
Drop-out and Completion in Higher Education in Europe

among students from under-represented groups

An independent report authored for the European Commission



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on behalf of the NESET network of experts

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Report identity

This is an independent report compiled for the European Commission by the Network of Experts on Social aspects of Education and Training (NESET). The main author is **Professor Jocey Quinn** (Plymouth University, UK).

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All responsibility for the choice, analysis and interpretation of the data and opinions presented in this report lies with the author.

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- *Coming from a poor socio-economic background is the dominant factor leading to drop-out for students from under-represented groups.*
- *It is not widening participation per se that causes drop-out. The problem is rather a lack of attention to the needs of a more diverse student population and a lack of a student-centred approach in designing and delivering higher education programmes.*

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Foreword



Success in higher education is vital for jobs, productivity and growth.

Evidence shows that, in contrast with their low-skilled peers, higher education graduates in Europe have consistently fared better even in the most crisis-hit economies, with lower rates of unemployment across the continent. High-skilled jobs have proved more resilient in the downturn, and high-skilled individuals have been better able to cope and adapt in a difficult employment environment.

That is why the European Union's strategy for jobs and growth, *Europe 2020*, includes the target of 40% of young people completing higher education by 2020. Increasing attainment levels in higher education is a key priority in the European Union's agenda for the Modernisation of Higher Education. Attracting a broader cross section of society into higher education, including under-represented and disadvantaged groups, and reducing drop-out rates are key targets in this context. The same message emerges from the spring 2013 Council Conclusions on the social dimension of higher education.

Currently too many students in the EU drop out before they complete their higher education degree. Students from a lower socio-economic background and other disadvantaged groups are the most likely to drop out. This is a problem across the EU. However, there is wide variation across Member States in their success at addressing the problem.

There is also a financial dimension. In a period of recession all public services including universities need to be more efficient. Drop-out can be seen as a drain on public finance and a waste of valuable resources.

Drawing on a large body of research and evidence on drop-out and completion, this report provides a basis for **policy guidance** for increasing the retention of students, particularly of those from under-represented groups. It shows **examples of national strategies that appear to work and highlights key success factors**.

A first key message emerging from this review is that widening participation in higher education does not mean more dropping out. The latter appears more to be the result of neglecting the needs of a more diverse student population.

A second key message is that students from a lower socio-economic background are particularly at risk of dropping out.

Dropping out can be a positive decision when students realise that the time, place or degree is not right for them. This report suggests that most of those who withdraw from an initial course of study wish to transfer to another course or to return to study at a later date. However, for many of them, sufficiently flexible and cost-effective opportunities are not available.

Therefore we need to develop not only more cost-effective but also **more inclusive** higher education systems which combine quality with equity.

This report also suggests that higher education policy must be supported by policies to tackle wider socio-economic and cultural inequalities.

With a significantly higher budget for the period 2014-2020, Erasmus+, the new European programme for education, training, youth and sport, will support the modernisation of European education and training systems, and will provide substantial opportunities for mobility, partnerships and policy development. This will provide an important support and complement actions by Member States to address the challenge of increasing attainment levels in higher education.

Brussels, October 2013



Jan Truszczyński

Director-General
European Commission's Directorate-General for
Education and Culture

Executive Summary

1. Too many students in the EU drop out before the end of their higher education course. This is a problem across the EU, as success in higher education is vital for jobs, social justice and economic growth.
2. The most successful EU countries in terms of completion are Denmark, the UK and Germany. However, even Denmark as most successful only has around 80% completion.
3. The least successful countries are Italy, Hungary and Poland (they have the lowest proportion of students completing their degrees). Only 46% finish in Italy.

Who drops out?

4. **Students from a low socio-economic background are the most likely to drop out.** Also, students with dependants, women in particular, struggle to balance caring responsibilities with their studies.
5. **Men** are more at risk of drop-out than women. They are more likely to study science and engineering, disciplines that have the highest drop-out rates. Men from a working-class background and from poor provincial areas are particularly vulnerable.
6. **Minority ethnic students** are more at risk of dropping-out as a result of factors such as racism or poverty. Here too, socio-economic background is a key factor: a refugee from a middle-class background is much more likely to graduate than one from a working-class background.
7. Students with **disabilities** face physical problems of access and other barriers in terms of attitudes of staff and other students. Again, socio-economic status has a strong impact: a disabled student from a middle-class family is much more likely to graduate than a disabled student from a working-class background.
8. **Part-time students** are at greater risk of dropping-out than full-time ones, often as a result of caring responsibilities or of working long hours in a job unrelated to their studies.

Why do students drop out?

9. Six key factors (socio-cultural, structural, policy, institutional, personal and learning factors –see page 71) lie behind students' decision to drop out. It is often a combination of these factors that leads to drop-out.
10. **Coming from a poor socio-economic background is the most significant factor leading a student to drop-out.** This dominates all other factors, including gender and ethnicity, in leading to drop-out.
11. **It is not widening participation per se that causes drop-out.** Denmark, which is recognised as being highly successful in widening participation, has the lowest rate of drop-out in the EU. The problem is rather a lack of attention to the needs of a more diverse student population and a lack of a student-centred approach in designing and delivering higher education programmes.
12. Not all countries face the same challenges, or the same combination of challenges, with regard to dropping out. In Italy, for example, the educational background of parents is especially significant.

What can be done to reduce dropping out?

13. Much remains to be done to help students in the EU, especially the most vulnerable, finish their degrees. What is being done is inconsistent and patchy.
14. A holistic approach to retention is necessary: one which acknowledges all the six factors leading to drop-out and their inter-relationships. Nationally, higher education policy must be supported by policies to tackle wider socio-economic and cultural inequalities.
15. Policies that are shown to be successful include the following factors:
 - recognition that factors leading to drop-out from higher education start much earlier in life and need to be tackled early;
 - financial support to the students;
 - targeted outreach programmes;

- improved monitoring and tracking of drop-out and completion, not only at national level but also at the level of individual institutions and disciplines;
- including measures to prevent drop-out in widening participation plans;
- recognising and accrediting the life skills students have already acquired;
- extra academic support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

16. Many higher education institutions already work hard to retain their students. Good examples of action include:

- preparing students for higher education through pre-induction activities
- tracking their progress
- offering a relevant and supportive curriculum
- ensuring teaching is responsive to diverse needs
- fostering positive approaches to learning
- improving formative assessment
- improving students' study skills
- offering financial support to students
- offering counselling and personal support
- helping students make friends and networks
- supporting specific disciplines that register high drop-out rates
- supporting specific groups of students
- proving that a higher education qualification is useful.

17. Putting potential and current students in touch with successful alumni as well as providing good careers advice can help increase completion rates.

18. Regional and local contexts have an impact on drop-out. Regional partnerships of higher education institutions, employers and other actors can help develop curricula which foster local employment and completion.

19. Building measures to monitor and reward completion into national systems of funding higher education can have a positive impact on reducing drop-out, in particular when linked to success in widening participation. Higher education institutions with a high intake of disadvantaged students could receive more resources,

indexed on the share of disadvantaged students they register and take to graduation.

20. Dropping out can be a positive decision when students realise that the time, place or degree is not right for them. However, even though most of those who withdraw from an initial course of study want to transfer to another course or to return to study at a later date, currently most Member States do not help them sufficiently with flexible arrangements. Also, employers look negatively upon students who did not finish their degrees.

21. Many students do triumph against the odds. More research on resilience and success is needed.

The problem with data

22. Only Denmark, Austria, Finland, the UK and Norway make statistics on completion openly available online.

23. There is no coherent set of data on access or on completion and drop-out in the EU. The extent to which individual countries collect data on this issue is variable. More reliable and comparable data, quantitative and qualitative, about how many students do not complete, who they are and why they drop-out is needed. Also, shared definitions on drop-out and completion would help to make comparisons across countries more effective.

Резюме

1. Прекалено голям брой студенти в ЕС прекъсват висшето си образование, преди да завършат курса си на обучение. Това е проблем в целия ЕС, тъй като успешното завършване на висше образование е от изключително важно значение за създаването на работни места и за постигането на социална справедливост и икономически растеж.
2. Държавите от ЕС с най-висок процент на завършилите висше образование са Дания, Обединеното кралство и Германия. Въпреки това дори и в Дания, където процентът е най-висок, завършилите висше образование са само около 80 %.
3. Държавите с най-нисък процент са Италия, Унгария и Полша, където дялът на завършилите образованието си студенти е най-малък. В Италия успешно завършилите студенти са само 46 %.

Кои студенти не успяват да завършат висшето си образование?

4. Вероятността да не успеят да завършат висшето си образование е най-голяма сред студентите в неравностойно социално-икономическо положение. Освен това студентите, в частност жените, които се грижат за други лица, трудно успяват да съвместят отговорностите, свързани с полагането на грижи, със следването си.
5. Рискът да не завършат висшето си образование е по-висок при мъжете, отколкото при жените. Мъжете по-често избират научни и инженерни специалности, където дялът на незавършилите висшето си образование е най-висок. Мъжете с произход от работническата класа и от бедни провинциални райони са особено уязвими.
6. Студентите от малцинствени етнически групи са изложени в по-голяма степен на риск от преждевременно напускане поради фактори като расизъм или бедност. И тук социално-икономическата среда е ключов фактор: много вероятно е бежанец от средната класа да завърши висше образование, отколкото младеж от работническата класа.
7. Студентите с физически увреждания изпитват проблеми с достъпа до сградите, както и други трудности, свързани с отношението на академичния персонал и на другите студенти. Тук отново социално-икономическата среда има силно влияние: много по-вероятно е студент с увреждания от средната класа да завърши висше образование, отколкото студент с увреждания от работническата класа.
8. Студентите, които се обучават задочно, са изложени на по-голям риск от напускане в

сравнение с редовните студенти, което често се дължи на отговорности, свързани с грижи за членове на семейството или продължителни работни часове на длъжност, която не е свързана с обучението им.

Защо студентите не успяват да завършат висшето си образование?

9. Решението на студентите да не завършат висшето си образование се определя от шест основни фактора (социално-икономически, свързани с политиката, институционални, лични и свързани с ученето - вж. стр. 71). Често пъти преждевременното напускане се дължи на комбинация от тези фактори.
10. Неравностойното социално-икономическо положение е основният фактор, определящ преждевременното напускане. Този фактор преобладава спрямо всички останали фактори, включително пола и етническата принадлежност.
11. По-големият брой студенти не обяснява сам по себе си увеличаването на броя на незавършилите висше образование. В Дания, която е призната за страна с отлични резултати по отношение на увеличаването на броя на студентите, дялът на незавършилите висше образование е най-нисък в ЕС. Проблемът е по-скоро в това, че не се отделя необходимото внимание на студенти с по-различни нужди и че липсва насочен към студентите подход при разработването и въвеждането на програмите за висше образование.
12. Не всички държави са изправени пред едни и същи трудности или комбинация от предизвикателства, що се отнася до преждевременното напускане. В Италия например образованието на родителите е от особено значение.

Какво може да бъде направено, за да се намали преждевременното напускане?

13. Още много трябва да се направи, за да се помогне на студентите в ЕС, особено на най-уязвимите, да се дипломират. Направеното досега е непоследователно и разпокъсано.
14. Необходим е цялостен подход за задържане на студентите във висшите учебни заведения: подход, който отчита всички шест фактора, водещи до преждевременно напускане, и взаимовръзките между тях. На национално равнище политиката за висшето образование трябва да бъде подкрепена от политики за справяне със социално-икономическото и културното неравенство в по-широк аспект.

15. Доказано успешните политики в това отношение включват следните елементи:

- отчитане на това, че факторите, които водят до преждевременно напускане, възникват на много по-ранен етап от живота и трябва да бъдат преодолявани по-рано;
- финансова подкрепа за студентите;
- целенасочени програми за приобщаване;
- подобряване на мониторинга и проследяване на напускащите и завършилите висше образование студенти, не само на национално равнище, но също така и на равнището на отделните институции и специалности;
- включване на мерки за предотвратяване на преждевременното напускане в плановете за увеличаване на броя на студентите;
- признаване и сертифициране на житейските умения, които студентите вече са придобили;
- допълнителна помощ във връзка с академичната програма за студенти от семейства в неравностойно положение.

16. Много висши учебни заведения вече полагат сериозни усилия, за да задържат своите студенти. Добри примери за такива действия включват:

- подготовка на студентите за висшето образование чрез въвеждащи курсове/програми;
- проследяване на напредъка им;
- предлагане на целесъобразни и подпомагащи учебни програми;
- гарантиране, че преподаването е в по-голяма степен съобразено с различните нужди;
- насърчаване на позитивни подходи към ученето;
- подобряване на градивното оценяване;
- подобряване на способностите за учене на студентите;
- предлагане на финансова подкрепа за студентите;
- предлагане на съвети и лична подкрепа;
- подпомагане на студентите да намерят приятели и да изградят мрежи от контакти;
- подпомагане на конкретни специалности, при които се отчита голям дял на преждевременно напускащи студенти;
- подпомагане на специфични групи студенти;
- доказване на ползата от завършване на висше образование.

17. Осъществяването на връзка между потенциални и настоящи студенти и успешно завършили студенти, както и осигуряването на полезни съвети за професионално развитие, могат да допринесат за повишаване на дела на завършилите висше образование студенти.

18. Регионалният и местният контекст оказват въздействие върху напусналите висшите учебни

заведения студенти. Регионалните партньорства между висши учебни заведения, работодатели и други участници могат да помогнат за разработването на учебни програми, които насърчават местната заетост и дипломирането на студентите.

19. Изготвянето на мерки за наблюдение и поощряване на завършването на висше образование в рамките на националните системи за финансиране на висшето образование може да има положително въздействие върху намаляването на преждевременното напускане, по-специално когато са свързани с успешни действия за увеличаване на броя на студентите. Висшите учебни заведения, където се приемат голям брой студенти от семейства в неравностойно положение, могат да получават повече средства, които да се индексират спрямо дела на такива студенти, които се записват в тях и които завършват висшето си образование.

20. Преждевременното напускане може да бъде положително решение, ако студентът прецени, че времето, мястото или дипломата не са подходящи за него. Въпреки че повечето от студентите, които напускат първоначалния си курс на обучение, искат да се прехвърлят към друга специалност или да отложат следването си за по-късно, понастоящем повечето държави членки не им помагат в достатъчна степен чрез осигуряване на гъвкави условия. Освен това работодателите гледат с лошо око на студенти, които не са завършили образованието си.

21. Много студенти успяват въпреки трудностите. Необходимо е по-широко проучване на гъвкавостта и успеха.

Проблемът с данните

22. Само Дания, Австрия, Финландия, Обединеното кралство и Норвегия предоставят открито статистически данни онлайн относно дела на завършилите висше образование студенти.

23. Няма последователен набор от данни за достъпа или за завършването или напускането на висшето учебно заведение в ЕС. Степента, в която се събират данни по този въпрос, е различна в отделните държави. Необходими са повече надеждни и съпоставими данни в количествено и в качествено отношение за броя на студентите, които не завършват висше образование, за това какъв е техният профил и за причините, които са ги накарали да напуснат. Изготвянето на общи дефиниции относно преждевременното напускане и завършването на висше образование ще спомогне за подобряване на ефективността на сравненията между различните държави.

Shrnutí zprávy

1. Příliš mnoho studentů v EU nedokončí vysokoškolské studium. Toto je problémem v celé EU, neboť úspěšné završení vysokoškolského studia má zásadní význam pro zvýšení zaměstnanosti, sociální spravedlnost a hospodářský růst.
2. Nejúspěšněji ze zemí EU, pokud jde o dokončení studia, si vede Dánsko, Spojené království a Německo. Nicméně i v Dánsku, které je v tomto směru na vedoucí pozici, dokončí vysokoškolské studium pouze 80 % studentů.
3. Na posledních příčkách žebříčku se nachází Itálie, Maďarsko a Polsko (s nejnižším poměrem studentů, kteří studium dokončí). V Itálii je to například pouze 46 %.

