online educational resources accessible to all students.
1.2. Inclusion and Student Well-being
1.2.1. Inclusive Education:
1.2.1.1. Enhanced support for students with disabilities through initiatives such as AESH (support staff for students with disabilities).
1.2.1.2. Teacher training to better accommodate and adapt teaching methods to diverse student needs.
1.2.2. Student Well-being:
1.2.2.1. National campaigns to raise awareness about youth mental health.
1.2.2.2. Promotion of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs to help students manage stress and build resilience.
1.3. Teacher Support
1.3.1. Continuous Professional Development:
1.3.1.1. Expansion of ongoing training programs to assist teachers in implementing pedagogical reforms.
1.3.1.2. Training in digital tools and classroom management strategies for complex situations.
1.3.2. Career Incentives:
1.3.2.1. Measures to attract new talent to the teaching profession, particularly in priority education zones.
1.4. Combating School Dropout
1.4.1. Personalized Pathways:
1.4.1.1. Implementation of tailored support systems for students at risk of dropping out.
1.4.1.2. Partnerships with associations and local organizations to help reintegrate students into school or vocational training programs.

2. Key Objectives of the Martinique Academic Project

The Martinique Academy's academic project is built on three key pillars:
2.1. Ensuring Equity and Excellence in Education:
2.2. Guaranteeing access to quality education for all students.
2.3. Reducing educational inequalities and supporting disadvantaged students.
2.3.1. Strengthening Links Between Education and Society:
2.3.1.1. Encouraging partnerships with local stakeholders.
2.3.1.2. Aligning education with regional socio-economic needs.
2.3.2. Promoting Well-being and Inclusion:
2.3.2.1. Improving the school climate.
2.3.2.2. Supporting students' physical and mental health.
2.3.2.3. Celebrating cultural identity and diversity.

3. Measures to Promote Well-being and Mental Health

3.1. Addressing Anxiety and Developing Social-Emotional Competencies
3.1.1. Implementation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs:

3.1.1.1. Curriculum-integrated activities to foster self-awareness, emotional regulation, decision-making, and interpersonal skills.
3.1.1.2. Workshops for students on managing stress, anxiety, and conflict resolution.
3.1.2. Mental Health Support:
3.1.2.1. Increased presence of school psychologists and counselors in educational institutions.
3.1.2.2. Teacher training to identify signs of anxiety, stress, or depression in students.
3.1.3. Peer Support Systems:
3.1.3.1. Establishing peer mentoring and mediation programs to foster a culture of empathy and mutual support.
3.2. Improving the School Climate
3.2.1. Anti-Bullying Campaigns:
3.2.1.1. Regular awareness programs and workshops to prevent bullying and promote respectful interactions.
3.2.1.2. Anonymous reporting systems to ensure student safety and confidentiality.
3.2.2. Parental Engagement:
3.2.2.1. Workshops to help parents support their children's mental and emotional health.
3.2.2.2. Providing resources to strengthen communication and foster a supportive home environment.
3.3. Physical Activities and Extracurricular Programs
3.3.1. Development of after-school programs combining sports, arts, and mindfulness activities to promote physical and mental well-being.
3.3.2. Promotion of physical education focused on stress reduction, such as yoga and relaxation techniques.
4. Adapting Education to Local Needs
4.1. Vocational and Technical Training
4.1.1. Alignment with Regional Needs:
4.1.1.1. Development of vocational programs in sectors such as agriculture, eco-tourism, and renewable energy, reflecting the Martinique economy's priorities.
4.1.2. Partnerships with Local Businesses:
4.1.2.1. Collaborating with employers to provide internships, apprenticeships, and hands-on experiences for students.
4.2. Celebrating Cultural Identity
4.2.1. Integration of Local Culture:
4.2.1.1. Teaching Creole language and incorporating Martinique's history, literature, and traditions into the curriculum.
4.2.1.2. Organizing events to celebrate local heritage, such as music and art festivals.

Conclusion

The integration of national and regional measures enables the Martinique Academy to build an inclusive and resilient educational system. By prioritizing student well-being, celebrating local culture, and developing programs tailored to socio-economic realities, the academy ensures a promising future for all Martinican students. This holistic approach addresses both academic and personal development, preparing students to navigate the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

4.2. GREECE

4.2.1. Institutional national framework

The development of a high quality and equitable education system is one of the central missions that the Greek state has undertaken for many decades. In order for this mission to be achieved, significant reforms have been introduced that touch on all aspects of the educational system which attempt to increase participation and eliminate exclusion within and from education for all students. Throughout these wider reform efforts, particular emphasis has been placed on the needs of those who have traditionally found themselves in a situation of greater risk in the process of educational exclusion, as they are students with disabilities or/and special educational needs.

Especially with regard to students with disabilities or/and special educational needs, these reform efforts have been guided throughout recent years by the 12th target of the Strategic Action Plan ("Education and Training for All"), which places a clear emphasis on the promotion of inclusive education and constitutes a 'roadmap' that provides a clear, coherent and systematic framework for action.

Addressing challenges in legislation, educational policy and practice

In order for the effective implementation of several provisions of the National Action Plan, and in line with International conventions and European priorities, the Greek Ministry of Education has received over the last years technical support from the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education in the framework of the European funded, SRSP REFORM Project "Promoting Inclusive Education in Greece: Addressing challenges in legislation, educational policy and practice". This specific project aimed at providing Technical Support to the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs regarding the promotion of inclusive transformations into the Greek Educational System, with the main focus being on:

a) Reinforcement of the inclusive perspective and operations of the supportive educational structures ie, the Centers of interdisciplinary Assessment and Counseling Support (KEDASY), the Interdisciplinary Educational Evaluation and Support Committees (EDY)

b) Strengthening of general education schools in order to meet the heterogeneous needs of all students, including those with disabilities or/and special educational needs.

As a result of this activity, many important deliverables have been produced, which have had a significant impact at policy and practice levels. To mention just a few:

1.

A conceptual paper has been formulated by national experts regarding the necessary steps in moving the field forward.

2.

Assessment protocols have been created for all grades which, following their pilot implementation, will be adopted by the Centers of interdisciplinary Assessment and Counseling Support.

3.

Guidelines on safeguarding effective inclusive transitions between different grades have been formulated and they are currently under review by the lawmaking committees.

4.

A Guide for inclusive education which is meant to be addressed to schools as a roadmap for inclusion.

Second Phase of Technical Support by DG REFORM

Following the successful implementation of the above project, a second phase of technical support has been provided by the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) of the European Commission. The technical support is provided in the context of the European funded project entitled «Implementation of the European Child Guarantee-Promoting Inclusive Education in Greece Phase II».

The central focus of the project is not only the implementation of the outcomes of the deliverables of PHASE I on a pilot basis, but also the inclusive aspect of the project. For this purpose, five (5) Regional Directorates of Education (P.D.E. of Attica, P.D.E. of Central Macedonia, P.D.E. of Western Greece, P.D.E. of the North Aegean, & P.D.E. of Crete), have been selected with the criterion of equal geographical representation in order to fulfil the criteria of representative diversity, in terms of geography, urban, rural and island economies so as to ensure the greatest possible coverage of the heterogeneous needs of the student population. The results of the work groups of the specific project are still in progress.

4.2.2. Description of the school(s)/partner(s)

For feasibility, five schools from the authority district of the Directorate were enrolled after the expression of interest for participation in the project. Out of the five schools: three were middle schools (students aged 12-15)

- 5th Middle School of Halandri
- Varvakeio Model Middle School
- 1st Experimental Middle School of Marousi

and two were high schools (students aged 15-17)

- 2nd General High School of Halandri
- 4th General High School of Herakleion Attikis

The data was gathered through interviews with three teachers, conducted following authorization from the respective school administrations. Data processing took place at the facilities of the institutions involved in the project.

At 4th Lyceum of Herakleion Attikis a Mathematics teacher was interviewed with 20 years of teaching experience and a trainer of students in mediation

At 5th Middle School of Halandri were interviewed:

- a Computer Science Teacher
- a French Teacher

In the interviews, all of the teachers state that they have limited experience in addressing students' anxiety but use techniques to manage their own anxiety.

Key situations of student anxiety faced in the school include panic attacks during examination periods and difficulty speaking in class. There are no specific protocols for managing these incidents; students can withdraw from the class and seek support from the school's Vice Principal or their peers.

The schools have a psychologist who provides support once a week on a priority basis, but the needs exceed his/her availability, stating that there is a general need for support and resources, such as the presence of a permanent psychologist and additional training for teachers on recognizing and managing student anxiety. Additionally, efforts to enhance physical activity and create special spaces for relaxation and stress relief are also necessary.

4.2.3. Concrete measures - Strategies and projects

Programs, associated with student's emotional and mental health in Greece:

- School psychologist, who systematically and scientifically supports children, adolescents, parents, educators, and the entire school community in their academic, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social development.
- Digital platform "STOP BULLYING", that has been created to report incidents of school violence and bullying, along with targeted educational programs offered by public and private organizations focusing on stress management, empathy, mental resilience, and the mental health of the student community.

