

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## REGARDING SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION



Young people participating in the "Youth Without Barriers" project developed a series of recommendations for supporting those with fewer opportunities in education. These ideas arose from intensive discussions and debates with educational decision-makers, aimed at finding effective methods of supporting students in difficult social and financial situations.

Young people proposed specific solutions aimed at increasing equality in access to education, such as: introducing peer tutoring, creating safe spaces in schools, creating a solidarity fund to support participation in trips and extracurricular activities, appointing school equal treatment advocates, organizing regular consultations between young people and educational decision-makers, developing soft skills and mental resilience, supporting students with migration and refugee experience, and increasing access to educational materials.

The proposed actions aim to create a more equitable and supportive educational environment in which all students, regardless of their difficulties, have equal opportunities to develop and succeed.

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- 5 Ongoing consultations between young people and educational decision-makers – enabling them to report barriers and propose solutions
- 6 Developing soft skills and mental resilience - through classes on empathy, cooperation, stress management and counteracting exclusion
- 7 Support for students with migration or refugee experience - through language pairings, joint cultural projects and diversity days
- 8 Increasing access to educational materials - by jointly creating a database of notes, books, and teaching materials from teachers

- 1 Students need support in their learning from peers who can explain difficult issues in a way that is understandable and tailored to the needs of their peers.
- 2 There is a need to create places in schools where students can rest, relax or talk about their problems, which will help them cope with stress and emotions.
- 3 The need for equal access to extracurricular educational experiences, such as trips and extracurricular activities, that may not be available to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 4 There is a need to support and protect students against discrimination and equal treatment, as well as to create a system that monitors and counteracts inequalities at school.
- 5 There is a need for regular and open communication between young people and decision-makers so that students can report difficulties and collaboratively develop educational solutions.
- 6 There is a need to equip young people with social and emotional skills that will help them cope with challenges, stress and exclusion in school and beyond.
- 7 The need to integrate students with migration or refugee experience, enabling them to better adapt to the new school environment and supporting their adaptation.
- 8 The need to equalize educational opportunities by ensuring all students have access to the necessary teaching materials, which will facilitate learning, especially for students with limited resources.

# INTRODUCING PEER TUTORING

## SOCIAL TRAFFIC JAMS

A recommendation based on the idea of mutual support between students – especially those who achieve good results or have stronger competences in a given subject, and those who, for various reasons, encounter educational difficulties



# INTRODUCING PEER TUTORING

## What is peer tutoring?

Regular meetings of students in pairs or small groups (e.g. once a week), in which one person (the tutor) supports the other (the tutee) in learning a chosen subject or topic.

Informal and friendly support, taking place outside the typical classroom structure – e.g. in the library, after-school club, online.

Individual approach – the tutor adapts the method of translation and the pace of work to the needs of the colleague.

Development of both parties – the tutor improves their translation and empathy skills, and the person being supported gains knowledge, self-confidence and motivation.

It may be coordinated by a teacher or school counselor, but is based on the voluntary involvement of students.

## Where did the idea come from?

From the experience of young people, many students indicate that they learn most easily when someone "at their level" explains to them, using simple language.

From the idea of learning through teaching – students who teach others acquire knowledge better themselves, which supports both sides of the tutoring relationship (the principle of "you learn twice when you teach").

Out of the need to counteract educational loneliness – some students are ashamed to ask teachers questions, but they open up more easily to their peers.

From observations of distance learning – during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people were left behind, and the friendly help of colleagues was the only source of support.

- Out of the need to build a school community, tutoring develops bonds, empathy, shared responsibility and a culture of mutual help among students.

# CREATING SAFE SPACES IN SCHOOLS – RELAXATION OR CONVERSATION ZONES



This recommendation aims to support students experiencing emotional, social, or academic difficulties. Such spaces allow students to relax, talk, and receive support in a safe, supportive environment.

# CREATING SAFE SPACES IN SCHOOLS

## What does it consist of?

Designating a special space in the school (e.g., library, common room, unused classroom, or corner of the hallway) where students can:

- rest mentally in a difficult moment,
- talk to a teacher, psychologist or another student,
- reduce tension and stress related to studying, grade pressure, and relationships.

The relaxation area can be equipped with: comfortable pouffes, blankets, books, board games, plants, and calming music – to create an atmosphere of safety and tranquility.