Kdo studium nedokončí?

4. **Nejčastěji jde o studenty ze slabšího socioekonomického zázemí.** Studenti, kteří se starají o závislé osoby, zejména ženy, také obtížně vyvažují své pečovatelské povinnosti se studiem.
5. **Muži** vykazují vyšší riziko předčasného ukončení studia než ženy. S větší pravděpodobností se totiž věnují studiu přírodních věd a inženýrství, což jsou obory s nejvyšší mírou neúspěšných studentů. Nejvyššímu riziku jsou vystaveni muži z dělnických rodin a z chudých venkovských oblastí.
6. **U příslušníků etnických menšin** je riziko předčasného ukončení studia vyšší v důsledku takových faktorů, jako je rasismus či chudoba. I v tomto případě je socioekonomické zázemí klíčovým faktorem: uprchlík pocházející ze středostavovské rodiny dostuduje s mnohem vyšší pravděpodobností než jiný student dělnického původu.
7. Studenti se **zdravotním postižením** se potýkají se špatnou fyzickou přístupností a dalšími překážkami v přístupu zaměstnanců a spolužáků. U těchto studentů rovněž platí, že socioekonomický status hraje velkou roli: zdravotně postižený student ze středostavovské rodiny úspěšně završí studium s mnohem vyšší pravděpodobností než takový student dělnického původu.
8. **Studenti kombinovaného studia** mají větší riziko neúspěšnosti než studenti prezenčního studia, často z důvodu pečovatelských povinností či dlouhé pracovní doby v zaměstnání nesouvisejícím se studijním oborem.

Proč studenti odcházejí?

9. K předčasnému ukončení studia vede šest hlavních faktorů (společensko-kulturní, strukturální, politické, institucionální, osobní a učební – viz strana 71). K odchodu často vede souběh několika těchto faktorů.
10. **Slabší socioekonomické zázemí je nejvýraznějším faktorem vedoucím k předčasnému opuštění studia,** jenž dominuje ostatním faktorům, včetně pohlaví a etnické příslušnosti.
11. **Příčinou předčasného ukončení studia není rozšiřování účasti na vzdělání jako takové.** Dánsko, které v něm vykazuje velkou úspěšnost, má nejnižší míru předčasného ukončení studia v EU. Problém představuje spíše nedostatek pozornosti vůči potřebám rozmanitější studentské populace a nezohledňování studentů při přípravě a realizaci vysokoškolských programů.
12. Různé země se při řešení této záležitosti potýkají s různými problémy či jejich kombinací. V Itálii hraje například obzvlášť významnou roli vzdělání rodičů.

Jak omezit předčasné ukončování studia?

13. Je třeba vykonat ještě mnoho práce, pokud jde o pomoc studentům v EU, zejména těm nejohroženějším, aby mohli dokončit studium. V současnosti prováděné kroky jsou nekonzistentní a nesystematické.
14. Udržet studenty vyžaduje celkový přístup, který zohlední všech šest faktorů vedoucích k předčasnému ukončení studia a jejich vzájemné vazby. Politika vysokoškolského vzdělávání v členských státech musí být podporována politikami řešícími hlubší sociálně ekonomickou a kulturní nerovnost.
15. Prokazatelně úspěšné politiky obsahují tyto prvky:
 - vědomí skutečnosti, že faktory vedoucí k předčasnému ukončení vysokoškolského studia mají kořeny mnohem dříve v životě a že je třeba je řešit brzy,
 - finanční podporu studentům,
 - cílené informační programy,
 - lepší monitorování a sledování předčasného a řádného ukončení studia, a to jak na celostátní úrovni, tak v jednotlivých vysokoškolských institucích a oborech,

- začlenění opatření, která předcházejí předčasnému ukončení studia, do plánů na rozšiřování účasti na vzdělání,
 - neformální i formální uznání životních dovedností, které studenti již získali,
 - zvláštní akademická pomoc studentům ze znevýhodněného prostředí.
16. Četné vysokoškolské instituce na udržení studentů již usilovně pracují. Dobrým příkladem jsou tyto kroky:
- příprava studentů na vysokoškolské vzdělávání prostřednictvím přípravných kurzů,
 - sledování jejich pokroku,
 - nabídka relevantních učebních plánů nabízejících podporu,
 - zajištění toho, že výuka reaguje na různé potřeby,
 - povzbuzování pozitivních přístupů k učení se,
 - zlepšování formativního hodnocení,
 - zlepšování studijních dovedností studentů,
 - možnost finanční podpory studentům,
 - možnost poradenství a osobní podpory,
 - pomoc studentům při hledání přátel a vytváření společenství,
 - podpora konkrétních oborů s velkou mírou předčasného ukončení studia,
 - podpora konkrétních skupin studentů,
 - názorné prokázání užitečnosti vysokoškolské kvalifikace.
17. Míru dokončení studia může zvýšit seznámení potenciálních a stávajících studentů s úspěšnými absolventy a poskytování dobrého kariérního poradenství.
18. Situace v regionu a dané lokalitě má na míru předčasného ukončení studia také dopad. Regionální partnerství vysokoškolských institucí, zaměstnavatelů a dalších aktérů mohou pomoci při navrhování učebních plánů, které zlepší zaměstnanost v lokalitě a zvýší míru dokončení studia.
19. Začlenění opatření, jejichž cílem je sledovat a odměňovat dokončení studia, do vnitrostátních režimů financování vysokoškolského studia může míru předčasného ukončení studia kladně ovlivnit, zejména jsou-li takové kroky prováděny v souvislosti s úspěšným rozšiřováním účasti na vzdělání. Vysokoškolské instituce, které přijímají vysoký počet znevýhodněných studentů, by mohly získávat více finančních prostředků v závislosti na podílu znevýhodněných studentů, které přijmou ke studiu a dovedou k absolutoriu.
20. Jestliže studenti dospějí k názoru, že načasování studia, škola či obor jim nevyhovují, může být předčasné ukončení studia dobrým rozhodnutím. Přestože většina studentů, kteří zanechají prvního studia, chce studovat jiný obor či se ke studiu vrátit později, většina členských států v současnosti neposkytuje dostatečnou pomoc v tom, aby si studenti mohli studium pružně přizpůsobit. Na studenty, kteří studium nedokončili, navíc negativně pohlížejí zaměstnavatelé.
21. Řada studentů úspěje navzdory všem překážkám. Je proto třeba důkladněji prozkoumat vytrvalost a úspěšnost.

Problémy s dostupností údajů

22. Pouze Dánsko, Rakousko, Finsko, Spojené království a Norsko zveřejňují statistiky o dokončení studia volně na internetu.
23. Neexistuje žádný soudržný soubor údajů o přístupu ke vzdělávání či o míře úspěšného a předčasného ukončení studia. Země shromažďují údaje o této záležitosti v různém rozsahu. Potřebujeme spolehlivější a srovnatelné údaje, a to jak kvantitativní, tak kvalitativní, o počtu studentů, kteří studium nedokončí, o jaké studenty se jedná a důvodech, jež je k takovému kroku vedou. Srovnávání jednotlivých zemí by zjednodušily i společné definice předčasného ukončení studia a dokončení studia.

Resumé

1. I EU er der for mange studerende, der falder fra, før de har afsluttet deres videregående uddannelse. Dette er et problem i hele Europa, da en fuldført videregående uddannelse er afgørende for arbejde, social retfærdighed og økonomisk vækst.
2. De mest succesfulde EU-lande, hvad angår fuldførte uddannelser, er Danmark, Det Forenede Kongerige og Tyskland. Alligevel er det selv i Danmark, det mest succesfulde land, kun 80 %, der fuldfører.
3. De mindst succesfulde lande er Italien, Ungarn og Polen (de har den mindste andel af studerende, der fuldfører en uddannelse). I Italien gennemfører kun 46 %.

Hvem falder fra?

4. **Studerende med en lav socioøkonomisk baggrund har størst risiko for at falde fra.** Studerende med familie, særligt kvinder, der har vanskeligt ved at balancere forsørgerpligt og deres studier.
5. **Mænd** har større risiko for at falde fra end kvinder. Der er større sandsynlighed for, at de studerer natur- og ingeniørvidenskab, der hører til de fag, der har den største frafaldsprocent. Mænd med en arbejderklasse-baggrund og fra fattige provinsområder er særligt udsatte.
6. **Studerende, der stammer fra et etnisk mindretal,** har størst risiko for at forlade studiet grundet faktorer som racisme og fattigdom. Også i dette tilfælde spiller den socioøkonomiske baggrund en afgørende rolle. En flygtning med middelklasse-baggrund har større chance for at gøre sin uddannelse færdig end én med arbejderklasse-baggrund.
7. Studerende med et **handicap** står over for fysiske adgangsproblemer og andre hindringer i form af lærerstabens og andre studerendes indstilling. Igen har den socioøkonomiske status stor betydning: En handicappet studerende med middelklasse-baggrund har meget større sandsynlighed for at fuldføre sin uddannelse end én med arbejderklasse-baggrund.
8. **Deltidsstuderende** har større risiko for at falde fra end fuldtidsstuderende, hvilket ofte skyldes forsørgerpligt eller lange arbejdstider på et arbejde, der ikke er studierelevant.

Hvorfor falder studerende fra?

9. Seks hovedfaktorer (sociokulturelle, strukturelle, politiske, institutionelle, personlige og læringsmæssige faktorer -se side 71) kendetegner en studerendes beslutning om at afbryde sit studie. Det er ofte en kombination af disse faktorer, der fører til, at studerende falder fra.
10. **At komme fra en fattig socioøkonomisk baggrund er den faktor, der oftest fører til, at en studerende falder fra.** Denne faktor har større betydning end alle andre faktorer, deriblandt også køn og etnisk baggrund.
11. **Det er ikke den bredere deltagerkreds som sådan, der fører til, at studerende forlader uddannelsesstedet i utide.** Danmark, der anses for at have succes med en bredere deltagerkreds, har den laveste frafaldsprocent i EU. Problemet er nærmere, at der ikke tages hensyn til de behov, studerende med forskellig baggrund har, samt at de uddannelsesprogrammer, der udarbejdes og tilbydes, ikke har fokus på den studerende.
12. Ikke alle lande står over for de samme udfordringer eller den samme kombination af udfordringer, når det kommer til frafald. F.eks. i Italien er forældrenes uddannelsesbaggrund særlig afgørende.

Hvordan kan man mindske frafaldet?

13. Der er stadig meget, der skal gøres for at hjælpe studerende i EU med at fuldføre deres studier, særligt de mest udsatte. De nuværende løsninger er inkonsistente eller kortsigtede.
14. Hvis der skal holdes fast i de studerende, er en holistisk tilgang nødvendig: en, der tager hånd om alle seks faktorer, der fører til frafald, samt sammenspillet mellem disse faktorer. På nationalt plan skal uddannelsespolitikken støttes af politikker, der forholder sig til bredere socio-økonomiske og kulturelle uligheder.
15. De politikker, der har vist sig at være succesfulde, har indeholdt følgende faktorer:
 - erkendelsen af, at de faktorer, der fører til, at studerende falder fra, findes meget tidligere i den studerendes liv og skal håndteres tidligt
 - finansiell støtte til de studerende
 - målrettede informationsprogrammer
 - bedre kontrol og kortlægning af frafald og fuldførelse ikke kun på nationalt plan, men

- også i forbindelse med de enkelte institutioner og fag
- heriblandt tiltag, der skal forhindre frafald ved at udvide deltagerkredsen
 - opmærksomheden på og anerkendelsen af de livsfærdigheder, som studerende allerede har tilegnet sig
 - yderligere akademisk støtte til studerende med en underprivilegeret baggrund.
16. Mange uddannelsesinstitutioner arbejder allerede hårdt på at holde fast på deres studerende. Nogle gode eksempler herpå er handlinger, der:
- forbereder studerende på en videregående uddannelse ved hjælp af introduktionskurser
 - følger og fastholder deres fremskridt
 - tilbyder relevant og støttende undervisningsplan
 - sikrer, at undervisningen tilgodeser forskellige behov
 - fremmer positive tilgange til læring
 - forbedrer formativ evaluering
 - forbedrer de studerendes studiefærdigheder
 - tilbyder finansiel støtte til studerende
 - tilbyder rådgivning og personlig støtte
 - hjælper studerende med at finde venner og etablere netværk
 - støtter bestemte fag, hvor frafaldprocenten er stor
 - støtter bestemte grupper af studerende
 - beviser, at en gennemført videregående uddannelse er nyttig.
17. En måde at øge fuldførelsesraten på er at lade potentielle og nuværende studerende møde nogle, der har fuldført uddannelsen, samt at give gode karriereråd.
18. De regionale og lokale forhold har indflydelse på frafaldet. Regionalt samarbejde mellem uddannelsesinstitutionerne, arbejdsgivere og andre aktører kan være med til at udvikle undervisningsplaner, der fremmer lokalt arbejde og fuldførelse.
19. Det kan have en positiv indvirkning på reduktionen af frafald, hvis de tiltag, der kontrollerer og krediterer fuldførelsen af en uddannelse, bliver en del af nationale systemer, der finansierer videregående uddannelser, særligt hvis tiltagene kan knyttes til succes på området med en bredere deltagerkreds. Uddannelsesinstitutioner, der optager mange underprivilegerede studerende, kunne modtage flere ressourcer, reguleret i forhold til den andel af underprivilegerede studerende, der optages, og hvor mange heraf der fuldfører studiet.
20. I de tilfælde, hvor studerende indser, at det ikke var det rigtige tidspunkt, sted eller fag, kan det være positivt at droppe ud af studiet. Men selvom de fleste af de studerende, der trækker sig fra det første studie, ønsker at påbegynde et andet eller starte igen på et senere tidspunkt, er medlemsstaterne på nuværende tidspunkt ikke gode nok til at hjælpe dem med fleksible løsninger. Arbejdsgiverne ser også negativt på studerende, der ikke har afsluttet deres studier.
21. De fleste studerende fuldfører trods alt. Der er behov for mere forskning i standhaftighed og succes.

Problemet med data

22. Kun Danmark, Østrig, Finland, Det Forenede Kongerige og Norge vælger at gøre statistikker over fuldførelse åbent tilgængelige på nettet.
23. Der findes ikke noget sammenhængende sæt data om adgang eller om fuldførelse og frafald i EU. Det er forskelligt, i hvilket omfang de enkelte lande samler data på dette område. Der er behov for mere pålidelige og sammenlignelige data, kvantitative og kvalitative, om, hvor mange studerende der ikke fuldfører, hvem de er, og hvorfor de falder fra. Derudover ville man på baggrund af fælles definitioner på frafald og fuldførelse kunne sammenligne lande mere effektivt.

Zusammenfassung

1. Zu viele Studierende in der EU verlassen die Hochschule ohne Abschluss. Dies ist ein Problem für die gesamte EU, da eine erfolgreiche Hochschulbildung für Beschäftigung, soziale Gerechtigkeit und Wirtschaftswachstum unerlässlich ist.
2. Die EU-Länder mit den höchsten Studienabschlussquoten sind Dänemark, das Vereinigte Königreich und Deutschland. Allerdings erzielt selbst Dänemark als erfolgreichstes Land nur eine Quote von rund 80 %.
3. Am geringsten ist der Anteil der Studierenden, die ihr Studium abschließen, in Italien, Ungarn und Polen. In Italien liegt er bei nur 46 %.