4.3. LITHUANIA

4.3.1. Institutional national framework

Among many other countries, Lithuania has reformed its educational legislation to better serve the goal of inclusive education. In this research, we ask what kinds of challenges primary and subject teachers encounter when teaching in heterogeneous classes. In Lithuania, the idea of inclusive education is fairly new. The Lithuanian education system has been evolving towards a democratic justice system since the escape from the Soviet Union regime in 1990. Until that, the children with disabilities were placed in specialized boarding schools, and the segregated education built barriers for the inclusion of people with disabilities into society. School-aged children with moderate or severe mental disorders as well as those in need of particular care and attention would stay at home or be taken to residential care homes where they would be looked after but not educated. Due to the segregated school arrangements, the existence of the people with disabilities was invisible to most Lithuanians. The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania (1991) validated the right of school-aged children with various developmental disorders to be educated in comprehensive schools or in specialized schools close to their parents. In 1998, the Law on Special Education of the Republic of Lithuania laid the legal foundation for the model of integrated education to transition from a strictly segregated system to an educational system open to all learners equally. Then the terms concerning the learners with various developmental disorders were changed to learners with special educational needs (SEN). The goal was to merge general and special education into a common educational space Also, an intensive movement of school-aged children and youngsters from families and care homes to general schools or special education centers took place.

The Law Amending the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania (2011) merged the two previous laws, the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on Special Education of the Republic of Lithuania. They evidence a sharp tendency to pursue the expansion of inclusive education of learners with SEN. Along with the National Education Strategy for 2013–2022, they aim to promote diversity in educational establishments by creating favorable learning conditions for all learners, according to their needs and abilities. The Lithuanian legitimate terminology does not include the term inclusive education. The terms special educational needs (SEN) and educational assistance, which covers special, special pedagogical, psychological, and social assistance, are used. There are two forms of education for learners with special educational needs in general education schools: education in a general class providing necessary student support, and education in a special class, usually for learners with intellectual disorders.

Determined by the Law Amending the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania (2011), there are now three ways of implementing the curricula in general classrooms: the general curriculum and two levels of adjustment of it. The adjusted program creates the conditions for a learner to acquire basic, secondary or vocational education and/or qualification. Individualized programs construct the studies of learners with mental disorders, by individualizing pre-school, primary, and lower general secondary curricula. The studies are designed in collaboration with the students and their guardians. The Child Welfare Committees coordinate the arrangements for education assistance. The

committees consist of a school leader, various specialists, teacher representatives, and representatives of learners' parents.

In Lithuania, teacher training for inclusive education is regulated by two documents, Pedagogues' Training Regulations 2018 and Descriptor of Teacher Qualification Requirements 2014. The Lithuanian teacher education consist of pedagogical studies as well as subject knowledge and skills to identify "the specificities of psycho-physical level of maturity and special needs of children and pupils of a given age, recognizes pupils' socialization, development and learning difficulties and helps overcome them, is able to provide psychological and pedagogical assistance". Every teacher, either during the initial teacher education or as in-service training, must complete a 60-hour course on Special Needs Education and Psychology, approved by the Minister for Education, Science and Sport. (adapted from https://www.zurnalai.vu.lt/acta-paedagogica-vilnensia)

4.3.2. Description of the school(s)/partner(s)

Lithuania in the project does not include schools as partners. Two schools, one from Kaunas and other from Klaipėda were enrolled by direct invitation. The data collection occurred after obtaining authorization from the respective school administration and data processing was conducted at the facilities of the institutions participating in the project.

Kaunas "Varpas" gymnasium is a state-funded secondary education institution, established in 1981. It is a modern school oriented towards contemporary students and teachers' competences, seeking optimum learning quality. Students aged from 14 to 18 are studying in the gymnasium. The gymnasium is adjusted for the disabled. Currently, there are 578 students and 58 teachers in the gymnasium.

„Varpas" gymnasium has been involved in international projects since 1995. It has been a member of ELOS network (Europe as Learning Environment), which means that the aim of the gymnasium is internationalization of its activity. Thus, regular student exchange projects with foreign partners are organized and delegations from other countries frequently visit the institution. Students can choose from a wide range of foreign languages. As well as this, teachers have been implementing CLIL for more than 10 years.

Since 2017 all students of the gymnasium must choose the topic of their interest and develop a year-long project called Student's Individual Project or it can be a group project. In such a way students gain the basic understanding how to conduct the research, how to collect and analyse the obtained data. Moreover, they develop their competence of public speaking by presenting the project to the audience at the end of the school year.

Kaunas "Varpas" gymnasium belongs to the network of Lithuania's health promoting schools. A huge variety of health-related topics are integrated in the school curriculum. The gymnasium also is a part of MEPA (The Ambassador of European Parliament), which means that a number of activities related to the European context are integrated in both formal and informal education.

Klaipėda Vytauto Didžiojo Gymnasium - the first Lithuanian gymnasium in Klaipėda (third city in Lithuania), founded: 1922. Currently, there are about 600 students and 60 teachers in the gymnasium.

Gymnasium is a modern, humanistic educational institution that bases its activities on the principles of humanism, constantly learning, providing quality education, applying the latest technologies and active educational methods, and meeting the strategic provisions of Lithuanian education development. The gymnasium, in cooperation with related educational institutions of the EU countries, focuses on European educational provisions, implements the national education strategy of the country: to develop freedom, creative, critical thinking personality; to form an independent, responsible, self-initiated personality with a maximally formed value system, able to choose a university course of study.

The gymnasium is known for teaching foreign languages - English, Lithuanian, Latin, Russian, French, German and Swedish. Actively cooperates with gymnasiums abroad, the most contacts are maintained with gymnasiums in Sweden and France. Projects have been implemented or are still being implemented in gymnasium: MEPA - Schools - Ambassadors of the European Parliament, European Union funds investment project; Erasmus + project "Key to change", Erasmus project "Teachers participate in change".

Interviewees:

At Varpas Gimnasium were interviewed:

- The chemistry teacher expert, working at school for more than 20 years, serves as a class director, with long experience in mediative processes.
- The physical activity teacher, young sportsmen, working at this gymnasium for four years, who has a pedagogical specialization except coach master's degree.

At Vytauto Didžiojo Gymnasium was interviewed:

- The geography teacher working at school for more than 10 years, who also holds several administrative and middle management responsibilities roles.

None of the Interviewees reported specific formation regarding anxiety in educational context and all have experience dealing with anxiety in students aged 15 to 18.

4.3.3. Concrete measures - strategies and projects

Programs, associated with emotional and mental health in Lithuania:

Second Step. This is a social-emotional skills development and violence prevention program that helps reduce children's aggressive behaviour, teaches them to properly express feelings and resolve conflicts, and understand the consequences of their behaviour. Second Step is a research-based program for elementary school children. The centre's specialists, who coordinate the implementation of the "Second Step" program in Lithuanian schools, teach primary school teachers to work with the program, provide the necessary information, training guidelines and provide advice throughout the work. After completing the training, the pedagogues are prepared to help children recognize and control feelings of anger, effectively solve problematic situations, and involve parents in joint work.

The correctional program of EQIUP is to teach teenagers to think and act responsibly, motivate them and enable them to help each other. During the self-help group classes, they are learning: Create and maintain positive social relations between minors and their close environment; Correct anger management/thinking errors; Develop social skills; Make socially responsible decisions.

The goal of the international program "*Zipio's Friends*" is to help 5-7 year old children acquire the skills to overcome social and emotional difficulties in order to improve the children's emotional well-being. The "*Zipio Friends*" program teaches children how to overcome everyday emotional difficulties: rejection, loneliness, bullying or harassment, and difficult changes. It helps to understand and encourages to talk about your feelings, to find ways to deal with those feelings. Teaches children empathy, how to find friends, how to ask for and accept support, and how to help others. It helps not only to avoid being a victim of bullying, but also to avoid becoming a bully yourself.

The international program "Apple Friends" is the long-awaited continuation of the "*Zipio Friends*" program for older children, i.e. 8-10 years. The two programs are now merging into one continuous program for the prevention of emotional and behavioral problems in two-year-old children, the first part of which is the "*Zippy Friends*" program, and the second part is the "*Apple Friends*" program.

The Lions Club program *"Paauglystės kryžkelės"* (*Crossroads of Adolescence*) is an evidence-based program that helps teachers create safe learning environments and develop life skills that help students navigate their teenage years. Comprehensive lessons and supporting program materials bring together school staff, family, community and young people. This program integrates social and emotional development, character development, substance abuse and *bullying* prevention, and service learning into the General Curriculum to promote appropriate adolescent development.

Numbers of participants in these programs presented in table. Unfortunately, the main programs are for younger schoolchildren and were used a long time ago (8-14 years).

Name	Schools participated	Teachers number	Education stuff number	Students participated
Second step	248	1.534	76	31.763
EQUIP	6	28	10	345
Paauglystės kryžkelės	325	6.115	725	65.309
Apple friends	156	622	62	7.154
Zipio friends	668	2.032	214	21.043

Based on the opinion of the interviewee's anxiety as a potential problem. Increase in student anxiety in recent years is noticed, with several students experiencing anxiety, including severe cases receiving external support. The problem is that a school physiologist is not always a solution in the anxiety problem.

The situations resulting or related to anxiety are: Increased stress and anxiety levels in the classroom, individual physical properties, aggression, absence of discipline in classroom or sport class.

The support from the school's management can access psychological services within the school, but interweavers indicated that internal psychologists are not a good decision, because sometimes knowing that a schoolchild visited this person can lead to bullying. Some programs from the table can potentially serve as support. Specific strategies and projects regarding wellbeing and anxiety control can include Study support, regular physical activity promotion, proclamation of school psychologist and social worker, new national and international projects.

The need for more proactive measures to prevent anxiety from escalating is expected from all interweavers. Training projects for teachers, targeting to increase awareness and dealing with practical strategies are more than welcome.