The conversation zone can operate at selected times – for example, during breaks or after classes – as a place available to those who feel overwhelmed, need conversation or quiet time.

## Where did the idea come from?

In the need to ensure mental well-being at school, many students indicate that they feel overwhelmed by the pace of learning and the lack of space to stop and catch their breath.

From the conversations of young people – people experiencing difficulties (e.g. emotional, family, integration) often do not know where and who to turn to – creating a specific place gives them a clear path to support.

From the experience of non-governmental organizations – foundations working for the mental health of children and young people in Poland, such as the Empowering Children Foundation, emphasize the importance of safe places in schools.

From the idea of a "student-friendly school" - a safe space supports inclusiveness, a sense of being important and heard, which especially helps students with fewer opportunities.

# CREATION OF A SOLIDARITY FUND

**SUPPORTING PARTICIPATION  
IN TRIPS, EXTRA-  
CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES OR  
THE PURCHASE OF  
EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS**



Youth Recommendation for equal access to education and full participation of all students in school life, regardless of financial situation. Thanks to it, the school becomes a more equitable and supportive place, where no one is left behind due to lack of financial resources.

# CREATION OF A SOLIDARITY FUND

## **What does it consist of?**

The Solidarity Fund is a joint school or local financial initiative that will support students with limited financial resources. It will enable, among other things:

co-financing participation in school trips,  
covering the costs of additional activities (e.g. language, sports),  
purchase of textbooks, notebooks, school supplies or access to educational platforms.

The fund can be funded by voluntary contributions from parents and teachers, fundraising events, support from local businesses, and educational grants.

## **Where did the idea come from?**

Observing inequalities in access to extracurricular education, not all students can afford to participate in paid activities, which leads to exclusion and deepening differences.

From the initiatives of youth and student governments – in some schools, young people themselves organize collections or campaigns to help their peers in difficult situations.

Out of the need to build solidarity within the school community, the fund can show that the school is a community in which the most vulnerable are supported and not excluded.

From the voice of young people – participants in debates and consultations pointed out that money is often a barrier to full participation in school life, despite willingness and ability.

# APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL ADVOCATES FOR EQUAL TREATMENT OF STUDENTS



A youth recommendation aimed at actively counteracting discrimination and promoting equality in schools. Ombudsmen will act as mediators, supporting their peers, monitoring situations of inequality, and reporting them to the appropriate school officials.

# **APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL EQUAL TREATMENT ADVOCATES**

## **What does it consist of?**

Students acting as equal treatment advocates will support peers experiencing exclusion, inequality or discrimination.

Ombudsmen will monitor situations related to inequality, identifying cases of discrimination, bullying or exclusion at school.

Student advocates will act as mediators, helping to resolve problems and supporting those experiencing difficulties at school.

They will organize workshops and educational activities on equality, tolerance and respect among students.

## **Where did the idea come from?**

The need for equality: The idea stems from the need to actively counteract discrimination and social exclusion in schools.

Youth experiences: Young people note that they feel best when they receive support from peers who understand their problems.

Inspiration from other countries: Many countries, such as those in Scandinavia, have implemented similar programs that effectively promote inclusiveness and integration.

Youth's willingness to engage: Youth demonstrate a willingness to help their peers if they are given the right tools and adult support.

# **ONGOING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKERS**

## **ENABLING REPORTING OF ENCOUNTERED BARRIERS AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS**

Youth Recommendations for Improving the Quality of Education and Incorporating Student Voices into Decision-Making Processes. Regular meetings with education representatives will allow young people to share their experiences and the challenges they face at school. Such consultations will enable the development of specific solutions that can improve students' educational conditions.



# ONGOING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKERS

## **What does it consist of?**

A set schedule of meetings between young people and representatives of educational decision-makers (e.g. ministries, education boards, school principals) to discuss current problems and needs of students.

Young people will have the opportunity to present their experiences and identify barriers that hinder their learning or full participation in school life.

Students will be invited to co-create solutions that can improve the quality of education, the availability of resources, and reduce inequalities in schools.

Based on these meetings, young people will have the opportunity to develop recommendations that will be presented to educational decision-makers and implemented in practice.

## **Where did the idea come from?**

The need for youth representation: The idea stems from the need for young people to have an active influence on decisions concerning their education and learning conditions.