Profil der Studienabbrecher

4. **Studierende aus sozioökonomisch benachteiligten Schichten brechen ihr Studium am ehesten ab.** Darüber hinaus haben Studierende mit Fürsorgepflichten, insbesondere Frauen, Schwierigkeiten, Betreuung und Studium zu vereinen.
5. **Männer** brechen ihr Studium häufiger ab als Frauen. Sie entscheiden sich vergleichsweise öfter für ein natur- oder ingenieurwissenschaftliches Studium – d. h. Fachrichtungen mit den höchsten Abbrecherquoten. Männliche Studienabbrecher stammen überwiegend aus Arbeiterfamilien und aus einkommensschwachen Regionen.
6. **Angehörige ethnischer Minderheiten** sind aufgrund von Faktoren wie Rassismus oder Armut stärker vom Studienabbruch betroffen. Auch hier spielt der sozioökonomische Hintergrund eine wesentliche Rolle: Die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass ein Flüchtling aus der Mittelschicht sein Studium abschließt, ist größer als bei einem Flüchtling aus einer Arbeiterfamilie.
7. **Studierende mit Behinderung** sind mit Problemen der Barrierefreiheit konfrontiert und treffen auf Hindernisse bei den Einstellungen des Hochschulpersonals und der Mitstudierenden. Der sozioökonomische Status macht sich auch hier bemerkbar: Studierende mit Behinderung aus einer Mittelschichtfamilie schließen ihr Studium eher ab als Studierende mit Behinderung, die aus dem Arbeitermilieu stammen.
8. **Teilzeitstudierende** brechen ihr Studium häufiger ab als Vollzeitstudierende, und zwar oftmals aufgrund von Betreuungsverpflichtungen oder langen Arbeitszeiten in einem Job, der keine Verbindung zu ihrem Studium aufweist.

Gründe für den Studienabbruch

9. Der Entscheidung für den Abbruch eines Studiums liegen sechs Hauptursachen zugrunde (soziokulturelle, strukturelle, politische, institutionelle, private und lerntechnische Gründe – siehe Seite 71). Häufig ist es eine Kombination dieser Faktoren, die zum Studienabbruch führt.
10. **Die Herkunft aus sozioökonomisch benachteiligten Verhältnissen ist der Hauptgrund für einen Studienabbruch.** Sie dominiert alle anderen Faktoren, auch das Geschlecht und die ethnische Herkunft.
11. **Die Ursachen für das Phänomen des Studienabbruchs liegen nicht in der zunehmenden Bildungsbeteiligung.** Dänemark, das die Bildungsbeteiligung bekanntermaßen mit großem Erfolg ausgeweitet hat, hat die niedrigste Studienabbruchquote in der EU. Das Problem liegt eher darin, dass den Bedürfnissen eines breiteren Spektrums an Studierenden nicht genügend Rechnung getragen wird und sich die Entwicklung und Umsetzung von Hochschulprogrammen nicht an den Studierenden orientiert.
12. Nicht alle Länder sind beim Thema Studienabbruch mit denselben Herausforderungen oder derselben Kombination von Herausforderungen konfrontiert. In Italien beispielsweise ist der Bildungshintergrund der Eltern besonders signifikant.

Wie lässt sich die Zahl der Studienabbrecher reduzieren?

13. Es gibt noch viel zu tun, um Studierenden in der EU – insbesondere den am stärksten benachteiligten – zu helfen, einen Abschluss zu erlangen. Die bisherigen Maßnahmen sind uneinheitlich und lückenhaft.
14. Um die Studierenden an der Hochschule zu halten, ist ein ganzheitlicher Ansatz nötig, der alle sechs Faktoren für den Studienabbruch und ihre Wechselwirkungen berücksichtigt. Auf nationaler Ebene muss die Hochschulpolitik durch Konzepte zur Beseitigung des allgemeineren sozioökonomischen und kulturellen Gefälles unterstützt werden.
15. Erfolgreiche politische Strategien zeichnen sich durch folgende Merkmale aus:

- Bestätigung, dass Faktoren, die zum Studienabbruch führen, weit früher im Leben begründet liegen und frühzeitig der Aufmerksamkeit bedürfen
 - finanzielle Unterstützung der Studierenden
 - gezielte Outreach-Programme
 - besseres Monitoring und Verfolgen von Studienabbruch und Studienabschluss, nicht nur auf nationaler Ebene, sondern auch auf Ebene einzelner Einrichtungen und Studienfächer
 - Einbindung von Maßnahmen zur Vermeidung des Studienabbruchs in die Pläne zur Ausweitung der Bildungsbeteiligung
 - Anerkennung und Zertifizierung bereits von den Studierenden erworbener Lebenskompetenzen
 - zusätzliche akademische Unterstützung von Studierenden aus benachteiligten Gruppen
16. Viele Hochschuleinrichtungen bemühen sich bereits intensiv, ihre Studierenden an der Hochschule zu halten. Dabei haben sich verschiedene Maßnahmen bewährt:
- Vorbereitung der Studierenden auf die Hochschule durch besondere Voreinführungsangebote
 - Verfolgung der Fortschritte der Studierenden
 - Angebot eines relevanten und stützenden Curriculums
 - Anpassung des Lehrangebots an unterschiedliche Bedürfnisse
 - Förderung positiver Lernansätze
 - Verbesserung der formativen Beurteilung
 - Verbesserung der Studienkompetenzen der Studierenden
 - Angebot finanzieller Hilfen für Studierende
 - Angebot von Beratung und individueller Unterstützung
 - Förderung von sozialen Kontakten und Netzwerkbildung
 - Unterstützung besonderer Fachrichtungen mit hohen Abbrecherquoten
 - Unterstützung bestimmter Gruppen von Studierenden
 - Anführen von Belegen für die Nützlichkeit eines Studienabschlusses
17. Die Vermittlung von Kontakten zu erfolgreichen Hochschulabsolventen kann zusammen mit einer guten Karriereberatung dazu beitragen, die Abschlussquoten potenzieller und gegenwärtiger Studierender zu erhöhen.
18. Der regionale und lokale Kontext hat Einfluss auf die Abbrecherquote. Regionale Partnerschaften zwischen Hochschuleinrichtungen, Arbeitgebern und anderen Akteuren können helfen, Curricula zu entwickeln, die die Beschäftigung vor Ort und den Studienabschluss fördern.
19. Durch die Einbindung von Maßnahmen zum Monitoring und zur Belohnung guter Abschlussquoten in die nationalen Hochschulfinanzierungssysteme lässt sich die Zahl der Studienabbrecher senken, vor allem bei gleichzeitiger erfolgreicher Ausweitung der Bildungsbeteiligung. Hochschuleinrichtungen mit einem hohen Anteil an Studierenden aus benachteiligten Gruppen könnten je nach dem Anteil der aufgenommenen und zum Abschluss geführten Studierenden aus diesen Gruppen mehr Ressourcen erhalten.
20. Für Studierende, die erkennen, dass sie den falschen Zeitpunkt, den falschen Ort oder das falsche Studienfach gewählt haben, kann ein Studienabbruch die richtige Entscheidung sein. Obwohl die meisten Studierenden, die ihr Studium im ersten Anlauf abbrechen, zu einem anderen Fach überwechseln oder später an die Hochschule zurückkehren möchten, gibt es in den meisten Mitgliedstaaten derzeit keine ausreichende Hilfe in Form flexibler Regelungen. Auch bei Arbeitgebern sind Studienabbrecher nicht gut angesehen.
21. Viele Studierende sind allen Widrigkeiten zum Trotz erfolgreich. Zum Thema Widerstandskraft und Erfolg sind weitere Untersuchungen erforderlich.

Problematische Datenlage

22. Lediglich Dänemark, Österreich, Finnland, das Vereinigte Königreich und Norwegen machen Statistiken zum Studienabschluss offen online zugänglich.
23. Es existieren keine kohärenten Datensätze zum Hochschulzugang sowie den Abschluss- und Abbrecherquoten in der EU. Das Ausmaß der Datenerhebung hierzu variiert von Land zu Land. Es werden zuverlässigere und vergleichbare quantitative und qualitative Daten über die Zahl der Studienabbrecher, ihr Profil und die Gründe für den Studienabbruch benötigt. Darüber hinaus würde eine einheitliche Definition von Studienabbruch und Studienabschluss den Ländervergleich erleichtern.

Σύνοψη

1. Πάρα πολλοί σπουδαστές στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση εγκαταλείπουν τις σπουδές τους πριν ολοκληρώσουν τον κύκλο της τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης. Αυτό αποτελεί πρόβλημα σε όλη την ΕΕ, δεδομένου ότι η επιτυχημένη ολοκλήρωση της τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης είναι ζωτικής σημασίας για την απασχόληση, την κοινωνική δικαιοσύνη και την οικονομική ανάπτυξη.
2. Οι πιο επιτυχημένες χώρες της ΕΕ όσον αφορά την ολοκλήρωση των σπουδών είναι η Δανία, το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο και η Γερμανία. Ωστόσο, ακόμη και στην πιο επιτυχημένη χώρα, τη Δανία, το ποσοστό της ολοκλήρωσης των σπουδών κυμαίνεται γύρω στο 80%.
3. Οι λιγότερο επιτυχημένες χώρες είναι η Ιταλία, η Ουγγαρία και η Πολωνία (έχουν το χαμηλότερο ποσοστό φοιτητών που ολοκληρώνουν τις πτυχιακές σπουδές τους). Στην Ιταλία, το ποσοστό ανέρχεται μόλις στο 46% των φοιτητών.

Ποιοι εγκαταλείπουν;

4. **Οι φοιτητές με χαμηλή κοινωνικοοικονομική προέλευση έχουν τις περισσότερες πιθανότητες να εγκαταλείψουν τις σπουδές τους.** Επίσης, οι φοιτητές με εξαρτώμενα μέλη, ιδίως οι γυναίκες, αγωνίζονται να συνδυάσουν τις ευθύνες φροντίδας με τις σπουδές τους.
5. **Οι άνδρες** διατρέχουν μεγαλύτερο κίνδυνο εγκατάλειψης των σπουδών απ' ό,τι οι γυναίκες. Είναι πιθανότερο να ακολουθούν σπουδές στο χώρο της επιστήμης και της τεχνολογίας, τους επιστημονικούς κλάδους που παρουσιάζουν το υψηλότερο ποσοστό εγκατάλειψης. Οι άνδρες με προέλευση από την εργατική τάξη και από φτωχές περιοχές της επαρχίας είναι ιδιαίτερα ευάλωτοι.
6. **Οι φοιτητές από εθνοτικές μειονότητες** αντιμετωπίζουν μεγαλύτερο κίνδυνο να εγκαταλείψουν τις σπουδές τους λόγω παραγόντων όπως ο ρατσισμός ή η φτώχεια. Και σε αυτή την περίπτωση, η κοινωνικοοικονομική προέλευση αποτελεί βασικό παράγοντα: ένας πρόσφυγας που ανήκει στη μεσαία τάξη έχει πολύ περισσότερες πιθανότητες να αποφοιτήσει απ' ό,τι ένας πρόσφυγας που ανήκει στην εργατική τάξη.
7. Οι φοιτητές με **αναπηρία** αντιμετωπίζουν πρακτικά προβλήματα που συνδέονται με τον τρόπο πρόσβασης και άλλα εμπόδια όσον αφορά τη στάση του προσωπικού και των άλλων φοιτητών. Και πάλι, η κοινωνικοοικονομική προέλευση έχει ισχυρό αντίκτυπο: ένας φοιτητής με αναπηρία που προέρχεται από μια οικογένεια της μεσαίας τάξης έχει πολύ περισσότερες πιθανότητες να αποφοιτήσει απ' ό,τι ένας φοιτητής με αναπηρία που ανήκει στην εργατική τάξη.
8. **Οι φοιτητές μερικής φοίτησης** αντιμετωπίζουν μεγαλύτερο κίνδυνο να εγκαταλείψουν τις σπουδές απ'

ό,τι οι φοιτητές πλήρους φοίτησης, κάτι που οφείλεται συχνά σε ευθύνες φροντίδας ή σε πολύωρη εργασία σε μια δουλειά που δεν έχει σχέση με τις σπουδές τους.

Γιατί εγκαταλείπουν οι φοιτητές;

9. Πίσω από την απόφαση του φοιτητή να εγκαταλείψει τις σπουδές του κρύβονται έξι κύριοι παράγοντες (κοινωνικοοικονομικοί, διαρθρωτικοί, πολιτικής, θεσμικοί, προσωπικοί και μαθησιακοί παράγοντες - βλέπε σελίδα 71). Η εγκατάλειψη είναι συνήθως αποτέλεσμα συνδυασμού αυτών των παραγόντων.
10. **Η προέλευση από χαμηλό κοινωνικοοικονομικό περιβάλλον είναι ο σημαντικότερος παράγοντας που οδηγεί τον φοιτητή στην εγκατάλειψη.** Ο παράγοντας αυτός επισκιάζει όλους τους άλλους, ακόμα και το φύλο και την εθνοτική καταγωγή.
11. **Δεν είναι καθαυτή η διεύρυνση της συμμετοχής στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση που προκαλεί την εγκατάλειψη.** Η Δανία, που αναγνωρίζεται ως ιδιαίτερα επιτυχημένη στη διεύρυνση της συμμετοχής, έχει το χαμηλότερο ποσοστό εγκατάλειψης των σπουδών στην ΕΕ. Το πρόβλημα είναι μάλλον η έλλειψη προσοχής στις ανάγκες ενός περισσότερο διαφοροποιημένου φοιτητικού πληθυσμού και η έλλειψη μιας προσέγγισης με επίκεντρο τον φοιτητή κατά τον σχεδιασμό και την εφαρμογή των προγραμμάτων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης.
12. Δεν αντιμετωπίζουν όλες οι χώρες τις ίδιες προκλήσεις, ή τον ίδιο συνδυασμό προκλήσεων, όσον αφορά την εγκατάλειψη των σπουδών. Στην Ιταλία, για παράδειγμα, ιδιαίτερη σημασία έχει το μορφωτικό επίπεδο των γονέων.

Τι μπορεί να γίνει για να περιοριστεί η εγκατάλειψη των σπουδών;

13. Πρέπει να γίνουν ακόμη πολλά για να δοθεί βοήθεια στους φοιτητές στην ΕΕ, ιδίως στους πλέον ευάλωτους, να ολοκληρώσουν τις πτυχιακές σπουδές τους. Τα μέτρα που λαμβάνονται είναι ανεπαρκή ή αποσπασματικά.
14. Είναι αναγκαία μια ολιστική προσέγγιση για την παραμονή των φοιτητών στην εκπαίδευση: μια προσέγγιση που να συνεκτιμά και τους έξι παράγοντες που οδηγούν στην εγκατάλειψη των σπουδών και τις σχέσεις μεταξύ αυτών των παραγόντων. Σε εθνικό επίπεδο, η πολιτική για την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση πρέπει να συνοδεύεται από πολιτικές για την αντιμετώπιση των ευρύτερων κοινωνικών, οικονομικών και πολιτισμικών ανισοτήτων.
15. Στις πολιτικές που είναι αποδεδειγμένα επιτυχημένες περιλαμβάνονται οι ακόλουθοι παράγοντες:

- η αναγνώριση ότι οι παράγοντες που οδηγούν στην εγκατάλειψη της τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης εμφανίζονται πολύ νωρίτερα στη ζωή και πρέπει να αντιμετωπίζονται εγκαίρως·
 - η οικονομική υποστήριξη των φοιτητών·
 - προγράμματα άμεσης επαφής με το στοχευόμενο κοινό·
 - η βελτιωμένη παρακολούθηση και καταγραφή της εγκατάλειψης και της ολοκλήρωσης των σπουδών, όχι μόνο σε εθνικό επίπεδο αλλά και στο επίπεδο των επιμέρους ιδρυμάτων και επιστημονικών κλάδων·
 - η συμπερίληψη μέτρων πρόληψης της εγκατάλειψης των σπουδών στα προγράμματα διεύρυνσης της συμμετοχής στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση·
 - η αναγνώριση και η πιστοποίηση των βασικών δεξιοτήτων της ζωής που έχουν ήδη αποκτήσει οι φοιτητές·
 - η επιπλέον ακαδημαϊκή υποστήριξη των φοιτητών από μειονεκτικό περιβάλλον.
- 16.** Πολλά ιδρύματα τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης ήδη εργάζονται σκληρά για να κρατήσουν τους φοιτητές τους. Στα καλά παραδείγματα δράσης περιλαμβάνονται:
- η προετοιμασία των φοιτητών για την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση μέσω δραστηριοτήτων προετοιμασίας·
 - η παρακολούθηση της προόδου τους·
 - η προσφορά κατάλληλου και υποστηρικτικού προγράμματος σπουδών·
 - η διασφάλιση διδασκαλίας ικανής να προσαρμόζεται στις διαφορετικές ανάγκες·
 - η προαγωγή θετικών προσεγγίσεων της μάθησης·
 - η βελτίωση της διαμορφωτικής αξιολόγησης·
 - η βελτίωση των δεξιοτήτων μελέτης των φοιτητών·
 - η προσφορά οικονομικής υποστήριξης στους φοιτητές·
 - η προσφορά συμβουλών και προσωπικής υποστήριξης·
 - η βοήθεια στους φοιτητές να κάνουν φίλους και να συμμετέχουν σε δίκτυα·
 - η υποστήριξη συγκεκριμένων επιστημονικών κλάδων που παρουσιάζουν υψηλά ποσοστά εγκατάλειψης των σπουδών·
 - η υποστήριξη συγκεκριμένων ομάδων φοιτητών·
 - η απόδειξη της χρησιμότητας των τίτλων της τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης.
- 17.** Η δημιουργία επαφών μεταξύ δυνητικών και υφιστάμενων φοιτητών, αφενός, και επιτυχημένων αποφοίτων, αφετέρου, καθώς επίσης και η παροχή καλών συμβουλών σε θέματα σταδιοδρομίας μπορούν να συμβάλουν στην αύξηση των ποσοστών ολοκλήρωσης των σπουδών.
- 18.** Το περιφερειακό και το τοπικό πλαίσιο έχουν αντίκτυπο στην εγκατάλειψη. Οι περιφερειακές συμπράξεις ιδρυμάτων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης, εργοδοτών και άλλων συντελεστών μπορούν να βοηθήσουν στην ανάπτυξη προγραμμάτων σπουδών που θα προωθούν την τοπική απασχόληση και την ολοκλήρωση των σπουδών.
- 19.** Η ανάπτυξη μέτρων για την παρακολούθηση και την ανταμοιβή της ολοκλήρωσης των σπουδών στο πλαίσιο των εθνικών συστημάτων χρηματοδότησης της τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης μπορεί να έχει θετικό αντίκτυπο στη μείωση της εγκατάλειψης των σπουδών, ιδίως όταν συνδέονται με επιτυχημένη διεύρυνση της συμμετοχής. Τα ιδρύματα τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης με υψηλό αριθμό φοιτητών από μειονεκτικό περιβάλλον θα μπορούσαν να λαμβάνουν περισσότερους πόρους, ανάλογα με τα ποσοστά εγγραφής και αποφοίτησης των φοιτητών από μειονεκτικό περιβάλλον.
- 20.** Η απόφαση για εγκατάλειψη των σπουδών μπορεί να είναι θετική αν οι φοιτητές συνειδητοποιήσουν ότι η χρονική στιγμή, ο τόπος ή ο κλάδος σπουδών δεν είναι κατάλληλα γι' αυτούς. Ωστόσο, παρά το γεγονός ότι οι περισσότεροι από όσους αποχωρούν από έναν αρχικό κύκλο σπουδών θέλουν να μεταγραφούν σε άλλο κύκλο ή να συνεχίσουν τις σπουδές σε μεταγενέστερη ημερομηνία, επί του παρόντος τα περισσότερα κράτη μέλη δεν τους βοηθούν αρκετά με ευέλικτες ρυθμίσεις. Επίσης, οι εργοδότες εκτιμούν αρνητικά το γεγονός ότι οι φοιτητές δεν έχουν ολοκληρώσει τις πτυχιακές σπουδές τους.
- 21.** Πολλοί φοιτητές πετυχαίνουν παρά τις αντιξοότητες. Είναι αναγκαίο να υπάρξει περισσότερη έρευνα στο θέμα της ανθεκτικότητας και της επιτυχίας.

Το πρόβλημα με τα στοιχεία

- 22.** Μόνο η Δανία, η Αυστρία, η Φινλανδία, το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο και η Νορβηγία δημοσιοποιούν στο δίκτυο τα στατιστικά στοιχεία σχετικά με την ολοκλήρωση των σπουδών.
- 23.** Δεν υπάρχει συνεκτική δέσμη στοιχείων σχετικά με την πρόσβαση στις σπουδές ούτε σχετικά με την ολοκλήρωση και εγκατάλειψη των σπουδών στην ΕΕ. Ο βαθμός στον οποίο κάθε χώρα συλλέγει στοιχεία σχετικά με το θέμα αυτό ποικίλλει. Απαιτούνται περισσότερα αξιόπιστα και συγκρίσιμα στοιχεία, ποσοτικά και ποιοτικά, όσον αφορά τον αριθμό των φοιτητών που δεν ολοκληρώνουν τις σπουδές τους, την ταυτότητα αυτών των φοιτητών και τους λόγους που τους οδήγησαν στην εγκατάλειψη. Επίσης, οι κοινοί ορισμοί σχετικά με την εγκατάλειψη και την ολοκλήρωση των σπουδών θα καθιστούσαν πιο αποτελεσματικές τις συγκρίσεις μεταξύ των χωρών.

Resumen

1. Demasiados estudiantes en la UE abandonan prematuramente sus estudios de educación superior. Esto constituye un problema en toda la UE, ya que la educación superior es fundamental para asegurar empleo, justicia social y crecimiento económico.
2. Los países de la UE con mayor éxito en esta materia son Dinamarca, Alemania y el Reino Unido. Sin embargo, incluso Dinamarca, siendo el país con mayor éxito en cuanto al número de estudiantes que terminan sus estudios, tiene una tasa tan solo del 80 % aproximadamente.
3. Los países con menor éxito son Italia, Hungría y Polonia (presentan la menor proporción de universitarios que finalizan sus estudios). En Italia la proporción es solo del 46 %.

Quién abandona los estudios?

4. **Los estudiantes con una situación socioeconómica poco favorable son los más proclives a abandonar los estudios.** Los estudiantes que tienen personas a cargo, especialmente las mujeres, también han de luchar para conciliar dichas responsabilidades con sus estudios.
5. **Los varones** corren un mayor riesgo de abandono escolar que las mujeres. Tienen más tendencia a estudiar carreras de ciencias e ingeniería cuyas tasas de abandono son más altas. Los varones de clase obrera y de zonas geográficas desfavorecidas son especialmente vulnerables.
6. **Los jóvenes pertenecientes a minorías étnicas** presentan un mayor riesgo de abandonar los estudios empujados por factores como el racismo o la pobreza. También en este caso, las circunstancias socioeconómicas son un factor clave: un refugiado de clase media tiene muchas más posibilidades de alcanzar una titulación que uno de clase obrera.
7. Los estudiantes con **discapacidad** encuentran problemas físicos de acceso y otras dificultades en términos de actitud del personal y de los demás estudiantes. De nuevo, la situación socioeconómica tiene un impacto importante: es mucho más probable que se titule un estudiante con discapacidad de una familia de clase media que un estudiante con discapacidad de clase obrera.
8. **Los estudiantes a tiempo parcial** corren un mayor riesgo de abandono de los estudios que los estudiantes a tiempo completo, a menudo como

resultado de las responsabilidades adicionales o de las largas jornadas de trabajo en un empleo no relacionado con sus estudios.

Por qué se abandonan los estudios?

9. Hay seis factores (socioculturales, estructurales, políticos, institucionales, personales y de aprendizaje –véase la página 71) que están detrás de la decisión de los estudiantes de abandonar prematuramente sus estudios. A menudo dicho abandono prematuro se debe a una combinación de estos factores.
10. **La pobreza es el factor más importante que lleva al abandono de estudios universitarios**, por delante del factor de sexo y de pertenencia étnica.
11. **Sin embargo, no es una amplia participación social "per se" lo que provoca un mayor abandono escolar.** Dinamarca que es un país al que se le reconoce un gran éxito con respecto a la participación social, cuenta con el menor índice de abandono de estudios universitarios de la UE. El problema radica más bien en la falta de atención a las necesidades de una población estudiantil más diversa y a la falta de un enfoque centrado en el estudiante en la concepción y la impartición de los programas de educación superior.
12. No todos los países afrontan los mismos retos o la misma combinación de retos con respecto al abandono prematuro. En Italia, por ejemplo, tiene gran importancia el nivel educativo de los padres.

Qué puede hacerse para reducir el abandono prematuro?

13. Queda mucho por hacer para ayudar a los estudiantes de la UE, especialmente a los más vulnerables, a terminar sus estudios. Lo que se está haciendo es incoherente y poco uniforme.
14. Se necesita un enfoque global que reconozca los seis factores que conducen al abandono y sus interrelaciones. A nivel nacional, la política de educación superior debe estar apoyada por políticas que aborden las mayores desigualdades socioeconómicas y culturales.
15. Las políticas que han demostrado tener éxito incluyen los siguientes factores:
 - el reconocimiento de que los factores que determinan el abandono prematuro de la

- educación superior comienzan mucho antes en la vida y es necesario abordarlos pronto;
 - el apoyo financiero a los estudiantes;
 - programas específicos de sensibilización;
 - un esfuerzo en el control y seguimiento tanto del abandono prematuro como de la cumplimiento de los estudios, no solo a nivel nacional, sino también a nivel de las instituciones y de las disciplinas individuales;
 - medidas para prevenir el abandono prematuro en planes de amplia participación;
 - el reconocimiento y la acreditación de las competencias para la vida que ya han adquirido los estudiantes;
 - apoyo académico extraordinario a los estudiantes procedentes de entornos desfavorecidos.
16. Muchas instituciones de educación superior ya se esfuerzan para retener a sus estudiantes. Algunos buenos ejemplos de esta acción son:
- la preparación de los estudiantes para la educación superior mediante actividades previas;
 - el seguimiento de su progreso;
 - la oferta de un programa de estudios pertinente y de apoyo;
 - la garantía de que la enseñanza responde a necesidades diversas ;
 - el fomento de enfoques de aprendizaje positivos;
 - la mejora de la evaluación de la formación;
 - la mejora de las competencias de los estudiantes;
 - la oferta de apoyo financiero a los estudiantes;
 - la oferta de asesoramiento y apoyo personalizados;
 - la ayuda a los estudiantes para hacer amigos y crear redes;
 - el apoyo a disciplinas específicas que registran altos índices de abandono prematuro;
 - el apoyo a grupos específicos de estudiantes;
 - demostrar que una cualificación de educación superior es útil.
17. Poner en contacto estudiantes de hoy y futuros estudiantes con alumnos exitosos y facilitar un buen asesoramiento sobre las carreras profesionales puede ayudar a aumentar las tasas de cumplimiento final de los estudios.
18. Los contextos regionales y locales tienen un impacto en el abandono prematuro. Las asociaciones regionales de instituciones de educación superior, empleadores y otros actores pueden contribuir a elaborar programas de estudios que fomenten el empleo local y la conclusión de los estudios.
19. La incorporación en los sistemas nacionales de financiación de la educación superior de medidas para controlar y recompensar el cumplimiento final del recorrido universitario puede tener un impacto positivo para reducir los abandonos de estudios, en particular cuando va unida al éxito de una participación ampliada. Las instituciones de educación superior con una alta inscripción de estudiantes desfavorecidos podrían recibir más recursos calculado con arreglo a la cuota de estudiantes desfavorecidos que matriculan y llevan a una titulación.
20. El abandono prematuro puede ser una buena decisión cuando los estudiantes se dan cuenta de que el momento, el lugar o la titulación no son los apropiados para ellos. Sin embargo, aunque la mayoría de los que abandonan una carrera inicial desean pasar a otra o reanudar los estudios más tarde, actualmente los Estados miembros no les ayudan suficientemente con disposiciones flexibles. También los empleadores tienen una opinión negativa sobre los estudiantes que no han terminado sus estudios.
21. Muchos estudiantes triunfan a pesar de las dificultades. Es necesario investigar en mayor medida la resiliencia y el éxito.

El problema de los datos

22. Solo Dinamarca, Austria, Finlandia, el Reino Unido y Noruega presentan estadísticas públicamente en internet sobre las tasas de cumplimiento de los estudios universitarios.
23. No hay una recopilación de datos coherente sobre el acceso o sobre el cumplimiento y el abandono prematuro de los estudios en la UE. Cada país recopila estos datos de manera diferente y variable. Se necesitan más datos fiables y comparables, cuantitativos y cualitativos, sobre el número de alumnos que no concluyen sus estudios, sobre quiénes son y sobre las causas del abandono de los estudios. Asimismo, la existencia de definiciones comunes sobre el abandono prematuro de los estudios superiores y el cumplimiento de los mismos haría que las comparaciones entre países fueran más eficaces.

Kommenteeritud kokkuvõte

1. Liiga palju üliõpilasi langeb ELis ülikoolist välja enne kõrghariduse omandamist. See on probleemiks kogu ELis, sest kõrghariduse edukas omandamine on otsustava tähtsusega töökoha leidmisel, samuti sotsiaalse õigluse ja majanduskasvu seisukohast.
2. Lõpuleviidud õpingute osas on ELi riikidest kõige edukamad Taani, Ühendkuningriik ja Saksamaa. Kuid isegi kõige edukamas riigis Taanis lõpetab studiumi vaid ligi 80% üliõpilastest.
3. Vähim edukad riigid on Itaalia, Ungari ja Poola (neis on studiumi lõpetanute protsent kõige väiksem). Itaalias lõpetab kõrgkooli ainult 46% alustanutest.

Kes langeb välja?

4. Kõige suurema tõenäosusega langevad koolist välja ebasoodsa sotsiaal-majandusliku taustaga üliõpilased. Ka üliõpilased, eelkõige naisüliõpilased, kellel on ülalpeetavaid, näevad vaeva, et hoida tasakaalus õpingud ja kodused kohustused.
5. **Meestel** on suurem oht välja langeda kui naistel. Nende puhul on tõenäolisem, et nad õpivad loodus- ja inseneriteadusi, mis on suurima väljalangevusega erialad. Töölisklassi hulgast ja vaestest maapiirkondadest pärit meesüliõpilased langevad eriti tihti välja.
6. **Mustanahalisi ja rahvusvähemuste hulka kuuluvaid üliõpilasi** ohustab teistest enam väljalangemine rassismi või vaesuse tõttu. Ka siin on oluliseks teguriks sotsiaal-majanduslik taust: keskklassi kuuluv pagulane lõpetab studiumi märksa tõenäolisemalt kui töölisklassi taustaga õppur.
7. **Puuetega** üliõpilastele saavad takistuseks juurdepääsuga seotud füüsilised raskused ja muud probleemid, mis tulenevad personali ja teiste üliõpilaste hoiakutest. Ka neile avaldab suurt mõju sotsiaal-majanduslik staatus: keskklassi perekonnast pärit puudega üliõpilane lõpetab studiumi märksa tõenäolisemalt kui töölisklassi taustaga õppur.
8. **Osalise õppeajaga õppivatel üliõpilastel on suurem oht välja langeda kui täisajaga õppijatel.** Sageli on selle põhjuseks kodused kohustused või pikad tööpäevad tööl, mis ei seondu õpitava erialaga.

Miks üliõpilased välja langevad?