4.4. POLAND

4.4.1. Institutional national framework

The Polish National is a reference system for qualifications awarded in Poland. There are 8 levels in the framework. Each is described using general characteristics of the scope and complexity of knowledge, skills and social competences required of people with qualifications at a given level. It includes characteristics typical of qualifications awarded in general education, vocational education and higher education.
In Poland, full and partial qualifications are distinguished.

Full qualifications:

1. level I of the Polish Qualifications Framework it is confirmed by:
   - a certificate of completion of a six-year primary school,
   - a certificate of completion of a first-degree music school,
   - a certificate of completion of a six-year general music school of the first degree.
2. level II of the Polish Qualifications Framework it is confirmed by:
   - a certificate of completion of an eight-year primary school.
3. level III of the Polish Qualifications Framework it is confirmed by:
   - a diploma confirming professional qualifications:

   - after completing a basic vocational school or after meeting the conditions referred to in art. 10 sec. 3 item 2 letter a of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system,
   - after completing a vocational school of the first degree or after meeting the conditions referred to in art. 10 sec. 3 item 2 letter a b of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system,
   - and after passing exams confirming qualifications in a given profession;
   - and after passing exams confirming qualifications in a given profession;
   - vocational diploma after completing a first-degree school or after meeting the conditions referred to in art. 10 sec. 3 item 2 letter b of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system and after passing exams confirming qualifications in a given profession;
   - journeyman's certificate issued after completing a basic vocational school or a first-degree vocational school after passing journeyman's exams in professions included in the classification of professions of vocational education on the basis of the requirements specified in the core curriculum of education in professions;
   - journeyman's certificate issued after completing a first-degree vocational school after passing a journeyman's exam in professions referred to in art. 3 sec. 3b of the Act of 22 March 1989 on crafts;
4. level IV of the Polish Qualifications Framework, it is confirmed by:
   - a diploma confirming professional qualifications:

   - after graduating from a technical school or a post-secondary school or after meeting the conditions referred to in art. 10 sec. 3 item 2 letter d of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system, or
   - after graduating from a vocational school of the second degree or after meeting the conditions referred to in art. 10 sec. 3 item 2 letter c of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system

- and after passing exams confirming qualifications in a given profession, a secondary school leaving certificate.

5. level V of the Polish Qualifications Framework, it is confirmed by:
   - a diploma of completion of a teachers' college,
   - a diploma of completion of a teachers' college of foreign languages,
   - a diploma of completion of a college of social service workers;
   - a certificate of a certified specialist;
   - a certificate of a certified specialist technologist;
   - a certificate of completion of an art school confirming the acquisition of a professional title;
   - a professional diploma after completing a post-secondary school or after meeting the conditions referred to in art. 10 sec. 3 item 2 letter d of the Act on the Education System, and after passing professional exams in a given profession taught exclusively at a post-secondary school.
6. level VI of the Polish Qualifications Framework it is confirmed by:
   - a first-cycle diploma.
7. level VII of the Polish Qualifications Framework it is confirmed by:
   a second-cycle diploma and a uniform Master's degree diploma.
8. level VIII of the Polish Qualifications Framework it is confirmed by:
   - doctoral diploma.

   The level of differences in the framework:

8.1. Level I
   very simple tasks, according to detailed instructions, under direct supervision
8.2. Level II
   simple tasks, according to general instructions, under guidance
8.3. Level III
   not very simple tasks, according to general instructions, partly independently
8.4. Level IV
   not very complex tasks, partly without instructions, independently
8.5. Level V
   tasks without instructions, leading a small team, evaluating the actions of teams
8.6. Level VI
   innovative performance of tasks, independent decision-making
8.7. Level VII
   creating and developing models of proper conduct in the work and life environment, leading a group and taking responsibility for it
8.8. Level VIII
   solving research problems, participating in the exchange of experiences and ideas, also in an international environment

4.4.2. Description of the school(s)/partner(s)

In the years 1949-50 the city authorities of Wieruszów made efforts to establish a Developmental Self-Government School of the High School level, but after a few months the Board of Education of the Łódź District withdrew the permit due to lack of funds and qualified teachers. In the years 1954-55 the eighth grade of the Developmental High School of the high school level was established. At the same time the city was promoted to the rank of a district, which helped to maintain the new school. The number of classes increased and quickly a 7-year primary school and a 4-year secondary school were housed in one building, creating an 11-year primary and secondary school. Teaching was carried out in two shifts. The first secondary school leaving exam was held in 1958, and 20 graduates received their secondary school certificates.

In 1960 a new building for the primary school was opened. The popularisation of education became more realistic when parallel classes were additionally created. In 1962, the School of Nicolaus Copernicus General Secondary School was built. The two schools started to function separately.

On 1 September 1982, the Complex of General Education Schools was established, consisting of Primary School No. 2 and Secondary School. Building of a new school in the town, intended ultimately as a junior high school, allowed the primary school and the secondary school to be separated again. Since 1 September 1999, the school has operated as the Nicolaus Copernicus General Secondary School. Since 1 January 2008, by resolution of the Wieruszów District Council, the General Secondary School Complex was established, which includes the Nicolaus Copernicus General Secondary School and Supplementary High School for Adults.

Now the school employs 29 teachers and 3.5 service and administration staff.

Experience with Anxiety in Students

Teachers observe that some students experience anxious moments at school. Factors that have an anxiety-inducing effect during the teaching process include knowledge control and evaluation- being asked by teachers or tests. Important are also teacher-student interactions, an atmosphere of competition and a lack of friendly relationships or even lack of peer acceptance.

Moreover, anxiety often stems from family issues, peer violence or unsuccessful social integration. The consequences of these factors are observed by low self-esteem, fear of failure, and lack of willingness to trust others.

4.4.3. Concrete measures - strategies and projects

Education on Anxiety

In our school, teachers have not taken part in any compulsory courses connected with anxiety and mental health issues among teenagers. However, our school provides access to some online trainings, which face the problem of youth mental health issues. Teachers who are interested in the topic can take part but also they have the support of school counsellors who are better educated in this issue, especially anxiety and depression.

Support Structure

The first step of dealing with students' anxiety is talking with students themselves. A form teacher also informs parents of the problem and they try to help. If the case is more complex, there is the school psychologist or a pedagogue who are at school during

classes and are willing to help. There is a psychological and pedagogical counselling centre in our town as well. The service is free of charge although the help is not given at once. Clients have to make appointments. The school itself provides opportunities to maintain mental health in proper condition by keeping fit. There are PE classes for all students, access to the gym, the tennis court. PE teachers ensure a wide range of activities to promote physical well-being.

Existing Protocols

There are no detailed procedures for helping students to cope with anxiety at school. However, the types of assistance and the principles for providing it to students, parents and teachers are specified based on School Statute. The basic forms of assistance include psychological and pedagogical assistance, which is provided by the team for psychological and pedagogical assistance, which includes a school pedagogue, a special education pedagogue and a psychologist.

Help-Seeking Behaviour

The first person who students usually find help with is their form teacher or any other trusted teacher. Teachers are available for consultation during dedicated office hours - it is one compulsory hour for each teacher. If the students need more professional help, they can turn to school specialists. The basic forms of assistance include psychological and pedagogical assistance, which is provided by the psychological and pedagogical assistance team, which includes a school pedagogue, a special education teacher, and a psychologist. Their main tasks include:

- -conducting activities aimed at preventing addictions, violence and risky behaviours among students,
- - assessing the needs and capabilities of students in the emotional, cognitive and social context,
- - conducting individual conversations with students to help them cope with emotional difficulties, such as stress, anxiety or peer conflicts,
- - providing assistance in crisis situations (e.g. loss of a loved one, traumatic situations),
- - conducting group classes in the area of coping with difficulties (e.g. coping with stress, emotions and anxiety).

In addition, in accordance with the Act of 13 May 2016 on Counteracting the Threat of Sexual Crime and the Protection of Juvenile, the School has implemented the Standards for Juvenile Protection from Abuse since 15 February 2024. They define the procedures for responding in the event of a suspicion of a student abuse. At the beginning and at the end of the school year, a team of teachers and a psychologist conduct a survey on the well-being of students and educational needs and obstacles to learning.

Concrete Measures

To prevent possible problems our assistance team consisting of two pedagogues and a psychologist organise workshops for students how to deal with learning difficulties, how to organise the learning, manage the time, suggest learning strategies, cope with stressful situations.

They also conduct lectures for parents on teacher-parent meetings to make them aware of teenagers' problems and suggest some solutions.

Unaddressed Needs

Our school makes effort to help students cope with their problems. Due to the growing need to provide children and young people more psychological support, the school participates in external youth support programs, the pedagogical and psychological team and teachers are constantly improving their skills in the area of more effective support for young people. We look for different ideas, solutions to help those who need mental support. Thanks to the small number of students and clear rules for functioning in the school environment, we create an atmosphere based on respect, openness and kindness, which in turn turns into better academic results for students, better functioning and a reduced risk of mental disorders, including anxiety and neurosis. Clear rules for school functioning for sure will help with dealing with the problem- when a student knows the consequences of their positive and negative behaviour, they then have control over their decisions and consequences, which reduces the level of anxiety they feel. The support and kindness of teachers and peers will build the belief that none of the students will be left alone in difficult situations. Emotion regulation trainings - building students' skills in recognizing, naming, controlling and expressing feelings allows them to cope with anxiety much better. Encouraging Challenges - One of the most important ways to deal with anxiety is to enter stressful situations and confront them. In a friendly atmosphere, it is much easier for students to make this effort.