Youth Experiences: Students who participate in consultations can report specific problems they encounter in schools, which can lead to real change.

Young people's willingness to get involved: Young people who participate in such consultations often demonstrate a great willingness to get involved in solving the problems that concern them.

# DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS AND MENTAL RESILIENCE

**THROUGH CLASSES ON EMPATHY, COOPERATION, STRESS MANAGEMENT AND COUNTERACTING EXCLUSION**



Recommendations for youth to support students' emotional development and counteract psychological difficulties in the school environment.

Contemporary challenges faced by youth, such as academic stress, peer pressure, and difficulties adapting to dynamic social and technological changes, require students to demonstrate not only intellectual skills but also emotional and social agility.

# DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS AND MENTAL RESILIENCE

## **What does it consist of?**

**Introducing empathy classes that teach students to understand and respond to the emotions of others, which aims to build mutual respect and cooperation at school.**

Workshops to help students recognize sources of stress and effectively cope with tension, both in everyday life and while studying.

Creating a space for conversation about social and educational exclusion, and learning skills to prevent such situations, promoting integration and support.

Classes based on active methods such as team games, simulations, and relaxation exercises that engage students and allow them to develop social skills.

## **Where did the idea come from?**

From the need for emotional support for young people: From observing the growing levels of stress, anxiety and emotional difficulties among students, especially in the context of the pandemic and changing educational conditions.

From the experience of teachers and psychologists: Knowledge about the benefits of developing soft skills, such as empathy and the ability to cooperate, in improving students' well-being and their academic performance.

From research on mental resilience: Research shows that students who can cope with stress and have strong mental resilience are better prepared for the challenges of school and life.

From youth initiatives: Young people often report the need for support in managing stress, coping with emotional difficulties and learning mutual empathy, which demonstrates their willingness to participate in such activities.

# **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH MIGRATION OR REFUGEE EXPERIENCE**

**BY CREATING LANGUAGE GROUPS  
AND IMPLEMENTING JOINT  
CULTURAL PROJECTS**

Recommendation aimed at integrating students with migration or refugee experience, promoting their equal access to education and strengthening intercultural ties at school.



# **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH MIGRATION OR REFUGEE EXPERIENCE**

## **What does it consist of?**

Students who have difficulty communicating in the language of the host country can benefit from the support of other students who act as language mentors, helping with learning and everyday communication. Organizing projects in which students from different cultures share their traditions, language and history, which promotes mutual understanding and tolerance.

Events organized in schools that promote multiculturalism enable students to become familiar with the cultures of other nations and bring them closer together through shared celebrations.

## **Where did the idea come from?**

**The Need to Integrate Students with Migration Experience:** Students with migration experience often struggle with adaptation, language, and social difficulties that hinder their integration into school. Support programs help them better adapt to their new environment.

**From the experiences of teachers and psychologists:** Observations of teachers and school psychologists indicate the need to create an environment conducive to integration, in which students from different cultures can feel accepted and respected.

**From youth initiatives:** In many schools, young people themselves initiate activities to support students with migration experience, for example by organizing cultural days or creating support groups.

# INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

**BY JOINTLY CREATING A DATABASE OF NOTES, BOOKS, AND TEACHING MATERIALS FROM TEACHERS**



A recommendation aimed at facilitating students' access to various sources of knowledge and educational materials, which will contribute to a more sustainable development of their competences.

# INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

## **What does it consist of?**

Students, teachers and parents can create and share a common database of notes, books, presentations and teaching materials that will be available online to all interested students.

Encouraging collaboration between students by sharing notes, papers, and study aids that can be helpful to other students in their studies.

Teachers can provide additional learning materials for students to use, including exercises, articles, videos, and other resources for self-study or review.

## **Where did the idea come from?**

From the need to equalize educational opportunities: Many students, especially those with fewer material resources, have difficulties accessing textbooks, books, and other educational materials, which limits their learning opportunities.

From educational experiences: In many schools, students use similar educational materials, which allows them to help each other in learning and share knowledge.

From external and online initiatives: There are already educational platforms that allow students to access resources, but the idea is to develop such an initiative at school level, providing easier access to local and curriculum-specific materials.

From the desire to develop cooperation between students and teachers: Joint creation of a database of materials can foster greater interaction between students and teachers, facilitating learning and adapting materials to students' needs.



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