9. Üliõpilaste otsuse taga jätta õpingud pooleli on kuus peamist tegurit (sotsiaalkultuurilised, struktuursed, poliitilised, institutsioonilised, isiklikud ja õppimisega seotud tegurid – vt lehekülj 71). Sageli põhjustab väljalangemist nimetatud tegurite kombinatsioon.
 10. **Vilets sotsiaal-majanduslik taust on kõige olulisem tegur, mis põhjustab üliõpilaste väljalangemist.** See domineerib kõigi muude koolist väljalangemiseni viivate põhjuste, sh soolise aspekti ja etnilise kuuluvuse üle.
 11. **Kõrghariduses osalemise laiendamine iseenesest ei ole väljalangemise põhjuseks.** Taanis, kus osalemise laiendamine on tunnustatud väga edukaks, on väljalangevus ELi riikide arvestuses kõige väiksem. Pigem on probleemiks vähene tähelepanu eripalgelisema üliõpilaskonna vajadustele ja õppijakeskse lähenemisviisi puudumine kõrghariduse programmide kavandamisel ja elluviimisel.
 12. Väljalangemisega seotud probleemid või probleemide kombinatsioonid ei ole kõigis riikides ühesugused. Näiteks Itaalias on eriti oluline vanemate hariduslik taust.
- ### *Mida on võimalik teha, et vähendada kõrgkoolist väljalangemist?*
13. Palju on veel teha, et aidata ELi tudengitel, eriti kõige haavatavamatel, õpingud lõpule viia. See, mida praegu selleks tehakse, on järjekindlusetu ja ebaühtlane.
 14. Väljalangemise ärahoidmiseks on vaja terviklikku lähenemisviisi, milles võetakse arvesse kõiki kuut väljalangemist põhjustavat tegurit ja nendevahelisi seoseid. Laiema sotsiaal-majandusliku ja kultuurilise ebavõrdsuse likvideerimiseks tuleb kõrghariduspoliitikat toetada riiklikul tasandil.
 15. Edukaks osutunud strateegiad sisaldavad järgmisi tegureid:
 - tõdemus, et kõrgkoolist väljalangemist põhjustavad tegurid saavad alguse palju varasemas eluetapis ja et neid tuleb lahendada hakata varakult;
 - rahaline toetus üliõpilastele;
 - suunatud teavitamisprogrammid;

- parem järelevalve ja kontroll väljalangemise ja õpingute lõpetamise üle mitte ainult riiklikul tasandil, vaid ka institutsioonide ja erialade tasandil;
 - kõrghariduses osalemise laiendamise kavadesse selliste meetmete lisamine, mis aitavad ära hoida väljalangemist;
 - üliõpilaste poolt varem omandatud oskuste äratundmine ja tunnustamine;
 - täiendav akadeemiline tugi ebasoodsast keskkonnast pärit üliõpilastele.
16. Paljud kõrgharidusasutused teevad juba praegu palju selleks, et nende üliõpilased välja ei langeks. Head näited on järgmised:
- üliõpilaste ettevalmistamine kõrghariduse omandamiseks ettevalmistustegevuse kaudu;
 - nende edusammude jälgimine;
 - asjakohase ja toetava õppekava pakkumine;
 - erinevate vajaduste arvestamine õpetamisel;
 - õppimisele positiivse lähenemisviisi edendamine;
 - formatiivse hindamise parandamine;
 - üliõpilaste õppimisoskuste parandamine;
 - üliõpilastele rahalise toetuse pakkumine;
 - nõustamise ja isikliku toetuse pakkumine;
 - üliõpilaste abistamine sõprade leidmisel ja võrgustike loomisel;
 - tugi konkreetsetes õppeainetes, milles on registreeritud kõrge väljalangemisprotsent;
 - konkreetse üliõpilaskontingendi toetamine;
 - kõrgharidusest tuleneva kasu näitamine.
17. Tulevaste ja praeguste üliõpilaste kokkuviiimine edukate kõrgkoolilõpetajatega ning hea karjääri-nõustamine võivad suurendada kõrgkooli lõpetanute protsenti.
18. Väljalangemist mõjutavad nii piirkondlikud kui ka kohalikud tingimused. Kõrgkoolide, tööandjate ja muude osalejate piirkondliku partnerluse toel saab välja töötada õppekavad, mis soodustavad kohalikkude tööhõivet ja stuudiumi lõpetamist.
19. Positiivset mõju väljalangemise vähendamisele võib avaldada kõrghariduse rahastamise riiklike süsteemide jaoks selliste meetmete väljatöötamine, mille abil jälgida ja toetada õpingute lõpuleviimist, seda eriti juhul, kui see on seotud eduga osalemise suurendamisega. Kõrgkoolid, kus on palju ebasoodsas olukorras olevaid tudengeid, võiksid saada rohkem vahendeid, mis on indekseeritud selliste vastuvõetud ja stuudiumi lõpetamiseni viidud üliõpilaste osakaalu arvestades.
20. Väljalangemine võib olla positiivne otsus, kui õpilased saavad aru, et aeg, koht ja eriala ei ole nende jaoks õige. Kuigi enamik neist, kes jätavad esialgselt valitud kursuse pooleli, soovivad üle minna mõnele muule erialale või naasta samale kursusele hiljem, ei anna enamik liikmesriike neile piisavalt abi paindlike lahenduste leidmisel. Ka tööandjad vaatavad viltu üliõpilastele, kes ei ole õpinguid lõpetanud.
21. Paljud üliõpilased suudavad kõigi asjaolude kiuste õpingud siiski edukalt lõpetada. Vastupidavust ja edu käsitlevaid teadusuuringuid oleks vaja teha rohkem.

Probleemid andmetega

22. Ainult Taanil, Austrial, Soomel, Ühendkuningriigil ja Norral on kõrgkooli lõpetanute kohta käiv statistika Internetis avalikult kättesaadav.
23. ELis ei ole ühtset andmekogu juurdepääsetavuse või õpingute lõpetamise ja väljalangemise kohta. Riigid koguvad selle kohta andmeid väga erineval tasemel. Vaja on rohkem usaldusväärseid ja võrreldavaid kvantitatiivseid ja kvalitatiivseid andmeid selle kohta, kui palju üliõpilasi ei jõua diplomini, kes nad on ja miks nad välja langesid. Ühised määratlused väljalangemise ja kooli lõpetamise kohta aitaksid muuta võrdlemise riikide vahel tõhusamaks.

Tiivistelmä

1. Liian monet opiskelijat jättävät EU:ssa korkea-asteen opintonsa kesken. Tämä on ongelmallista koko EU:lle, sillä menestyminen korkea-asteen koulutuksessa on olennaista työpaikkojen, sosiaalisen oikeudenmukaisuuden ja talouskasvun kannalta.
2. Parhaiten opintojen päätökseen saattamisen osalta menestyvät EU-maista Tanska, Yhdistynyt kuningaskunta ja Saksa. Ykkösenä olevassa Tanskassakin suorittamisaste on kuitenkin vain noin 80 prosenttia.
3. Heikoiten tässä suhteessa menestyvät Italia, Unkari ja Puola (näissä maissa tutkinnon suorittaneiden opiskelijoiden osuus on pienin). Italiassa osuus on vain 46 prosenttia.

Ketkä jättävät opintonsa kesken?

4. **Keskeyttäminen on todennäköisintä opiskelijoilla, joiden sosioekonominen tausta on heikko.** Ne opiskelijat, joilla on huollettavia (etenkin naiset), joutuvat puolestaan kamppailemaan siinä, miten he pystyvät yhdistämään hoitovelvollisuutensa opintojensa kanssa.
5. **Miehillä** keskeyttämisriski on suurempi kuin naisilla. Miehet opiskelevat todennäköisemmin kuin naiset luonnontieteitä ja tekniikkaa. Näillä aloilla keskeyttämisaste on suurin. Erityisen suuri riski on miehillä, joiden tausta on työväenluokainen tai jotka tulevat köyhiltä maaseutualueilta.
6. **Etnisiin vähemmistöihin kuuluvien opiskelijoiden keskeyttämisriskiä lisäävät esimerkiksi rasismi tai köyhyys.** Tällöinkin sosioekonominen tausta on keskeinen tekijä: taustaltaan keskiluokkainen pakolainen valmistuu selvästi todennäköisemmin kuin työväenluokkainen.
7. **Vammaiset** opiskelijat kohtaavat koulutukseen pääsyyn liittyviä fyysisiä ongelmia ja muita esteitä, joiden taustalla ovat henkilöstön ja muiden opiskelijoiden asenteet. Sosioekonomisella asemalla on tässäkin tapauksessa vahva vaikutus: keskiluokkaisesta perheestä tuleva vammaisen opiskelija valmistuu selvästi todennäköisemmin kuin työväenluokkainen.
8. **Osa-aikaopiskelijoilla** keskeyttämisriski on suurempi kuin kokopäiväisillä. Taustalla ovat usein hoitovelvollisuudet tai pitkät työajat opintoihin liittymättömissä tehtävissä.

Miksi opiskelijat keskeyttävät opintonsa?

9. Opiskelijoiden keskeyttämisspätöksen taustalla on kuusi avaintekijää: sosiokulttuuriset, rakenteelliset, politiikkaan liittyvät, institutionaaliset ja oppimiseen liittyvät tekijät – ks. sivu 71. Keskeyttämiseen johtaa usein näiden tekijöiden yhdistelmä.
10. **Heikko sosioekonominen tausta on merkittävin syy sille, että opiskelija keskeyttää opintonsa.** Keskeyttämiseen johtavana tekijänä se on voimakkaampi kuin mikään muu tekijä sukupuoli ja etninen tausta mukaan luettuina.
11. **Osallistujapohjan laajentaminen ei itsessään aiheuta keskeyttämistä.** Keskeyttämisaste on EU:n pienin Tanskassa, jonka tunnustetaan onnistuneen erinomaisesti osallistujapohjan laajentamisessa. Ongelmana on pikemminkin se, ettei entistä moninaisemman opiskelijakunnan tarpeisiin kiinnitetä tarpeeksi huomiota ja ettei korkea-asteen koulutusohjelmien suunnittelussa ja toteutuksessa toimita opiskelijalähtöisesti.
12. Keskeyttämiseen liittyvät haasteet tai niiden yhdistelmät eivät ole samoja kaikissa maissa. Esimerkiksi Italiassa vanhempien koulutustausta on erityisen merkittävä tekijä.

Miten keskeyttämistä voitaisiin vähentää?

13. Opiskelijoiden auttamisessa tutkinnon suorittamiseen riittää EU:ssa tehtävää etenkin kaikkein heikoimmassa asemassa olevien tapauksessa. Toimet ovat nyt epäyhtenäisiä ja hajanaisia.
14. Opiskelijoiden pitämiseen opintojen parissa tarvitaan kokonaisvaltaista lähestymistapaa, jossa otetaan huomioon kaikki kuusi keskeyttämiseen johtavaa tekijää ja niiden väliset yhteydet. Kansallista korkeakoulupolitiikkaa on tuettava sellaisilla linjauksilla, joilla puututaan laajempiin sosioekonomisiin ja kulttuuriin epätasa-arvoisuuksiin.
15. Toimivaksi osoittautunut politiikka sisältää seuraavat tekijät:
 - sen tunnustaminen, että korkeakoulupintojen keskeyttämiseen johtavat tekijät ovat olemassa jo paljon ennen opiskelua ja että niihin on puututtava varhain
 - taloudellinen tuki opiskelijoille
 - kohdennetut tutustuttamisohjelmat

- keskeyttämisen ja valmistumisen parempi seuraaminen paitsi valtakunnallisesti myös yksittäisten laitosten ja oppiaineiden kohdalla
 - keskeyttämistä ehkäisevien toimenpiteiden ottaminen osaksi laajemman osallistumisen suunnitelmia
 - opiskelijoiden jo hankkimien elämäntaitojen tunnustaminen ja hyväksi lukeminen
 - opinto-ohjauksen lisääminen heikoista lähtökohdista tuleville opiskelijoille.
16. Monet korkea-asteen oppilaitokset tekevät jo nyt paljon työtä pitääkseen opiskelijansa opiskele-massa. Esimerkkejä hyvistä toimista:
- valmennetaan opiskelijoita korkea-asteen koulutukseen siihen tähtäävillä aiemmillä toimilla
 - seurataan opiskelijoiden edistymistä
 - tarjotaan tarkoituksenmukaisia opinto-ohjel-mia, jotka tukevat opiskelijoita
 - huolehditaan siitä, että opetus vastaa erilaisiin tarpeisiin
 - edistetään positiivista asennoitumista oppimiseen
 - parannetaan formatiivista arviointia
 - parannetaan opiskelijoiden opiskelutaitoja
 - tarjotaan opiskelijoille taloudellista tukea
 - tarjotaan neuvontaa ja henkilökohtaista tukea
 - autetaan opiskelijoita ystäväystymään ja verkostoitumaan
 - tuetaan niitä oppiaineita, joissa keskeyt-täminen on yleistä
 - tuetaan erityisiä opiskelijaryhmiä
 - osoitetaan, että korkeakoulutuksesta on hyötyä.
17. Tutkintojen suorittamisastetta voitaisiin korottaa silläkin, että potentiaaliset ja jo opintonsa aloittaneet opiskelijat saatetaan yhteen samassa oppilaitoksessa jo tutkinnon suorittaneiden kanssa. Myös neuvot tulevista uramahdollisuuksista voivat auttaa.
18. Alueellisilla ja paikallisilla oloilla on vaikutusta keskeyttämiseen. Korkea-asteen oppilaitosten, työnantajien ja muiden toimijoiden alueelliset kumppanuudet voivat auttaa kehittämään sellaisia opetussuunnitelmia, jotka edistävät paikallista työllisyyttä ja tutkintojen suorittamista.
19. Opintojen keskeyttämisen vähentämisessä voi olla apua kansallisiin korkea-asteen koulutuksen rahoitusjärjestelmiin nivoutuista toimenpiteistä, joilla seurataan tutkintojen suorittamista ja palkitaan ne. Näin etenkin, kun ne kytketään osallistujapohjan laajentamisen onnistumiseen. Korkea-asteen oppilaitoksille, joihin tulee runsaasti heikoista lähtökohdista tulevia opiskelijoita, voitaisiin antaa enemmän resursseja suhteessa siihen, mikä on heikommista lähtökohdista tulevien opiskelijoiden osuus niiden opiskelijaksi rekisteröidyistä ja tutkinnon suorittaneista opiskelijoista.
20. Opintojen keskeyttäminen voi olla myös hyvä päätös, kun opiskelija huomaa, ettei aika, paikka tai tutkinto sovi hänelle. Vaikka useimmat alkuperäisen opinto-ohjelmansa keskeyttävistä haluavat vaihtaa toiseen ohjelmaan tai jatkaa opintojaan myöhemmin, useimmat jäsenvaltiot eivät tätä nykyä auta heitä riittävästi joustavilla järjestelyillä. Lisäksi työnantajat suhtautuvat nihkeästi opiskelijoihin, jotka eivät ole suorittaneet tutkintoaan loppuun.
21. Monet opiskelijat kuitenkin pärjäävät heikoista olosuhteista huolimatta. Tarvitaan lisää tutki-musta sinnikkydestä ja onnistumisesta.

Tieto-ongelma

22. Vain Tanska, Itävalta, Suomi, Yhdistynyt kuningaskunta ja Norja tarjoavat avoimesti verkossa tilastotietoja tutkintojen suorittamisesta.
23. EU:ssa ei ole käytössä yhtenäistä tietokoko-naisuutta opiskelun aloittamismahdol-lisuuksista, tutkinnon suorittamisesta ja opintojen keskeyt-tämisestä. Se, kuinka laajasti yksittäiset maat keräävät näitä tietoja, vaihtelee. Tarvitaan luotettavampia ja vertailukelpoisia laadullisia ja määrällisiä tietoja siitä, kuinka moni opiskelija jättää opinnot kesken, keitä he ovat ja miksi he keskeyttävät. Maiden välisiä vertailuja helpot-taisivat myös yhteiset opintojen keskeyttämisen ja niiden loppuun suorittamisen määritelmät.

Synthèse

1. Un trop grand nombre d'étudiants de l'UE abandonnent leurs études de niveau supérieur. Cette situation pose problème dans l'ensemble de l'UE, étant donné que la réussite des études supérieures constitue un facteur essentiel pour l'emploi, la justice sociale et la croissance économique.
2. Les pays enregistrant les plus hauts taux d'achèvement des études supérieures sont le Danemark, le Royaume-Uni et l'Allemagne. Toutefois, le taux de réussite le plus élevé, enregistré au Danemark, n'est que de 80 %.
3. Les pays les moins performants (c'est-à-dire ceux ayant la plus faible proportion d'étudiants inscrits qui finissent par obtenir leur diplôme) sont l'Italie, la Hongrie et la Pologne. Seuls 46 % des étudiants terminent leurs études supérieures en Italie.