4.5. PORTUGAL

4.5.1. Institutional national framework

The Decreto-Lei nº 54/2018, issued on July 6, 2018, underscores the Portuguese government's commitment to creating an inclusive education system. This decree aligns with the priority to establish inclusive schools where all students, regardless of their personal and social circumstances, can achieve a level of education that promotes their full social inclusion. The decree supports the right to inclusive education, responding to students' potential, expectations and needs within a common educational project.

The decree mandates the establishment of multidisciplinary teams in each school. These teams are responsible for identifying support measures, monitoring their effectiveness and involving teachers, parents and students in the process. These teams should function holistically, considering academic, behavioral, social, emotional and environmental factors when evaluating students' needs. Also is enhanced the role of parents or guardians, giving them specific rights and duties to participate actively in their children's education. Schools are encouraged to develop partnerships with local entities, leveraging community resources to support educational inclusion. These partnerships aim to implement support measures, individual educational programs and transition plans for post-school life.

The Decreto-Lei nº 54/2018 provides guidelines on various support measures for learning and inclusion, categorized into three main levels: universal, selective and additional interventions. These measures aim to address the diverse needs of students, ensuring equitable access to education and promoting their full participation and success in the school environment:

Universal Measures

Universal measures are designed to benefit all students, fostering an inclusive environment by addressing the general needs of the entire student body. These measures are proactive and preventive, aimed at promoting participation and learning success. Key universal measures include:

- Differentiated Instruction: Teachers adapt their teaching methods and strategies to accommodate the diverse learning styles, abilities and interests of all students.
- Curriculum Accommodations: Adjustments are made to the way information is presented and assessed, without altering the core content or expectations. This might involve providing visual aids, simplified texts, or alternative assessment methods to cater to different learning needs.
- Enrichment Activities: Opportunities for extended learning and engagement beyond the standard curriculum are provided including extracurricular activities, special projects or advanced coursework that challenges and stimulates students' intellectual growth.
- Promotion of Prosocial Behavior: Schools implement programs and activities that encourage positive social interactions and relationships among students. This can include peer mentoring, social skills training and initiatives to foster a supportive and respectful school culture.
- Small Group Interventions: For students who may need additional support in specific areas, small group interventions are implemented.

These groups focus on targeted skills, such as reading comprehension or math problem-solving, providing more personalized instruction.

Selective Measures

Selective measures are targeted interventions for students who demonstrate a higher risk of academic failure or who have specific educational needs that are not fully addressed by universal measures. These measures require a more individualized approach and often involve additional resources. Key selective measures include:

- Differentiated Curricular Paths: Customized educational pathways are created to align with the individual needs and goals of students.
- Non-Significant Curriculum Adaptations: Adjustments are made to the curriculum content and goals without significantly altering the expected learning outcomes (changes in the sequence of content delivery or prioritization of specific learning objectives).
- Psychopedagogical Support: Specialized support services, such as counseling, therapy, or academic coaching, are provided to address the psychological and educational needs of students.
- Anticipation and Reinforcement of Learning: Additional instructional time and resources are allocated to help students master key concepts and skills.
- Tutorial Support: One-on-one or small group tutoring sessions are offered to provide personalized assistance and guidance.

Additional Measures

Additional measures are intensive and individualized interventions for students with significant and persistent learning needs. These measures often require specialized resources and are implemented when universal and selective measures are insufficient:

- Subject-Specific Learning: Students may attend classes for specific subjects or modules, focusing intensively on areas where they need the most support.
- Significant Curriculum Adaptations: Substantial modifications are made to the curriculum to accommodate the unique learning needs of students.
- Individual Transition Plans: For students preparing to transition from one educational stage to another (e.g., from primary to secondary school or from school to work), individualized plans are developed. These plans outline the necessary steps and support services to ensure a smooth and successful transition.
- Structured Teaching Methodologies: Specific teaching strategies, such as the TEACCH approach for students with autism, are employed to provide a consistent and supportive learning environment.
- Development of Personal and Social Autonomy Skills: Programs and activities are designed to enhance students' independence and social competencies. This can include vocational training, life skills education and opportunities for social interaction and community involvement.

Student anxiety is a significant concern that can impact academic performance, social interactions and well-being. Recognizing the diverse manifestations of anxiety—from general stress and social anxiety to severe anxiety disorders—Decreto-Lei nº 54/2018

provides a framework for inclusive education that addresses the needs of all students. This decree underlines the importance of creating an educational environment that is not only accessible to all but also supportive and responsive to the mental health challenges students may face.

These measures aim to create a school atmosphere where every student can succeed, regardless of their individual challenges. Universal measures promote a general atmosphere of well-being and stress reduction, while selective measures offer targeted support for those who need additional help. For students with significant and persistent anxiety, additional measures provide intensive, individualized interventions.

The implementation of these measures involves the collaboration of educators, parents, mental health professionals and the students themselves. By promoting a holistic approach, Decreto-Lei nº 54/2018 ensures that schools are equipped to address the various types of anxiety students may experience, thereby enhancing their educational outcomes and personal development. This framework not only highlights the importance of academic achievement but also prioritizes the mental and emotional well-being of every student, aligning with the broader goals of a truly inclusive educational system.

4.5.2. Description of the school(s)/partner(s)

The Portuguese consortium of the project does not include schools as partners. For feasibility, two schools from the metropolitan area of Porto with high school level were enrolled by direct invitation. The data collection occurred after obtaining authorization from the respective school administration and data processing was conducted at the facilities of the institutions participating in the project.

First school was created in 1988/1989, with the designation of Escola Secundária de Arcozelo. In 2000, the school was renamed the Escola Arquiteto Oliveira Ferreira (ESAOF), in homage to the architect Francisco de Oliveira Ferreira, who became the school's patron. The school is located in Arcozelo, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal, and its educational territory extends through the parishes of Arcozelo, Gulpilhares, S. Félix da Marinha and Serzedo, an area where the rural, scarce industry and some services intersect. However, the seashore boosts the development of a bathing area, with good infrastructure and innovative products, which attract tourists throughout the year, especially in the summer season when tourist demand increases, allowing an increase in seasonal employment. The school buildings are surrounded by green spaces that include a pedagogical garden with a greenhouse, created as part of the "Sow to Spoon" Project. This space is dynamised by Special Education students who attend an Individual Specific curriculum. It has six hundred students in grades from 7th to 12th. As regards the teaching staff, they are a total of eighty-two. As for the non-teaching staff, they make a total of twenty-six technical and operational assistants.

The educational project involves guiding young people on a journey of learning to be, learning to do, learning to be and learning to learn in a motivated, rigorous and disciplined way. Thus, the educational process is based on principles and values of democratic citizenship, humanism, shared leadership, pedagogical primacy, with a view to autonomy, critical thinking, responsibility, discipline and the promotion of a culture of inclusion. The school has been receiving in recent decades several students of Brazil, Venezuela, China and Ukrainian descent, some of them do not always speak Portuguese. Besides the formal educational offer, there are also several clubs and workshops at the

School that provide students with opportunities for personal appreciation and full occupation of their school time, constituting devices for consolidation and enrichment of curricular learning, while assuming themselves as forms of education for a more informed and participatory citizenship. Eco-School, Reading Workshop, Orality Workshops (English/German), Applied Arts Workshop, Recycling Workshop, European Club, Gardening Club, Chess Club, Table Tennis Club and Sports Dynamization Workshop, which constitutes the Internal Activity of School Sport, TV at School, Radio School and the Musical Choir are examples of projects in activity at school.

The second school invited was the Escola Básica e Secundária de Pedrouços (EBSP), which is the main school of a cluster (Agrupamento de escolas de Pedrouços - AE Pedrouços) which educational territory extends through the two municipalities, Maia and Gondomar, serving the parishes of Pedrouços (Maia) and partially Águas Santas (Maia) and Rio Tinto (Gondomar). It was officially announced under the designation of Escola Básica de D. Paio Mendes in the 1972/1973 school year, with the grades corresponding currently to the second and third cycle. The educational offer of EBSP was latter extended to cover ISCED 3, while ISCED 0 and the first 4 years of ISCED 2 are served by the 8 other schools from the cluster. Together they have around the 1900 students, of which approximately 10% have foreign nationality and 7% benefit from selective and additional learning support and inclusion measures, reinforcing a multicultural and inclusive nature. In this sense, special attention is given to the socioeconomic and cultural context of AE Pedrouços, as approximately 37% of students depend on social school support. This reality highlights increased socioeconomic difficulties, exacerbated by the pandemic and currently by the military conflict and inflation crisis, which must be considered by AE Pedrouços, calling for more support measures that ensure conditions of equity and comprehensive human development for each student. AE Pedrouços beneficiates from TEIP (Priority Education Intervention Territories) since 2006/2007 legal framework a program in Portugal aimed at improving educational outcomes in schools located in socially and economically disadvantaged areas. The initiative focuses on addressing issues such as academic failure, absenteeism, and social exclusion by implementing targeted interventions and providing additional support and resources to these schools.

The TEIP priorities leading the Improvement Plan allowed to implement several supporting and quality promoting initiatives, such as Community in Formation (Diversification of the educational offerings and alternative educational pathways), Psychology Office, Apazigua Office, Inclusion Support Club, Peer-to-Peer support for new students and peer-to-peer Academic Support. AE Pedrouços has always played an active civic and cultural role among the citizens of the area. Today, it continues to be a pluralistic and multicultural school, where free men and women teach and study. According to the Educational Project for 2022-2025 they aspire to be recognized for their commitment to excellence, innovation, inclusion, and social responsibility in developing critical citizens.