Qui abandonne ses études?

4. **Les étudiants d'origine socioéconomique modeste sont les plus susceptibles d'abandonner leurs études.** De même, les étudiants ayant des personnes à charge, les femmes en particulier, ont de difficultés à trouver le bon équilibre entre leurs études et leurs responsabilités familiales.
5. **Les hommes** sont plus exposés au risque de décrochage que les femmes. Ils sont plus enclins à étudier les sciences et l'ingénierie, des disciplines où l'on constate le plus fort taux d'abandon. Les hommes issus de la classe ouvrière et de zones provinciales défavorisées sont particulièrement vulnérables.
6. **Les étudiants issus des minorités ethniques** ont une probabilité plus élevée d'abandonner leurs études en raison d'éléments tels que le racisme ou la pauvreté. Ici aussi, l'origine socioéconomique est un facteur-clé: un réfugié originaire de la classe moyenne a bien plus de chances de décrocher un diplôme s'il est issu des classes moyennes plutôt que d'un milieu ouvrier.
7. Les étudiants présentant des **handicaps** sont confrontés à des problèmes physiques d'accès et à l'attitude du corps enseignant et des autres étudiants. Ici aussi, le statut socioéconomique a une incidence considérable: un étudiant handicapé d'une famille de classe moyenne a bien plus de chances de décrocher un diplôme qu'un étudiant handicapé issu de la classe ouvrière.
8. **Les étudiants à temps partiel** sont plus susceptibles d'abandonner que ceux à plein temps, souvent

parce qu'ils doivent assumer des responsabilités familiales ou prester de longues heures de travail sans rapport avec leurs études.

Pourquoi les étudiants abandonnent-ils leurs études?

9. Un ou plusieurs de ces six facteurs-clés – socio-culturel, structurel, politique, institutionnel, personnel et liés à l'apprentissage – voir page 71 – peuvent amener certains étudiants à abandonner leurs études supérieures. C'est souvent une combinaison de ces facteurs qui est à l'origine de ce décrochage.
10. **Un milieu socioéconomique défavorisé peut être, pour l'étudiant, est le facteur le plus important à l'origine d'un abandon des études.** Celui-ci prend le pas sur tous les autres facteurs, y compris ceux liés au sexe et à l'origine ethnique.
11. **Il n'y a pas de relation de cause à effet entre l'élargissement de l'accès aux études à une plus grande population et le taux d'abandon des études.** Le Danemark, dont la politique d'accès aux études élargi au plus grand nombre est reconnue comme un grand succès, affiche le plus faible taux d'abandon dans l'Union européenne. C'est plutôt le manque d'attention accordée aux besoins d'une population d'étudiants plus diversifiée et l'absence d'une approche centrée sur les étudiants lors de la conception et de la mise en œuvre des programmes d'enseignement supérieur qui posent problème.
12. Tous les pays ne sont pas confrontés aux mêmes problèmes, ou à la même combinaison de problèmes, en matière de décrochage. En Italie, par exemple, le niveau de formation des parents joue un rôle particulièrement important.

Que peut-on faire pour réduire le taux d'abandon?

13. Beaucoup reste à faire pour aider les étudiants de l'UE, en particulier les plus vulnérables, à terminer leurs études. Les actions en cours manquent de cohérence et d'homogénéité.
14. Une approche holistique s'impose, qui tienne compte non seulement de l'ensemble des six facteurs conduisant à l'abandon des études mais aussi de leurs interrelations. Au niveau national, la politique en matière d'enseignement supérieur doit être soutenue par des mesures visant à lutter contre les inégalités socioéconomiques et culturelles au sens large.

15. Les politiques qui se sont révélées efficaces comprennent les éléments suivants:
- la reconnaissance du fait que les facteurs conduisant à l'abandon des études supérieures se manifestent beaucoup plus tôt dans la vie et qu'ils doivent être pris en considération plus tôt;
 - le soutien financier des étudiants;
 - des programmes de sensibilisation ciblés;
 - l'amélioration de la surveillance et le suivi des taux de décrochage et d'achèvement, non seulement au niveau national mais aussi dans chaque établissement et discipline;
 - des mesures visant à prévenir le taux d'abandon dans les plans de participation élargie;
 - la reconnaissance et l'accréditation des compétences générales déjà acquises par les étudiants;
 - un soutien pédagogique supplémentaire pour les étudiants issus de milieux défavorisés.
16. De nombreux établissements d'enseignement supérieur consentent déjà des efforts importants pour retenir leurs étudiants. Citons à titre d'exemples d'action:
- la préparation des étudiants à l'enseignement supérieur grâce à des activités de formation préalable;
 - le suivi de leurs progrès;
 - une offre de programmes pertinents et incluant des mesures de soutien;
 - un enseignement capable de s'adapter à une diversité de besoins;
 - des approches positives d'apprentissage;
 - l'amélioration de l'évaluation formative;
 - l'amélioration des compétences d'apprentissage des étudiants;
 - le soutien financier des étudiants;
 - l'offre de conseils et de soutien personnel;
 - l'aide aux étudiants pour établir des réseaux sociaux;
 - le soutien de disciplines spécifiques pour lesquelles on enregistre des taux d'abandon élevés;
 - le soutien de groupes spécifiques d'étudiants;
 - la démonstration de l'utilité d'un diplôme de l'enseignement supérieur.
17. La mise en contact d'étudiants potentiels et actuels avec d'anciens étudiants diplômés ainsi que un conseil de qualité en matière d'orientation professionnelle peuvent contribuer à accroître les taux de réussite.
18. Les contextes régionaux et locaux ont une incidence sur l'abandon des études. Les partenariats régionaux d'établissements d'enseignement supérieur, d'employeurs et d'autres intervenants peuvent contribuer à l'élaboration de programmes favorisant l'emploi local et l'achèvement des études.
19. La mise en place, au sein des systèmes de financement de l'enseignement supérieur à l'échelon national, de mesures pour suivre de près et récompenser l'achèvement des études supérieures peut avoir un effet positif sur la réduction des abandons, surtout si celles-ci sont indexées sur le degré de succès dans l'ouverture à un plus grand nombre d'étudiants. En effet, les établissements d'enseignement supérieur enregistrant un grand nombre d'étudiants venant de milieux défavorisés pourraient prétendre à davantage de ressources, en fonction de la proportion de ces étudiants qui n'ont pas décroché et ont fini leurs études jusqu'à l'obtention du diplôme final.
20. L'abandon peut être une décision positive si les étudiants se rendent compte qu'ils ont fait fausse route en terme de temps, lieu et discipline. Toutefois, même si la plupart de ceux qui se détournent d'une voie pour opter pour d'autres disciplines ou qui les délaissent pour y revenir à un stade ultérieur, les États membres ne leur offrent pas suffisamment de flexibilité pour ce faire à l'heure actuelle. En outre, les employeurs ont tendance à juger négativement les étudiants n'ayant pas terminé leurs études.
21. Nombre d'étudiants arrivent cependant à terminer leurs études avec succès, en dépit de tous les obstacles. Plus de recherche devrait être consacrée à ce type de résilience et de réussite.

Le problème des données

22. Seuls le Danemark, l'Autriche, la Finlande, le Royaume-Uni et la Norvège établissent des statistiques sur le décrochage au niveau supérieur qui peuvent être consultées en ligne.
23. Il n'existe pas d'ensemble cohérent de données sur l'accès ou sur le taux d'achèvement et d'abandon des études supérieures dans l'Union européenne. La mesure dans laquelle les pays collectent des données sur cette question est variable. Il est indispensable d'obtenir des données plus fiables et comparables tant au niveau quantitatif que qualitatif, concernant le nombre d'étudiants n'ayant pas achevé leurs études, leur milieu d'origine et la raison de leur abandon. De même, le recours à des définitions communes des notions de décrochage et de réussite permettrait d'effectuer des comparaisons valables entre les différents pays.

Sažetak

1. Previše studenata u EU-u napušta studij prije završetka visokoškolskog obrazovanja. To je problem diljem EU-a budući da je uspjeh u visokom školstvu neophodan za radna mjesta, socijalnu pravdu i gospodarski rast.
2. Najuspješnije zemlje EU-a prema stopi završetka visokoškolskog obrazovanja su Danska, Ujedinjena Kraljevina i Njemačka. U Danskoj, kao najuspješnijoj, studij završi samo 80 % studenata.
3. Najneuspješnije zemlje su Italija, Mađarska i Poljska gdje najmanji broj studenata završi studij. U Italiji samo 46 % studenata završi studij.
10. **Siromaštvo je najznačajniji čimbenik koji dovodi do odustajanja.** Taj je čimbenik ispred svih drugih, uključujući spol i nacionalnu pripadnost.
11. **Proširivanje sudjelovanja samo po sebi nije razlog za odustajanje.** Danska, koja je veoma uspješna u proširivanju sudjelovanja, ima najmanju stopu odustajanja u EU-u. Problem je u nedovoljnom obraćanju pozornosti potrebama različite studentske populacije i nedostatku pristupa usmjerenog studentu u stvaranju i pružanju programa visokog školstva.

Tko odustaje?

4. Studenti koji dolaze iz obitelji nižeg socioekonomskog statusa najčešće odustaju od studija. Također su to studenti koji nekoga uzdržavaju, posebice žene, koji pokušavaju uskladiti svoje odgovornosti sa studijem.
5. Muškarci češće odustaju od studija nego žene. Oni često studiraju prirodne ili tehničke studije gdje je stopa odustajanja najveća. Najpodložniji odustajanju su muškarci iz radničkih obitelji i muškarci iz siromašnih geografskih područja.
6. Studenti koji pripadaju nacionalnim manjinama češće odustaju od studija zbog rasizma ili siromaštva. Ovdje je također ključan socioekonomski status. Vjerojatnije je da će studij završiti izbjeglica iz obitelji srednje klase od one iz radničke klase.
7. Studenti s invaliditetom imaju probleme fizičkog pristupa i druge zapreke u smislu stava osoblja i drugih studenata. Ponovno je socioekonomski status veoma bitan: vjerojatnije je da će studij završiti student s invaliditetom iz obitelji srednje klase od onoga iz radničke klase.
8. Izvanredni studenti češće odustaju od studija od redovnih studenata zbog drugih odgovornosti ili posla koji nisu povezani sa studijem.

Zašto studenti odustaju?

9. Šest ključnih čimbenika (socio-kulturološki, politički, institucijski, osobni i učenje – vidi stranicu 71) utječu na odluku studenata o odustajanju od studija. Obično kombinacija tih čimbenika dovodi do odustajanja.

12. Nisu sve zemlje suočene s jednakim izazovima ili jednakom kombinacijom izazova u odnosu na odustajanje. U Italiji je, na primjer, razina obrazovanja roditelja veoma bitan čimbenik.

Što se može učiniti kako bi se spriječilo odustajanje od studija?

13. Potrebno je još mnogo toga učiniti kako bi se pomoglo studentima, za koje je najizglednije da će odustati, da završe studij. Ono što se sad čini nedosljedno je i neujednačeno.
14. Potreban je holistički pristup kojim bi se uzelo u obzir svih šest čimbenika koji dovode do odustajanja od studija i njihova međusobna povezanost. Na državnoj razini politiku o visokom školstvu moraju podupirati politike kojima se rješavaju socioekonomske i kulturološke nejednakosti.
15. Uspješne politike obuhvaćaju sljedeće čimbenike:
 - priznavanje da su čimbenici koji dovode do odustajanja od studija prisutni ranije u životu i treba ih rano rješavati
 - financijsku pomoć studentima
 - ciljane dopunske programe
 - bolji nadzor i praćenje odustajanja od studija i završavanja studija, ne samo na državnoj razini nego i na razini pojedinačnih ustanova i disciplina
 - uključenje mjera kako bi se spriječilo odustajanje od studija u programima proširivanja sudjelovanja
 - priznavanje životnih vještina koje su studenti već usvojili
 - dodatnu akademsku potporu studentima u nepovoljnom položaju

16. Mnoge visokoškolske ustanove već čine mnogo kako bi zadržale studente. Dobre mjere obuhvaćaju:

- pripremu studenata za visokoškolsko obrazovanje pripremnim aktivnostima
- praćenje njihova napretka
- pripremu odgovarajućeg i prilagođenog nastavnog programa
- poduku prilagođenu raznolikim potrebama
- poticanje pozitivnog pristupa učenju
- bolja samoprocjena
- poboljšanje vještina učenja studenata
- financijsku potporu studentima
- savjetovanje i osobnu potporu
- pomoć studentima pri upoznavanju prijatelja i stvaranju mreža poznanika
- potporu određenim disciplinama koje bilježe veliku stopu odustajanja
- potporu posebnim skupinama studenata
- potvrdu da je visokoškolska diploma korisna

17. Povezivanje potencijalnih studenata i onih koji već studiraju s uspješnim bivšim studentima te profesionalna orijentacija kako bi se povećao broj studenata koji završavaju studij.

18. Regionalni i lokalni kontekst utječu na odustajanje od studija. Regionalna partnerstva visokoškolskih ustanova, poslodavci i drugi sudionici mogu pomoći pri izradi nastavnog programa kojime bi se potaknulo lokalno zapošljavanje i završavanje studija.

19. Razvoj mjera za nadzor i nagrađivanje studenata koji završe studij i njihova provedba u nacionalne

sustave financiranja visokog školstva imaju pozitivan učinak na smanjenje stope odustajanja, posebice kada su povezani s uspjehom u proširivanju sudjelovanja. Visokoškolske ustanove s velikim brojem studenata s invaliditetom mogle bi primati više sredstava u odnosu na broj takvih studenata koji se upišu i završe studij.

20. Odustajanje od studija može biti pozitivna odluka kada studenti shvate da to vrijeme, mjesto ili smjer nisu za njih. Međutim, iako se većina studenata koji odustanu od početnog studija želi prebaciti na drugi studij ili se vratiti na studij u kasnijoj životnoj fazi, trenutačno većina država članica ne nudi dovoljno rješenja takvim studentima. Također, poslodavci loše gledaju na studente koji nisu završili studij.

21. Mnogi studenti ipak uspiju. Potrebno je provesti više istraživanja o ustrajnosti i uspjehu.

Problem s podacima

22. Samo Danska, Austrija, Finska, Ujedinjena Kraljevina i Norveška objavljuju statistike o stopi završetka studija na *web*-stranicama.

23. U EU-u nema dosljednih podataka o upisima ili o završetku studija i odustajanju. Zemlje u različitoj mjeri prikupljaju te podatke. Potrebni su pouzdani i usporedivi kvalitativni i kvantitativni podaci o tome koliko studenata ne završi studij, tko su ti studenti i zašto su odustali od studija. Također su potrebne zajedničke definicije o odustajanju od studija i završetku studija kako bi usporedbe među zemljama bile učinkovitije.

Összefoglalás

1. Az Unióban túlságosan sok diák hagyja félbe a már megkezdett felsőfokú tanulmányait. Ez Unió-szerte problémát jelent, mivel a sikeres felsőoktatási rendszer létfeltétele a munkahelyteremtésnek, a társadalmi igazságosságnak és a gazdasági növekedésnek.
2. Az EU tagországai közül Dániában, az Egyesült Királyságban és Németországban fejezik be a legtöbben megkezdett tanulmányaikat. A felsőfokú tanulmányok sikeres befejezésének aránya azonban még a listavezető Dánia esetében is csak 80% körül van.
3. A legkevésbé sikeres országok e téren Olaszország, Magyarország és Lengyelország (itt a legalacsonyabb a tanulmányaikat diplomával záró diákok aránya). Olaszországban csak a diákok 46%-a jut el a diplomáig.

Kiket fenyeget a lemorzsolódás?