At ESAOF were interviewed:

- the principal, whose main role is to organize and manage the school, has training in philosophy and psychology, with a postgraduate degree in multiple disabilities and cognitive diseases.

- a psychologist working at this school for about four years, who has a specialization in caring for children who are victims of abuse and deals with anxiety related to academic performance, especially during tests and exams.

At EBSP were interviewed:

- a Spanish language teacher at both middle and high school levels, who also holds several administrative and middle management responsibilities roles as the coordinator of the Citizenship Education Strategy, class director for 11th grade, coordinator of the Internal Training Center and internship advisor for teachers professionalization masters.
- a teacher of Biology and Geology at both middle and high school levels, and has also taught professional courses and serves as a class director.

None of the Interviewees reported specific formation regarding anxiety in educational context and all have experience dealing with anxiety in students aged 15 to 18.

4.5.3. Concrete measures - strategies and projects

The opinion of the interviewees is that in general both teachers and schools are attentive to anxiety as a potential problem, though there is room for improvement. From the interviews is perceptible some awareness regarding anxiety as useful in the educational context but also as a potential issue, if not attended. Increase in student anxiety in recent years is noticed, with several students experiencing anxiety, including severe cases receiving external support.

Insecurity and fear of the unknown related to the transition from middle to high school level and to the academic results are consistently referred as potential causes and triggers for anxiety. Regarding students' performance and academic results were explicitly referred to: pressure to achieve good grades, to complete modules within deadlines, to perform well at exams and to achieve the levels required to get into college. This relates to poor management of expectations and pressure to meet goals, and difficulty in handling frustration when unable to achieve objectives, which were also explicitly noticed. Pressure is testified as self-imposed, as well as generated by the school and home environments. Family factors, including unstable home environments and exposure to violence were listed in both schools, with rebellious behavior in adolescents listed as also contributing to stress. On the other hand, the total lack of motivation was also included by one of the interviewees, Specific pathological issues like fear of crowds or public speaking and sensory issues (e.g., light and sound) for students with special conditions were also referred to.

Several situations were reported as problems resulting or relating with anxiety:

- increased stress and anxiety levels in the classroom
- feelings of unpreparedness despite being well-prepared with students feeling incapable despite their abilities
- anxiety peaks during assessments and classifications and even difficulties in completing formal assessments.
- challenges in maintaining appropriate interpersonal relationships, with aggressive responses towards teachers
- increased conflicts among peers, including instances of aggression and physical confrontations
- disciplinary problems

- frequent absences from school.

Consistent support from the school's administration is reported, as well as access to psychological services within the school at both schools. TEIP program is listed as an opportunity to implement more initiatives that relate wellbeing. Specific strategies and projects regarding wellbeing and anxiety control vary between schools and include:

- Study support with teachers to present study methods and help to manage time and expectations for all students (e.g. A2A program) and tutoring programs for students struggling with school performance (at both schools);
- Regular physical activity promotion (at both schools), including a dancing club and organized School Sports;
- Weekly sharing time (1h30) for talking about whatever the students want, being loneliness and wellbeing recurrent topics;
- Activities to facilitate social integration for new students with emphasis on community service and personal development (Ububtu club), and plans to extend it to cycle change
- Gardening club
- Philosophy club
- Health and citizenship education projects, including partnerships with external organizations, other short terms activities to address emotional conflicts.

Preventive interventions from early education to prevent conflicts and bullying, some of which as part of TEIP program “Apazigua - Pacify project”.

Additional strategies, more prone to intervene after a potential issue is identified, were also reported. As part of TEIP program "Apazigua - Pacify project" provides mediation service to help manage conflicts and providing immediate support, including a calming room, while the other school has GIP (Priority Intervention Office). Along with school psychologist, informing and involving the class council, direct communication with parents and supportive actions in the classroom were highlighted. Anxiety diagnosed as pathological is supported by psychologists and doctors from the health center and protocols with hospitals and other entities to help treatment are in force.

Still, all interviewed identified needs to be coped, additional sources required and claim for more autonomy to implement good ideas effectively. Broader implementation of the projects required more resources, namely stable psychologists at schools and more teaching hours allocated to tutoring programs. A need for more proactive measures to prevent anxiety from escalating is also expressed. This is expected to include the promotion of a culture where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities and to integrate mindfulness and relaxation techniques into the classroom, particularly before formal evaluation. The focus of current resources is described as on cycle transition years and academic performance, thus more specific projects targeting anxiety prevention are missed. Emphasis on addressing anxiety from an early age to prevent its escalation as students’ progress through school is suggested.

While there is general awareness among teachers about student anxiety, some reluctance to implement time-consuming interventions is described, due to curriculum pressures, especially at the high school level. Moreover, balancing the need for traditional content knowledge and traditional assessment methods, as required by mandatory national exams, with developing broader competencies and skills is

described as a current conflict promoting evaluation related anxiety among students. Both school and home environments need to reduce pressure on students to alleviate stress and anxiety though a more supportive environment.
Training initiatives for teachers, targeting to increase awareness but mostly capacitating with practical strategies will be welcome.

4.6. SLOVENIA

4.6.1. Institutional national framework

In the Slovenian educational system, the overarching law – the Act on the Organization and Financing of Education – sets the goals of upbringing and education, which include, among other things:

- Ensuring the optimal development of an individual, regardless of gender, social and cultural background, religion, race, ethnic and national origin, and physical and mental constitution or disability;
- Educating for mutual tolerance, developing awareness of gender equality, respecting differences and cooperating with others, respecting children's and human rights and fundamental freedoms, developing equal opportunities for both genders, and thereby developing the ability to live in a democratic society;
- Equal opportunities for upbringing and education in areas with special development problems;
- Ensuring equal opportunities for upbringing and education for children from less stimulating social environments;
- Ensuring equal opportunities for upbringing and education for children, adolescents, and adults with special needs;
- Educating and training for sustainable development and active participation in a democratic society, which includes a deeper understanding and responsible attitude towards oneself, one's health, other people, one's own and other cultures, the natural and social environment, and future generations.

This law also stipulates that institutions for upbringing and education must ensure a safe and stimulating learning environment in accordance with these goals, where corporal punishment of children and any other form of violence against and among children, as well as unequal treatment based on gender, sexual orientation, social and cultural background, religion, race, ethnic and national origin, and differences in physical and mental development, are prohibited.

In 2018, a resolution on the mental health program declared as one of its main goals the Promotion of Mental Health, Prevention of Mental Disorders, and Destigmatization of Mental Disorders in Various Target Groups.

A specific goal, targeted at children and adolescent mental health, was the Promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health issues in children and adolescents in educational institutions and local communities.

The lead ministries involved are MIZŠ (Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport), MZ (Ministry of Health), MDDSZ (Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities), and MNZ (Ministry of the Interior).

Measures proposed in the resolution on the mental health program, targeted at educational facilities, are as follows:

- Measure 1: Preparation of protocols for mutual cooperation among providers and programs in the field of promotion and prevention.

- Measure 2: Systematic introduction of the concept of mental health promotion in kindergartens and schools and cross-curricular treatment of health topics.
- Measure 3: Systematic introduction of tested and evaluated programs for the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental health problems in children and adolescents.
- Measure 4: Systematic introduction of evidence-based early intervention programs, including parenting programs, early intervention programs for children and adolescents, and programs for teachers.
- Measure 5: Pilot testing and gradual systematic introduction of proven effective programs for reducing peer violence, which increase children's sensitivity to this issue and specifically address identified cases of peer and online peer violence, as well as programs that successfully establish a safe and encouraging school environment.
- Measure 6: Training and strengthening the cooperation of school counseling services with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Center (CDZOM) by including mental health issues in the work concept of school counseling services and with the Center for Social Work (CSD) in working with children and adolescents with learning difficulties and mental health problems. Preparation of cooperation protocols for more effective collaboration.
- Measure 7: Development and implementation of programs for vulnerable groups of adolescents (e.g., school dropouts, minorities, migrants).
- Measure 8: Development and introduction of new approaches and communication channels for promoting mental health among children and adolescents (ICT, e-mental health).
- Measure 9: Preparation of recommendations and measures for upbringing and protecting the mental health of children and adolescents in the age of digital media, with the aim of preventing non-chemical addictions (playing computer games, gambling, social networks).
- Measure 10: Development of preventive programs in the field of preventing non-chemical addictions.
- Measure 11: Ensuring a safe and stimulating learning environment.
- Measure 12: Providing hospital school programs for integration into the home school environment during treatment and after, until full integration into the home school is possible, as well as later counseling and connecting with the home school.

As the Resolution on the National Mental Health Program (ReNPDZ18–28) spans until 2028, several of the proposed measures have still not been achieved.

4.6.2. Description of the school(s)/partner(s)

Srednja šola Slovenska Bistrica was established in 1998/1999. It is located in the town and municipality of Slovenska Bistrica.

The Municipality of Slovenska Bistrica, located in the north-eastern part of Slovenia, is an important economic and educational centre in the region. The local economy is based on industry, crafts, agriculture, and service activities. Among the main industrial sectors are metal processing, woodworking, and the production of electrical equipment. The

municipality hosts several successful companies that operate both domestically and internationally, contributing to high employment rates and economic growth.
In the field of education, the municipality offers a wide range of educational institutions, including preschools, elementary schools, and a secondary school. The schools in the municipality are well-equipped and follow modern pedagogical approaches, ensuring quality education and promoting the development of young talents.
Srednja šola Slovenska Bistrica offers several educational programs. These include the General Gymnasium, Metallurgical Technician, Economic Technician, Economic Technician PTI (Vocational-Technical Education), and Retailer programs. Currently there are 415 students in 18 classes. Class sizes vary from 15 (laboratory groups) to 28-30, with some classes as low as seven, due to low enrollment.

Educational Programs

1. General Gymnasium:
    - Focuses on a broad education with the possibility of continuing studies at the university level.
    - Students participate in various research projects and competitions, achieving high results both nationally and internationally.
2. Metallurgical Technician:
    - Directed towards technical education with an emphasis on metallurgy and the processing industry.
    - The program includes practical training and close collaboration with industrial companies, allowing students to gain concrete work experience during their schooling.
3. Economic Technician and Economic Technician PTI:
    - Focuses on economics, entrepreneurship, and business management.
    - The program includes a "Training Company," where students establish simulated companies and learn business skills through practical examples.
4. Retailer:
    - Training for work in retail and sales.
    - Emphasis is on practical knowledge directly applicable in the workplace in the retail sector.

Srednja šola Slovenska Bistrica is a relatively young educational institution. The school has achieved a high level of educational quality and has become recognized for its commitment to supporting students. The school strives for creativity, openness, and collaboration, as evidenced by numerous student projects and achievements. In addition to the formal education offering, there are several clubs and projects where students can explore their interests and personal growth. Among these clubs are Reading Workshops, European Club, Chess Club, Volunteer Club, and several clubs focused on academic enrichment through participation in different competitions.
The teaching staff consists of 45 employees. The non-teaching staff consists of four people (2 laboratory assistants, 1 school custodian). The administration office staff includes seven people: head-master, deputy head-master, school secretary, accountant, and school counselling team (pedagogue, psychologist, inclusive pedagogue). Several

people in administration combine their roles with teaching roles and are as such heavily involved in the education process.
The educational process is based on principles and values of cooperation, creativity, and knowledge. The school promotes a culture of integration. In the recent decades, it has received several immigrant students, mostly hailing from Kosovo or other countries of former Yugoslavia, who come to the school with varying proficiencies in Slovene. For these students, the school offers a course in Slovene language and culture, as well as other accommodations (delayed grading period, time adjustments, individual lessons, etc.).
At the school, there are currently 27 students with individual education programs (IEP) for various learning and mobility difficulties, hearing issues, and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties, spread out throughout the programs. The school also provides IEPs for several athletes who compete at the state level.

4.6.3. Concrete measures – strategies and projects

Education on Anxiety

Teachers have not received training on anxiety and mental health issues during their initial training, but there are several professional development programs focused on youth violence and mental health issues available. Attendance at these programs is voluntary and depends on individual teachers' interests and needs. Topics like online violence, peer violence, and mental health workshops are covered. For instance, the school counsellors attended several seminars on dealing with students' mental health issues, including anxiety and depression. School counselling services also provide ongoing education for teachers.

Experience with Anxiety in Students

Teachers observe that many students experience anxiety, especially when entering school, due to distrust and fear of integration. Another common source of anxiety are evaluations, when fear of failure and avoidant behaviour often prevents students from succeeding. Anxiety often stems from family issues, academic pressure, peer violence, or unsuccessful social integration. Students commonly exhibit symptoms like low self-esteem, fear of failure, and reluctance to confide in others. Specific incidents include family violence, substance abuse, serious illnesses, and bereavement.

Support Structure

Teachers primarily handle anxiety cases themselves by talking to students and, in more complex cases, referring them to the school counselling service, which can also refer students to external specialists for severe cases. Schools have a counselling service staffed with a pedagogue, psychologist, and inclusive pedagogue. The school also offers a sensory room and individualised education plans (IEPs) for students with special needs, as well as for student-athletes, students with extraordinary life circumstances, and gifted students. The school provides opportunities for physical exercise, with mandatory PE classes and activities to promote physical well-being.

Existing Protocols

While no specific strategies solely target anxiety, protocols for dealing with violence and promoting healthy lifestyles are in place. Guidelines for referral to counselling services

are part of school rules, and teachers use relaxation techniques and individualised support for students during stressful evaluations.

Help-Seeking Behaviour

Students usually first seek help from their class teacher or a trusted professor. Teachers are available for consultation during dedicated office hours. In urgent cases, students may leave class to seek immediate help. The school also facilitates access to external mental health resources through vetted advertisements and social media channels.

Concrete Measures

Preventative measures include workshops, lectures for parents and students, and community-building activities. The school organises regular workshops on learning strategies, goal setting, and mental health. There are efforts to destigmatize mental health issues through education and awareness campaigns. For specific needs, IEPs are prepared, and school counsellors mediate conflicts involving students, teachers, and parents. The counsellors are available for individual and group work with students. The promotion of physical activity through PE classes and extracurricular activities is also emphasised.

Unaddressed Needs

While schools are making efforts to address anxiety, there is recognition that more can be done. Teachers express the need for more preventive measures and regular mental health education. They highlight the importance of integrating mental health support within the classroom and utilising school social media for awareness campaigns.

4.7. TÜRKİYE

4.7.1. Institutional national framework

After the foundation of the Turkish Republic the organization of the Ministry of Education gradually developed and was reorganized with the Law no 2287 issued in 1933.The objectives of the Turkish National Education System are regulated by the National Education Basic Act No. 1739. 2.1.

General Objectives

The general objective of Turkish National Education is to educate all individuals of the Turkish Nation,

1. To raise citizens who adhere to Atatürk's reforms and principles and Atatürk's nationalism expressed in the Constitution; adopting, protecting, and developing the national, moral, humanitarian, spiritual, and cultural values of the Turkish Nation; who love their family, homeland, and nation and always try to glorify them, who know their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Türkiye, which is a democratic, secular and social State governed by the rule of law based on human rights and the basic principles at the beginning of the Constitution, and who have turned them into behaviors;
2. To have a balanced and healthy personality and character in terms of body, mind, morality, spirit and emotions, the power of free and scientific thinking, a broad worldview, respecting human rights, valuing personality and initiative, feeling responsible towards society to raise them as constructive, creative and productive individuals;
3. To prepare them for life by developing their interests, talents and abilities, providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills, behaviors, and the habit of working together, and ensuring that they have a profession that will make them happy and contribute to the happiness of the society. Thus, on the one hand, to increase the welfare and happiness of Turkish citizens and Turkish society; on the other hand, to support and accelerate economic, social, and cultural development within national unity and integrity, and finally, to make the Turkish Nation a constructive, creative and distinguished partner of contemporary civilization.

Special Objectives

Turkish education and training system is organized to achieve these general objectives, and the specific objectives of educational institutions of various degrees and types are determined in accordance with the general objectives and the basic principles of the Turkish national education system.

Basic Principles of Turkish National Education

The basic principles of the Turkish National Education System were determined by the National Education Basic Act № 1739. Accordingly, universality and equality, needs of the individual and society, orientation, the right to education, equality of opportunity and possibility, continuity, commitment to Atatürk's reforms and principles and Atatürk's nationalism, democracy education, secularism, scientificness, planning in education, coeducation, education campuses, cooperation between school and family and education everywhere are the basic principles of the Turkish National Education system. 4. General Structure of Turkish National Education Turkish National Education System comprises two main aspects: formal and non-formal education. Figure 2

demonstrates the general structure of Turkish National Education System based on age with levels.

Curriculums and Textbooks

In Türkiye, the curriculum designed by the relevant Ministry units to which the school is affiliated and approved by the Board of Education is implemented at public and private schools. The textbooks of the courses conducted at these schools are written by the Ministry units or the private sector in accordance with the approved curriculum, and they are taught with the approval of the Board of Education. In Türkiye, the state provides textbooks free of charge to students at all levels of education.

In its 2023 Education Vision Document, the Ministry of National Education has included the target of opening graduate-level programs by removing the "Pedagogical Formation" application based on certificates. In this context, Pedagogical Formation Education has been abolished in line with the Decision of the Ministry of National Education, Board of Education and Discipline, dated 29/06/2020 and numbered 12.

The meeting of Council of Higher Education on 09.02.2012 concluded that teacher education programs that are either open or distance oriented would not accepts students by 2012-2013 academic years, thus programs of Anadolu University Open Education Faculty such as Early Childhood Education and English language teacher education programs did not accept students. Moreover, the night programs of all teacher education programs were closed, except for Early Childhood, Counseling and Psychological Advising, Special Education, Religion Culture and Ethics teacher education programs. However, only special education and Arabic language teacher education programs accept students to the night programs. In addition, a regulation issued by the Council on 22.05.2015 stated that mentally handicapped, hearing and visual handicapped teacher education programs were placed under Special Education programs.

The Institutional National Framework in Turkish education refers to the overarching structure, policies, and regulations governing the education system in Turkey. It is designed to ensure a standardized and high-quality education across the country. Key components of this framework include:

1. Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı - MEB)

Primary Authority: The MEB is the central government body responsible for formulating national education policies, implementing educational programs, and overseeing all educational institutions from preschool to secondary education.

Curriculum Development: MEB is responsible for developing and approving the national curriculum, textbooks, and educational materials.

Teacher Training and Professional Development: MEB sets the standards for teacher education, certification, and continuous professional development.

Examinations and Assessments: The ministry oversees national examinations, such as the High School Entrance Examination (LGS) and the University Entrance Examination (YKS).