4. **A bizonytalanabb társadalmi-gazdasági háttérrel rendelkező diákokat fenyegeti legjobban a lemorzsolódás veszélye.** Azok a diákok, főként nők, akiknek más személyeket is el kell tartaniuk, szintén nehezen tudják kezelni feladataikat összeegyeztetni tanulmányaikkal.
5. **A férfiak** esetében nagyobb a lemorzsolódás esélye, mint a nőkben. Ők nagyobb arányban végeznek természettudományi vagy mérnöki tanulmányokat, és ezeken a szakokon a legnagyobb a lemorzsolódók aránya. Különösen sebezhető a munkáscsaládból és a szegény vidéki régiókból származó férfiak helyzete.
6. **Az etnikai kisebbségi származású diákok** bizonyos tényezők – például a rasszizmus vagy a szegénység – miatt gyakrabban hagyják el idő előtt az oktatási rendszert. A társadalmi-gazdasági környezet esetükben is kulcsfontosságú: a középosztálybeli származású menekültek sokkal nagyobb eséllyel szereznek diplomát, mint a munkáscsaládból származó társaik.
7. **A fogyatékossgal élő** diákok fizikai problémákkal és egyéb, az oktatási személyzet és diáktársaik hozzáállásával összefüggő akadályokkal szembesülnek. A társadalmi-gazdasági státusz esetükben is fontos szerepet játszik: a középosztálybeli családból származó fogyatékos diákok sokkal nagyobb eséllyel szereznek diplomát, mint a munkáscsaládból származó társaik.

8. **A részdíjs hallgatók** jobban ki vannak téve a lemorzsolódás kockázatának, mint nappali tagozatos társaik, mivel gyakran gondozási feladatokat és a tanulmányokhoz nem kapcsolódó hosszú munkaórák terheit is viselniük kell.

Melyek a lemorzsolódás fő okai?

9. Hat alapvető ok (társadalmi-kulturális, strukturális, politikai, intézményi, személyes és tanulmányi tényezők –lásd 71 oldal) állhat a diákok döntése mögött, hogy felhagynak tanulmányaikkal. A lemorzsolódás gyakran e tényezők együttes hatására következik be.
 10. **A tanulmányok elhagyásának legfontosabb kiváltó oka a bizonytalan társadalmi-gazdasági háttér.** Ez a tényező minden másnál, így a nemi és etnikai hovatartozásnál is jobban meghatározza a lemorzsolódás esélyeit.
 11. **A felsőoktatás lehetőségének kiszélesítése önmagában nem eredményez nagyobb lemorzsolódást.** Dánia, amely közismerten kiemelkedően sikeresen szélesítette ki a felsőoktatásban résztvevők körét, egyúttal az EU-n belül a legalacsonyabb lemorzsolódási arányt mutatja fel. A legfőbb problémát inkább az jelenti, ha a felsőoktatási programok tervezése és megvalósítása során nem veszik kellően figyelembe a sokszínűbb diákpuláció igényeit, és nem érvényesül diákközpontú koncepció.
 12. Az egyes országokban nem mindig ugyanazok a problémák vagy a problémák nem ugyanolyan együtthatása vezet a lemorzsolódáshoz. Olaszországban például kiemelkedően nagy jelentősége van a szülők iskolázottságának.
- ### Mit tehetünk a lemorzsolódás visszaszorításáért?
13. Az EU szintjén még igen sokat kell tenni azért, hogy a diákok – különösen a legkiszolgáltatottabbak – könnyebben eljussanak a diplomáig. A jelenlegi fellépések nem összehangoltak és nem egységesek.
 14. Átfogó megközelítést kell kidolgozni a tanulmányok befejezésének elősegítésére: ebben a lemorzsolódáshoz vezető mind a hat tényezőt és azok együtthatását is figyelembe kell venni. Nemzeti szinten a felsőoktatási politikát a társadalmi-gazdasági és kulturális egyenlőségek felszámolására irányuló tágabb politikáknak kell alátámasztaniuk.

15. A sikeresnek bizonyuló politikákba beépülnek a következő elemek:
- annak elismerése, hogy a felsőoktatásban a lemorzsolódáshoz vezető tényezők az élet jóval korábbi szakaszaiban gyökereznek, és korábban kell kezelni őket;
 - a diákok pénzügyi támogatása;
 - célzott bevonási programok;
 - a lemorzsolódás és a diplomaszerezés hatékonyabb nyomon követése és elemzése, nem csak nemzeti szinten, hanem az egyes intézményekre és szakirányokra lebontva is;
 - a lemorzsolódás megelőzésére irányuló intézkedések beépítése a továbbtanulási lehetőségek bővítését célzó programokba;
 - a diákok által korábban megszerzett élettapasztalatok elismerése és akkreditálása;
 - a hátrányos helyzetből induló diákok oktatáson kívüli támogatása.
16. Számos oktatási intézmény már most is keményen küzd azért, hogy megtartsa diákjait. Néhány példa a sikeres fellépésekre:
- a diákok felkészítése a felsőoktatás kihívásaira a tanulmányok megkezdése előtti tevékenységek keretében;
 - a diákok előrehaladásának nyomon követése;
 - pertinens és támogató jellegű kurzuskínálat;
 - a különböző igényekre szabott oktatási módszerek;
 - a tanulás pozitív aspektusainak erősítése;
 - a képzés hatékonyabb külső értékelése;
 - a diákok tanulási készségeinek javítása;
 - pénzügyi támogatás nyújtása a diákoknak;
 - személyes tanácsadás és támogatás;
 - a diákok kapcsolat- és hálózatépítési lehetőségeinek segítése;
 - a magas lemorzsolódási arányt mutató szakirányok konkrét támogatása;
 - egyes diákkategóriák támogatása;
 - a felsőoktatás hasznosságának népszerűsítése.
17. A leendő és jelenlegi diákok és a sikeres öregdiákok közötti kapcsolatteremtés, illetve a hatékony karriertanácsadás is segíthet növelni a diplomázók arányát.
18. A regionális és helyi kontextus is befolyásolja a lemorzsolódási arányt. A felsőoktatási intézmények, munkaadók és egyéb szereplők közötti regionális partnerségek elősegíthetik olyan kurzuskínálat kialakítását, amely növeli a helyi munkalehetőségek és a diplomaszerezés esélyeit.
19. A diplomaszerezés nyomon követését és jutalmazását szolgáló intézkedések beépítése a nemzeti felsőoktatás-finanszírozási rendszerekbe elősegítheti a lemorzsolódás csökkentését, főként ha a továbbtanulási lehetőségek sikeres bővítésével párosul. A hátrányos helyzetű diákokat nagyobb arányban befogadó felsőoktatási intézmények számára több forrást kell biztosítani, a felvett és diplomát szerzett hátrányos helyzetű diákok arányában.
20. A tanulmányok feladása pozitív döntés is lehet, ha a diák rájön, hogy a tanulmányok időtartama, helyszíne vagy szintje nem megfelelő számára. Azonban még ha az eredeti tanulmányaikat elhagyó diákok többsége szeretne is átiratkozni másik szakirányra vagy egy későbbi időpontban visszatérni félbehagyott tanulmányaihoz, jelenleg a legtöbb tagállam nem segíti kellőképpen őket rugalmas tanulmányi szerződésekkel. A munkáltatók szintén rossz szemmel néznek a tanulmányaikat félbehagyó diákokra.
21. Mindezen hátrányok ellenére, számos diáknak mégis sikerül befejeznie a tanulmányait. Alaposabb kutatásokat kell végezni a kitartás és a sikeresség témájában.

Az adathiány problémája

22. A diplomaszerezés arányairól csak Dánia, Ausztria, Finnország, az Egyesült Királyság és Norvégia vezet az interneten is hozzáférhető nyilvántartást.
23. Az EU szintjén nincs egységes adatbázis a felsőoktatásba való bejutás, a diplomaszerezés és a lemorzsolódás arányairól. Az egyes tagállamok eltérő mélységben gyűjtenek adatokat ezekről a kérdésekről. Megbízhatóbb és összevethető mennyiségi és minőségi adatokra volna szükség arról, hány diák nem fejezi be tanulmányait, kiket érint ez a probléma, és mi az oka lemorzsolódásuknak. Egyúttal a lemorzsolódás és a diplomaszerezés fogalmának egységes meghatározása hatékonyabb országok közötti összehasonlítást tenne lehetővé.

Relazione

1. Troppi studenti nell'UE abbandonano gli studi prima del termine del ciclo di istruzione superiore. Questo costituisce un problema in tutta l'UE, poiché il successo nell'istruzione superiore è fondamentale per l'occupazione, la giustizia sociale e la crescita economica.
2. I paesi dell'UE con i tassi più elevati di completamento degli studi sono la Danimarca, il Regno Unito e la Germania. Anche in Danimarca tuttavia, che è il paese con i risultati migliori, si registra un tasso pari solo all'80% circa.
3. I paesi con gli esiti meno soddisfacenti a tale riguardo sono l'Italia, l'Ungheria e la Polonia (presentano la minor percentuale di studenti che ottengono un diploma di laurea). In Italia solo il 46% completa gli studi.

Chi abbandona gli studi?

4. **Gli studenti che provengono da un contesto socioeconomico modesto hanno le maggiori probabilità di abbandonare gli studi.** Gli studenti con persone a carico, in particolare le donne, hanno inoltre difficoltà nel conciliare le responsabilità familiari con gli studi.
5. **Gli uomini** sono più esposti al rischio di abbandonare gli studi rispetto alle donne. Tendono maggiormente a studiare scienze e ingegneria, le discipline che registrano il più alto tasso di abbandono. Gli uomini di estrazione operaia e provenienti da zone periferiche svantaggiate sono particolarmente vulnerabili.
6. **Gli studenti appartenenti a minoranze etniche** sono più esposti al rischio di abbandonare gli studi, per effetto di fattori quali il razzismo o la povertà. Anche in questo caso il contesto socioeconomico è un fattore chiave: un rifugiato proveniente dalla classe media ha molte più probabilità di laurearsi di uno di estrazione operaia.
7. Gli studenti con **disabilità** devono far fronte a problemi fisici di accesso e ad altri ostacoli quali il comportamento dei docenti e degli altri studenti. Anche in questo caso la situazione socioeconomica ha un forte impatto: uno studente disabile proveniente dalla classe media ha molte più probabilità di laurearsi di uno di estrazione operaia.
8. Gli **studenti a tempo parziale** sono maggiormente esposti al rischio di abbandonare gli studi rispetto agli studenti a tempo pieno, spesso a causa di

responsabilità familiari o di orari prolungati di un lavoro non connesso ai loro studi.

Perché gli studenti abbandonano gli studi?

9. Sei fattori chiave (di ordine socioculturale, strutturale, politico, istituzionale, personale e connesso all'apprendimento - cfr. pagg.71) sono all'origine della decisione degli studenti di abbandonare gli studi. È spesso una combinazione di questi fattori a condurre all'abbandono.
10. **La provenienza da un contesto socioeconomico svantaggiato è il più importante fattore di abbandono degli studenti.** Predomina su tutti gli altri fattori, compresi genere ed origine etnica, che portano all'abbandono degli studi.
11. **L'ampliamento della partecipazione agli studi non provoca di per sé l'abbandono.** La Danimarca, che è riconosciuta per il notevole successo nell'ampliare la partecipazione agli studi, ha registrato il più basso livello di abbandono nell'UE. Il problema è dato piuttosto da una scarsa attenzione alle esigenze di una popolazione studentesca più diversificata e dall'assenza di un'impostazione incentrata sullo studente nell'elaborazione e nello svolgimento dei programmi di istruzione superiore.
12. Non tutti i paesi hanno gli stessi problemi, o la stessa combinazione di problemi relativi all'abbandono. In Italia, ad esempio, il livello di istruzione dei genitori è particolarmente determinante.

Che cosa si può fare per ridurre l'abbandono degli studi?

13. Resta ancora molto da fare per aiutare gli studenti dell'UE, in particolare i più vulnerabili, a portare a compimento gli studi. Le misure attuali mancano di coerenza e di omogeneità.
14. Per contrastare l'abbandono degli studi occorre un approccio olistico, che tenga conto di tutti e sei i fattori che portano all'abbandono e delle loro interrelazioni. A livello nazionale la politica in materia di istruzione superiore deve essere sostenuta da politiche intese a contrastare le più gravi disuguaglianze socioeconomiche e culturali.
15. Le politiche che si sono rivelate efficaci comprendono gli elementi seguenti:

- riconoscimento del fatto che i fattori che portano all'abbandono degli studi superiori hanno origine molto prima e devono essere affrontati tempestivamente;
- sostegno finanziario agli studenti;
- programmi di sensibilizzazione mirati;
- migliore monitoraggio e tracciabilità dei casi di abbandono e di completamento degli studi, non solo a livello nazionale ma anche a livello dei singoli istituti e delle discipline;
- misure inclusive per prevenire l'abbandono nei piani di ampliamento della partecipazione agli studi;
- riconoscimento e accreditamento delle competenze di vita che gli studenti hanno già acquisito;
- sostegno extra accademico per gli studenti provenienti da contesti svantaggiati.

16. Molti istituti di istruzione superiore si adoperano già per evitare che i loro studenti abbandonino gli studi. Gli esempi di buone prassi comprendono :

- preparazione degli studenti all'istruzione superiore attraverso attività di formazione introduttive;
- monitoraggio dei progressi compiuti;
- offerta di programmi di studi pertinenti e solidali;
- garanzia che l'insegnamento risponde a esigenze diverse ;
- promozione di approcci positivi all'apprendimento;
- miglioramento della valutazione formativa;
- miglioramento delle capacità di studio degli studenti;
- offerta di un sostegno finanziario agli studenti;
- offerta di consulenza e di sostegno personale;
- aiuto agli studenti nel formare amicizie e reti di conoscenze;
- sostegno alle discipline specifiche che registrano un elevato tasso di abbandono degli studi;
- sostegno a gruppi specifici di studenti;
- dimostrazione dell'utilità di un diploma di istruzione superiore.

17. Mettere in contatto gli studenti potenziali ed attuali con laureati di successo e fornire un buon orientamento professionale possono contribuire ad accrescere i tassi di completamento degli studi.

18. I contesti locali e regionali hanno un'incidenza sull'abbandono degli studi. I partenariati regionali tra istituti di istruzione superiore, datori di lavoro e altri soggetti possono contribuire all'elaborazione di programmi di studi che promuovono l'occupazione locale e il completamento degli studi.

19. Misure volte a monitorare e a premiare il completamento degli studi, ancorate nei sistemi nazionali di finanziamento dell'istruzione superiore, possono avere un impatto positivo sulla riduzione degli abbandoni, soprattutto se tali misure sono collegate a un efficace ampliamento della partecipazione. Gli istituti di istruzione superiore che registrano un gran numero di studenti svantaggiati potrebbero ricevere maggiori risorse, in base alla percentuale di studenti svantaggiati iscritti e che ottengono un diploma di laurea.

20. L'abbandono degli studi può essere una decisione positiva quando gli studenti si rendono conto che il momento, il luogo e il corso di studi non sono adeguati alle loro necessità. Tuttavia, sebbene la maggior parte di coloro che abbandonano un corso di studi iniziale desideri orientarsi verso altri studi o riprendere il corso di studi in un momento successivo, attualmente non riceve sufficiente aiuto dagli Stati membri tramite percorsi flessibili. I datori di lavoro considerano inoltre negativamente gli studenti che non hanno completato gli studi.

21. Numerosi studenti riescono a terminare con successo gli studi nonostante le difficoltà. Occorre approfondire le ricerche sulla capacità di recupero e sulle possibilità di successo.

Il problema dei dati

22. Soltanto Danimarca, Austria, Finlandia, Regno Unito e Norvegia rendono pubblicamente accessibili in linea le statistiche sul completamento degli studi.

23. Non esiste un insieme coerente di dati sull'accesso o sul tasso di completamento e di abbandono degli studi nell'UE. La misura in cui i singoli paesi raccolgono i dati relativi a tale questione è variabile. È necessario ottenere dati più attendibili e comparabili, quantitativi e qualitativi, sul numero di studenti che non completano gli studi, sulla loro origine e sui motivi dell'abbandono. Definizioni comuni in materia di abbandono e di completamento degli studi contribuirebbero inoltre a rendere più efficaci i confronti tra i paesi.