2. Council of Higher Education (Yükseköğretim Kurulu - YÖK)

YÖK regulates universities and higher education institutions in Turkey, ensuring quality standards in tertiary education. YÖK is responsible for the accreditation of universities and their programs. The council is involved in policy-making for higher education, including research funding and international collaborations.

3. Provincial and District Directorates of National Education

These directorates act as local representatives of the MEB, implementing national policies at the provincial and district levels. Those are public bodies that are responsible for administrative affairs of formal and non-formal education including primary, secondary, vocational and technical education, special education, school counseling services and lifelong learning. Policy making, monitoring the implementation of educational policies; monitoring and evaluation of educational environments, programs, materials, student affairs and social activities; making research, planning and developing projects to meet the educational needs are among the activities of the directorate.

4. Educational Institutions

4.1. Formal Education

The education is carried out regularly at schools within the framework of programs designed for individuals of a certain age group and at the same level. Formal education covers pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and higher education institutions.

4.2. Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education covers all educational activities organized alongside or outside of formal education.

The particular purpose of non-formal education, in accordance with the general objectives and basic principles of national education, is to help citizens who have never entered the formal education system or who are at or out of any level of formal education next to or outside of formal education.

5. Legislative Framework

National Education Basic Law (Nº 1739 outlines the fundamental principles and goals of the Turkish education system, emphasizing equality, secularism, and modernity. A series of regulations and directives issued by the MEB and YÖK guide the implementation of educational policies.

6. Educational Reforms and Programs

6.1. Innovation and Technology

Initiatives to integrate technology in education, such as the FATİH Project (Movement of Enhancing Opportunities and Improving Technology).

6.2. Inclusive Education

Programs aimed at ensuring equal access to education for all students, including those with disabilities and from disadvantaged backgrounds.

7. International Collaborations

Erasmus+ and Other Programs: Participation in international education programs and partnerships to enhance educational quality and global competencies. This framework ensures that the education system in Turkey is coherent, standardized, and aligned with national development goals, while also being adaptable to changes and improvements over time.

The regulation for Turkish Qualifications Framework (henceforth TQF) states that the regulation on the inclusion of all quality assured qualifications gained through education and training programs and other learning pathways into the TQF and the quality assurance of the qualifications to be included in the TQF should be published in the Official Journal upon the approval of the TQF Coordination Board.

4.7.2. Description of the school(s)/partner(s)

Darıca Directorate of National Education is a non-profit local public body, affiliated with the Ministry of National Education (MONE), is responsible for administrative affairs of formal and non-formal education, including primary, secondary, vocational and technical education, special education, school counseling services, and lifelong learning within the region.

Led by a Head Director and supported by 4 co-directors and a staff of 58 individuals, the directorate manages all educational activities for 2548 teachers and 41,619 students across 137 educational institutions by managing, directing, supervising, and coordinating the Ministry's education policies and strategic plans in line with the legislation and programmes, and fulfilling them effectively and efficiently. Besides, we also offer training, seminars, refresher courses, and other activities to our teachers to motivate, foster, and encourage their professional development according to their needs and demands.

Additionally, DIMEM has been carrying out 7 Erasmus+ KA2SCH and KA2VET projects on different topics such as digitalization, gamification, artificial intelligence, IoT, environment etc. in collaboration with universities, companies, NGOs, and schools in Europe. Given its significant capacity, DIMEM possesses the potential to contribute to the project through the dissemination and exploitation of results

In this project, Darıca İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü (DIMEM) formed a consortium comprising three different types of high schools, including Anatolian High Schools and vocational education and training (VET) schools with a health department focus. The project aimed to address anxiety-related issues among students.

The process of data collection involved securing authorization from the respective school administrations to ensure ethical compliance and participant consent. Subsequently, data processing and analysis were carried out within the facilities of the participating institutions, ensuring that the work aligned with the project's goals and standards.

1. Gökşen Mustafa Yücel Anatolian High School

   Under DIMEM's umbrella, the school has the vision of creating a unique school that raises generations who create their future, not those who predict their future. The mission of our school is to raise individuals who can question, produce, use their own potential at the highest level, and are at peace with themselves and their environment, with a student-centered education approach by following innovations. The school is among the largest in the district, accommodating a diverse community with 4 administrators, 76 teachers, and a student body of 1,210. Education at the school spans four years, from 9th to 12th grade.

   In the 11th grade, students specialize by selecting one of four departments based on their interests and career aspirations: Science, Mathematics, Social Sciences, or Foreign Languages. This structure allows students to focus on their preferred areas of study, fostering academic excellence and preparation for future endeavors.

   In addition to academics, the school emphasizes extracurricular activities, particularly in sports. Students with a passion for athletics are identified and selected by Physical Education teachers to join school teams. These teams actively participate in sports tournaments at both district and city levels, representing the school with enthusiasm and skill.

This balance of academic rigor and extracurricular engagement makes the school a dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

The school's Guidance Service is a vital resource, staffed by three professional counselors dedicated to supporting students. The service offers individual counseling sessions addressing topics such as anxiety, stress management, and academic success. In addition, it organizes regular seminars for students, teachers, and parents, aiming to foster a supportive educational environment.

Every May, the Guidance Service administers a comprehensive "Guidance Needs Assessment Survey" to students, teachers, and parents. This survey identifies key areas requiring attention for the upcoming academic year. Based on this year's survey results, the focus for the next academic cycle will be on "Academic Self-Efficacy" and "Conscious Technology Use." The service will develop targeted initiatives and activities to address these priorities effectively.

2. Öğretmen Fusün Erdemir Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School

Under DIMEM's umbrella, which is one of 5 vet schools in the district, to the vision of being the only address and a distinguished Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School in our region where competent healthcare professionals are trained who combine the knowledge given at school with their skills, embrace moral values, and take responsibility; it has the mission of, in line with Atatürk's Principles and Reforms, training healthcare personnel equipped with professional knowledge and skills to meet the healthcare needs of society, who will further enhance the quality of healthcare services, increase trust in healthcare services, are at peace with themselves and society, closely follow developments in their profession, continuously renew themselves, and embrace national, spiritual, moral, and human values.

There are 36 teachers working in our school and 610 students are studying. There are 21 classrooms, 1 conference hall, 3 health practice laboratories, 1 library, 1 football pitch, 1 volleyball and 1 basketball court. Full day training is provided.

There are a total of three departments at our school: Nursing Assistant, Midwifery Assistant, and Healthcare Technician.

The school's guidance service provides annual seminars on managing exam anxiety and stress, focusing particularly on students in the 11th and 12th grades. Additionally, it offers individual counseling sessions for students who seek personal assistance. Towards the end of the academic year, a survey is conducted to assess the guidance needs of students and based on the findings; a plan for the upcoming year is formulated to address these needs effectively. Our school also organizes various social activities, competitions, and trips at regular intervals to prevent students from getting bored due to the academic workload.

3. Deniz Yıldızları Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School:

To the vision of being a leading school that trains quality manpower and is proud to be a member of our school; It has the mission of providing continuous innovation and development in education and training for the future of our country, providing quality vocational and technical education services in line with the needs of our society and region in the light of the general and specific objectives of National Education, and training intermediate staff for our industry and students for higher education who are committed to national and moral values.

There are 109 teachers working in the school and 2109 students are studying. There are 32 classrooms, 21 workshops, 1 conference hall, 1 gym, 13 professional practice laboratories, 1 chemistry, 1 physics laboratory, and 1 library. Full day training is provided.

There are 4 departments in the school: Radio and Television Technologies Department, Industrial Automation Department, Electrical and Electronic Technologies Department, Information Technologies Department.

Our school guidance service gives seminars on exam anxiety and stress management every year, especially to 11th and 12th grades. Apart from this, it also conducts individual interviews with students who apply individually. At the end of the year, a guidance needs assessment survey is administered to students; The next year's plan is prepared in line with the results obtained.

4.7.3. Concrete measures - strategies and projects

Education on Anxiety

In Turkish schools, addressing anxiety has become a priority through structured education and targeted interventions. Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services are at the core of these efforts, providing individual and group counseling on anxiety, stress management, and academic success. Programs like "Stress-Free Exam Days" help students prepare for high-stakes exams in a supportive environment. Schools also conduct annual Guidance Needs Assessment Surveys to identify specific areas requiring intervention, with recent initiatives focusing on "Academic Self-Efficacy" and "Conscious Technology Use." International projects, such as Erasmus+ initiatives, facilitate collaboration with European schools to implement innovative strategies. Additionally, mindfulness practices, parent engagement workshops, and partnerships with universities have been introduced to equip students and their families with tools to manage anxiety effectively. These measures highlight the growing emphasis on mental health education within Turkey's educational system.

Experience with Anxiety in Students

Teachers in Turkish schools often encounter students grappling with anxiety, particularly related to academic pressure and exams. Their experiences reveal both challenges and strategies in supporting students:

1. Increased Exam Pressure

   Teachers observe that national exams like LGS and YKS significantly contribute to student anxiety. Many students feel overwhelmed by high expectations from families and society, which affects their emotional well-being and classroom engagement.

2. Behavioural Changes in Students

   Teachers report common signs of anxiety, such as withdrawal, difficulty concentrating, irritability, or physical complaints (e.g., headaches or stomachaches). They often act as first responders, identifying these signs and referring students to school counsellors.

3. Support and Interventions

   Teachers work closely with guidance services to create a supportive environment. They use strategies like offering encouragement, fostering a positive classroom atmosphere, and incorporating relaxation techniques, such as mindfulness activities, into the school day.

4. Need for Training

Many teachers express the need for additional training in recognizing and managing anxiety in students. While some schools provide workshops on mental health, teachers believe more professional development is necessary to effectively address these challenges.

5. Cultural and Parental Expectations

Teachers often deal with the added complexity of cultural attitudes toward mental health. Families may not always recognize or address anxiety, leaving teachers to play a more significant role in advocating for the student's needs.

Support structure

In Turkish schools, teachers are supported by various structures to help manage student anxiety effectively. Guidance and counseling services play a central role, offering professional support to both students and teachers through individual counseling, workshops, and tailored interventions. Teachers also participate in training programs designed to enhance their ability to identify and address anxiety-related issues, incorporating strategies like mindfulness and stress relief into their classrooms. Collaboration with families is another key aspect, with schools organizing parent-teacher meetings and workshops to create a unified approach to student well-being. Peer and administrative networks provide additional support, enabling teachers to share experiences and solutions, while partnerships with universities, NGOs, and international programs like Erasmus+ offer access to resources and expertise. These measures, combined with access to materials like relaxation guides and anxiety management workbooks, empower teachers to foster a more supportive and anxiety-aware educational environment.

Existing Protocols

In Turkey, existing protocols for addressing student anxiety are guided by policies established by the Ministry of National Education (MEB) and implemented through school-level structures. The Ministry mandates that every school have a dedicated guidance unit responsible for addressing student mental health. These services operate under national guidelines, which include procedures for identifying students with anxiety, conducting individual and group counselling sessions, and organizing mental health awareness programs for students, parents, and teachers. Also, Schools are required to use standardized tools, such as student observation forms and mental health assessment surveys, to detect signs of anxiety early. Once identified, students are referred to the school's guidance counsellor, who follows specific steps for intervention, including family involvement and, if necessary, referral to external mental health professionals. For acute cases of anxiety or mental health crises, schools follow detailed crisis management protocols. These include immediate counselling, notifying parents, and, in severe cases, collaborating with local health institutions to provide professional psychiatric support. The Ministry regularly updates and disseminates training modules for teachers to help them identify anxiety in students and apply supportive classroom strategies. These protocols also emphasize the importance of maintaining a positive learning environment to reduce stress triggers.

Help-Seeking Behaviour

In Türkiye, protocols for addressing anxiety in schools are supplemented by an understanding of help-seeking behaviours, which play a crucial role in ensuring students receive the support they need. The Ministry of National Education (MEB) emphasizes structured approaches to intervention, including the role of Guidance and Psychological Counselling Services, which serve as the first point of contact for students exhibiting anxiety symptoms. These services encourage help-seeking behaviour by fostering trust and confidentiality, making students feel safe to discuss their concerns.

Help-seeking behaviour is influenced by cultural and social factors, with students often hesitant to approach counsellors directly due to stigma. To address this, schools implement awareness campaigns, mental health seminars, and peer-support initiatives to normalize seeking help. Teachers, acting as trusted figures, are trained to identify signs of anxiety and guide students to appropriate resources, bridging the gap between students and counsellors.

Parents are also targeted in this effort, with workshops educating them on recognizing anxiety symptoms and encouraging their children to seek help. Additionally, anonymous surveys and feedback forms provide indirect ways for students to communicate their needs without fear of judgment.

Despite these measures, challenges remain, as some students may rely more on informal sources of support, such as friends or family, before accessing professional help. To mitigate this, schools are increasingly using technology-based platforms like online counselling portals and mental health apps to make help-seeking more accessible and less intimidating.

By combining structured protocols with efforts to reduce stigma and promote mental health literacy, Turkish schools aim to create an environment where help-seeking is a natural and encouraged response to anxiety.

Concrete Measures

To address anxiety in Turkish schools effectively, concrete measures can include implementing training programs for teachers to help them recognize and manage signs of anxiety and fostering supportive classroom environments. Establishing school-based mental health teams comprising counsellors, psychologists, and administrators ensures consistent intervention and guidance. Integrating mindfulness and relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises or yoga, into daily routines can help students manage stress. Schools can also organize parent education workshops to build awareness and equip families with tools to support their children's mental health. Peer mentoring programs enable students to provide emotional support to one another, while technology-driven solutions like mental health apps and virtual counselling make help more accessible and confidential. Initiatives like "anxiety-free" exam preparations, including mock exams in stress-free settings, can alleviate academic pressure. Standardized annual mental health surveys help identify needs and guide tailored interventions. Embedding emotional literacy in the curriculum fosters resilience and coping skills from an early age. Partnerships with mental health professionals, universities, and NGOs enhance these efforts by offering specialized training and support. Together, these measures create a proactive and holistic approach to reducing anxiety and fostering mental well-being in schools.

Unaddressed Needs

One significant gap is the lack of widespread mental health literacy among students, parents, and educators, leading to delayed identification and intervention for anxiety. While some schools provide basic training for teachers, many still lack adequate skills or confidence to handle mental health challenges effectively.

Another issue is the shortage of professional counsellors, with many schools relying on limited staff who may not have specialized training in anxiety-related disorders. Additionally, cultural stigma around mental health prevents students and families from seeking help, leaving many cases unreported or untreated.

Furthermore, resources for long-term support are often insufficient. Current interventions focus more on immediate stressors, such as exams, rather than addressing underlying causes of anxiety or providing sustained psychological care. Rural and underfunded schools, in particular, face resource disparities, with fewer access points for professional guidance or advanced programs.

Lastly, data-driven interventions are still evolving; while schools conduct needs assessments, a lack of systematic, nationwide data collection limits the ability to create scalable and targeted solutions. Addressing these gaps requires comprehensive reforms, including increased funding, greater awareness campaigns, and enhanced collaboration between schools, mental health professionals, and policymakers.

5. Final Considerations

The WAI (Wellbeing@Artificial Intelligence) project has highlighted the crucial role of addressing student anxiety in educational environments, especially in light of the challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing integration of digital tools in schools. Through this international collaboration, we have explored a variety of approaches to managing anxiety in schools, focusing on the experiences and strategies implemented across seven countries: Portugal, France, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, and Turkey.

Our research has shown that anxiety is a widespread issue in educational contexts, with significant implications for both academic performance and students' emotional wellbeing. The project revealed that while the symptoms of anxiety can manifest differently across cultures and educational systems, the underlying factors—academic pressure, social expectations, and the challenges of navigating digital environments—are common threads.

Key Findings:

1. The Impact of Anxiety on Education

Anxiety is not only a personal challenge for students but also a barrier to effective learning. It negatively impacts cognitive functions such as working memory, attention, and decision-making, which are vital for academic success.

2. Diverse Strategies Across Countries

The study revealed various strategies employed by different countries, including teacher training, the implementation of wellbeing programs, and the integration of digital tools to monitor and support students' mental health. These approaches highlight the importance of providing tailored support that aligns with local educational frameworks and cultural contexts.

3. The Role of Technology and AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds significant potential in mitigating anxiety, offering personalized support and early interventions through smart educational tools. The WAI project's focus on AI-driven solutions, such as personalized recommendation systems, demonstrates the promise of technology in fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

4. Ethical Considerations

Throughout the project, ethical considerations regarding data privacy, consent, and the responsible use of AI were paramount. Ensuring transparency and safeguarding students' privacy while using AI tools is crucial to maintaining trust in educational technologies.

5. Teacher Training and Professional Development

A critical theme throughout the findings was the necessity of equipping educators with the tools, knowledge, and skills to identify and address anxiety symptoms in students. Ongoing professional development in both mental health and technological tools is essential for fostering a compassionate and effective educational environment.

Recommendations

1. Enhanced Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

The WAI project emphasizes the value of cross-cultural collaboration in tackling common challenges. Continued sharing of best practices and strategies across countries can enhance the collective understanding of how to address anxiety in schools.

2. Investment in AI and Mental Health Tools

Educational systems should continue to explore and invest in AI solutions that offer personalized mental health support to students. These tools should be designed with input from educators, mental health professionals, and students to ensure their relevance and efficacy.

3. Inclusive Education Practices

Efforts to promote inclusive education, particularly for students with special educational needs, should be strengthened. The integration of tailored programs that address both academic and emotional needs can help reduce exclusion and foster a sense of belonging among students.

4. Policy and Structural Support

Policymakers must prioritize mental health and wellbeing as part of the broader educational agenda. This includes establishing clear frameworks for the integration of mental health support and ensuring that educational policies reflect the need for a balanced approach to academic and emotional development.

Conclusion

The WAI project provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by students dealing with anxiety and the role of educational systems in addressing these issues. As we move forward, it is clear that a multifaceted approach—combining AI tools, teacher training, and inclusive educational practices—will be essential in creating supportive learning environments where students can thrive academically and emotionally. The lessons learned from this international collaboration offer a blueprint for future efforts to improve student wellbeing, ensuring that mental health is given the attention it deserves in the educational sector.

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7. Annexes

7.1.1. Semi Structured interview guide

Structered_interview_with_logos.docx
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1R1E4XZOjO2skMx0snAtdGq751sdcghE9/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=116470601382900771807&rtpof=true&sd=true

7.1.2. Report of acceptance from Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Porto (Portugal)

Ofício Parecer_230_CEFMUP_24
https://drive.google.com/file/d/110b1XSZYdtO03D-vh93ThvwjNI7rCHXW/view?usp=drive_link

7.1.3. Participant information sheet and consent form

Inform_consent_form_logos
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O0-UX5yws_EMR2-IFwUqXO-mq4DJOKk0/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=116470601382900771807&rtpof=true&sd=true