Santrauka

1. Studijas aukštosiose mokyklose ES meta pernelyg daug studentų. Aukštasis išsilavinimas labai svarbus darbo rinkos, socialinio teisingumo ir ekonomikos augimo veiksnys, todėl ši problema aktuali daugeliui ES šalių.
2. Geriausių rezultatų užtikrindamos, kad pradėtas studijas baigtų kuo daugiau studentų, yra pasiekusios Danija, Jungtinė Karalystė ir Vokietija. Tačiau net šioje srityje pirmaujančioje Danijoje studijas baigia tik 80 proc. studentų.
3. Patys prasčiausi rezultatai – Italijoje, Vengrijoje ir Lenkijoje, kuriose pradėtas studijas baigiančių studentų mažiausiai. Italijoje jų – vos 46 proc.

Kokie studentai meta mokslus?

4. **Dažniausiai mokslų nebaigia prastomis socialinėmis ir ekonominėmis sąlygomis gyvenantys studentai.** Studijas ir kitas pareigas derinti būna sunku ir ir išlaikytinių turintiems studentams, visų pirma moterims.
5. Didesnis pavojus nebaigti mokslų vis dėlto gresia **vyrams**. Jie dažniau renkasi tokias studijų sritis kaip gamtos mokslai ar inžinerija. Būtent šių disciplinų studijų nebaigia daugiausiai studentų. Patys pažeidžiamiausi – studentai vyrai, kilę iš darbo klasei priklausančių šeimų ar iš neturtingų atokių regionų.
6. **Etninėms mažumoms priklausantys studentai** dėl tokių veiksmų kaip rasizmas ar skurdas taip pat patenka į didesnės rizikos grupę. Socialinės ir ekonominės sąlygos ir čia labai svarbios: migrantai iš vidurinei klasei priklausančių šeimų paprastai yra mažiau linkę mesti studijas nei migrantai iš darbo klasės šeimų.
7. Neįgalūs **studentai** susiduria su fizinėmis prieigos problemomis ir kitomis kliūtimis, susijusiomis su darbuotojų ir kitų studentų požiūriu. Ir vėl svarbus vaidmuo tenka socialinėms ir ekonominėms sąlygoms: neįgalus studentas iš vidurinei klasei priklausančios šeimos paprastai yra mažiau linkęs mesti studijas nei neįgalus studentas iš darbo klasės šeimos.
8. **Tęstinių studijų studentai** mokslus meta dažniau nei nuolatinų studijų – dažnai taip yra dėl pareigos rūpintis kitais asmenimis ar ilgų darbo valandų dirbant su studijomis nesusijusį darbą.

Kodėl studentai meta mokslus?

9. Studentų sprendimą mesti mokslus lemia šeši – socialiniai ir kultūriniai, struktūriniai, politiniai, instituciniai, asmeniniai ir mokymosi – veiksniai. Nebaigti studijų dažniausiai skatina visų šešių veiksmų derinys.
10. **Vis dėlto svarbiausia priežastis, dėl kurios metamos studijos, yra prastos socialinės ir ekonominės sąlygos.** Jos daro poveikį visiems kitiems studijų nebaigimo veiksniams, įskaitant lytį ir tautybę.
11. **Tai, kad studijuoti aukštosiose mokyklose nori vis daugiau žmonių, nėra studijų nebaigimo priežastis.** Danija, kuri itin sėkmingai didina norinčiųjų studijuoti skaičių, gali džiaugtis mažiausia studijų nebaigiančių asmenų dalimi ES. Tikroji problema veikiausiai yra nepakankamas dėmesys įvairialypės studentų populiacijos reikmėms ir nepakankamas atsižvelgimas į studentus rengiant ir įgyvendinant aukštojo mokslo programas.
12. Kalbant apie studijų nebaigiančius asmenis, šalys susiduria su skirtingomis problemomis ar problemų deriniais. Italijoje, pavyzdžiui, itin didelės reikšmės turi tėvų išsilavinimas.

Ką galima padaryti, kad sumažėtų studijas metančių asmenų skaičius?

13. Kad ES studentai, ypač patys pažeidžiamiausi, tęstų ir baigtų pradėtas studijas, dar reikia daug ką nuveikti. Dabartiniai veiksmai yra nenuoseklūs ir fragmentiški.
14. Reikia laikytis visapusiško požiūrio, t. y. suvokti visus šešis veiksmus, dėl kurių metamos studijos, ir galimas jų sąsajas. Nacionaliniu lygmeniu aukštojo mokslo politiką reikėtų papildyti politinėmis kovos su socialine ir ekonomine bei kultūrine nelygybe priemonėmis.
15. Sėkmingoms politinėms priemonėms būdingi tokie bruožai kaip:
 - pripažinimas, kad aukštosios mokyklos nebaigimą lemiantys veiksniai poveikį daro nuo vaikystės, todėl juos šalinti reiktų kuo anksčiau;
 - finansinė parama studentams;
 - tikslinės sklaidos programos;
 - geresnė studijas metusių ir jas baigusių asmenų stebėseną ir jų vėlesnės karjeros fiksa-

- vimas ne tik nacionaliniu, bet ir pavienių institucijų ar disciplinų lygmeniu;
 - prevencijos priemonių integracija į dalyvavimo skatinimo planus;
 - studentų įgytų gyvenimo įgūdžių pripažinimas;
 - papildoma akademinė parama palankių sąlygų neturintiems studentams.
16. Daugelis aukštųjų mokyklų jau dabar deda nemažai pastangų, kad studentai nemestų studijų. Štai keli geri pavyzdžiai:
- padėti studentams pasirengti studijoms aukštojoje mokykloje įgyvendinant specialias pasirengimo programas;
 - stebėti studentų daromą pažangą;
 - rengti aktualias ir studentus palaikančias studijų programas;
 - užtikrinti, kad dėstytojai tenkintų įvairias skirtingų studentų reikmes;
 - skatinti teigiamą požiūrį į mokymąsi;
 - gerinti ugdomąjį vertinimą;
 - gerinti studentų gebėjimus mokytis;
 - siūlyti studentams finansinę paramą;
 - siūlyti konsultavimo ir individualaus palaikymo paslaugas;
 - padėti studentams susidraugauti ir susiburti į tinklus;
 - remti konkrečias studijų sritis, kurių nebaigia daugiausiai studentų;
 - remti konkrečias studentų grupes;
 - įrodyti, kad baigti aukštąjį mokslą yra naudinga.
17. Sumažinti mokslus metančių studentų skaičių galima padedant būsiamiems ir esamiems studentams užmegzti ryšius su sėkmingai dirbančiais absolventais, taip pat konsultuojant juos karjeros klausimais.
18. Poveikį studijų (ne)baigimui daro regioninės ir vietos sąlygos. Regioninė aukštųjų mokyklų, darbdavių ir kitų suinteresuotųjų šalių partnerystė gali padėti rengti studijų programas, kurios ne tik
- skatintų užimtumą konkrečioje vietovėje, bet ir mažintų studijų nebaigiančių asmenų skaičių.
19. Teigiamą poveikį gali daryti ir priemonių, kuriomis stebima padėtis ir atlyginama už gerus rezultatus, integracija į nacionalines aukštojo mokslo finansavimo sistemas, visų pirma jei tos priemonės susiejamos su sėkmingu norinčiųjų studijuoti skaičiaus didinimu. Aukštosios mokykloms, kuriose mokosi daugiau palankių sąlygų neturinčių studentams, galėtų būti skiriama daugiau išteklių, nustatant jų apimtį pagal studijuoti priimtų ir studijas baigusių tokių studentų skaičių.
20. Mesti studijas gali būti tinkamas sprendimas, jei studentas supranta, kad studijuoja jam netinkamu laiku, netinkamoje vietoje ar netinkamą dalyką. Nors dauguma nusprendusiųjų mesti pasirinktas studijas pageidauja pereiti į kitą studijų sritį ar grįžti studijuoti vėliau, šiuo metu dauguma valstybių narių tokią lanksčią tvarką taiko nepakankamai. Neigiamai mokslus metusius asmenis vertina ir darbdaviai.
21. Tačiau daug studentų sėkmingai baigia mokslus, nepaisant esamų sunkumų. Reikia išsamesnių atsparumo ir sėkmės sąsajų mokslinių tyrimų.

Duomenų problema

22. Duomenis internete apie mokslus metančių asmenų skaičių pateikia tik Danija, Austrija, Suomija, Jungtinė Karalystė ir Norvegija.
23. Nuoseklių duomenų apie studijuoti priimtų ir studijas baigiančių asmenų skaičių ES neturi. Pavienių šalių renkamų duomenų mastas labai skiriasi. Reikia patikimesnių ir palyginamų kiekybinių ir kokybinių duomenų apie studijas metančių asmenų skaičių, jų ypatumus ir priežastis. Palyginti duomenis tarptautiniu mastu būtų kur kas lengviau, jei būtų nustatytos bendros studijas metančio asmens ir studijas baigiančio asmens apibrėžtys.

Kopsavilkums

1. Pārāk daudz studentu Eiropas Savienībā pārtrauc studijas pirms augstākās izglītības diploma iegūšanas. Tā ir problēma visā ES, jo veiksmīgi iegūtai augstākajai izglītībai ir būtiska nozīme nodarbinātībā, sociālā taisnīguma nodrošināšanā un ekonomikas izaugsme.
2. Salīdzinot ES dalībvalstis, visvairāk studentu, kas ir pabeiguši iesāktās studijas augstskolā, ir Dānijā, Apvienotajā Karalistē un Vācijā. Taču pat Dānijā, kurā ir vislabākie rezultāti šajā jomā, augstskolu pabeidz tikai aptuveni 80 % studentu.
3. Vissliktākie rādītāji ir Itālijā, Ungārijā un Polijā (šajās valstīs ir proporcionāli vismazāk studentu, kuri ir ieguvuši augstskolas diplomu). Itālijā tikai 46 % studentu pabeidz iesāktās studijas.

Kādi studenti nepabeidz studijas?

4. **Vislielākā iespējamība nepabeigt augstskolu ir studentiem no zemākajiem sociālekonomiskajiem sabiedrības slāņiem.** Arī studenti, kuriem ir apgādājāmie, jo īpaši sievietes, cīnās, lai līdzsvarotu aprūpes pienākumus ar studijām.
5. Lielāks studiju pārtraukšanas risks ir **vīriešiem** nekā sievietēm. Pastāv lielāka iespēja, ka viņi mācās dabaszinātnes un inženierzinātnes — disciplīnas, kurās ir visaugstākie studiju pārtraukšanas rādītāji. Īpaši šādam riskam ir pakļauti vīrieši, kas nāk no strādnieku šķiras aprindām un no nabadzīgiem lauku reģioniem.
6. **Etnisko minoritāšu studenti** dēļ rasisma un nabadzības ir vairāk pakļauti studiju nepabeigšanas riskam. Arī šajā ziņā noteicošais faktors ir sociāli ekonomiskā izcelsme: pastāv daudz lielāka varbūtība, ka studijas pabeigs students, kurš nāk no vidusšķiras ģimenes kā students no strādnieku šķiras aprindām.
7. Studenti ar **invaliditāti** saskaras ar fiziska rakstura piekļuves problēmām un citiem šķēršļiem darbinieku un citu studentu attieksmes ziņā. Arī šajā gadījumā sociāli ekonomiskajam stāvoklim ir liela ietekme: ir daudz lielāka varbūtība, ka studijas pabeigs students ar invaliditāti no vidusšķiras ģimenes kā students ar invaliditāti no strādnieku šķiras aprindām.
8. Nepilna laika studenti ir pakļauti lielākam studiju pārtraukšanas riskam kā pilna laika studenti, bieži vien tieši dēļ aprūpes pienākumiem vai garām

stundām, strādājot darbu, kas nav saistīts ar studijām.

Kādēļ studenti pārtrauc mācības?

9. Studenta lēmums pārtraukt mācības balstās uz sešiem galvenajiem faktoriem (kultūrsociālais, strukturālais, politikas, institucionālais, personīgais un ar mācībām saistītais faktors – skatīt lpp.71) . Bieži vien priekšlaicīgu studiju pārtraukšanu izraisa šo faktoru kombinācija.
 10. **Slikti sociāli ekonomiskais stāvoklis ir visnozīmīgākais faktors studiju priekšlaicīgai pārtraukšanai.** Šis faktors dominē pār visiem citiem priekšlaicīgu studiju pārtraukšanu izraisošiem faktoriem, tostarp dzimumu un etnisko piederību.
 11. **Studentu skaita pieaugums pats par sevi nav iemesls studiju pārtraukšanai.** Dānijā, kuras darbība ir atzīta par ļoti veiksmīgu studentu līdzdalības palielināšanā, ir viszemākais mācību pārtraukšanas gadījumu skaits ES. Problēmas drīzāk ir uzmanības trūkums daudzveidīgākas studentu kopienas vajadzībām un uz studentiem orientētas pieejas trūkums, izstrādājot un piedāvājot augstākās izglītības programmas.
 12. Ne visas valstis studiju priekšlaicīgas pārtraukšanas ziņā saskaras ar vienādiem izaicinājumiem vai to kopumu. Piemēram, Itālijā īpaši nozīmīga loma ir vecāku izglītības līmenim.
- Ko varētu darīt, lai samazinātu priekšlaicīgu studiju pārtraukšanu?**
13. Vēl ir daudz darāmā, lai palīdzētu studentiem ES, īpaši sociāli visneaizsargātāko grupu studentiem, iegūt diplomus. Līdz šim paveiktais ir pretrunīgs un nesaskaņots.
 14. Attiecībā uz studiju pabeigšanu ir nepieciešama visaptveroša pieeja, kurā atzīti visi seši faktori, kas izraisa priekšlaicīgu studiju pārtraukšanu, un to savstarpējā saistība. Valsts līmenī jāatbalsta augstākās izglītības politika, izmantojot rīcībpolitikas, lai novērstu nevienlīdzības paplašināšanos sociālekonomiskajā un kultūras ziņā.
 15. Veiksmīgi īstenotās rīcībpolitikās ietverti šādi elementi:
 - izpratne par to, ka faktoru, kas izraisa augstākās izglītības studiju pārtraukšanu, pirmsākumi meklējami jau daudz agrākā

dzīves posmā, un līdz ar to šī problēma ir jārisina agrāk;

- finansiāls atbalsts studentiem;
- mērķtiecīgas pieejas programmas;
- uzlabota studiju pārtraukšanas un pabeigšanas pārraudzība un izsekošana ne tikai valsts līmenī, bet arī atsevišķu iestāžu un disciplīnu līmenī;
- tostarp pasākumi, lai novērstu priekšlaicīgu studiju pārtraukšanu, plānojot lielāku studentu līdzdalību studijās;
- tādu dzīves prasmju atzīšana un akreditācija, ko studenti jau ir ieguvuši;
- papildu mācību atbalsts studentiem, kuri nāk no nelabvēlīgas vides;

16. Daudzas augstākās izglītības iestādēs jau aktīvi rīkojas, lai saglabātu savus studentus. Daži labas rīcības piemēri:

- sagatavot studentus augstākajai izglītībai, izmantojot dažādus kursus;
- sekot līdzi viņu rezultātiem;
- piedāvāt saistošas un atbalstošas mācību programmas;
- nodrošināt, lai pedagoģiskajā darbā tiek ņemtas vērā studentu atšķirīgās vajadzības;
- sekmēt pozitīvu pieeju mācībām;
- uzlabot formatīvu novērtēšanu;
- uzlabot studentu mācīšanās prasmes;
- sniegt finansiālu atbalstu studentiem;
- piedāvāt konsultācijas un personisku atbalstu;
- palīdzēt studentiem iegūt draugus un iesaistīties sociālajos tīklos;
- sniegt atbalstu īpašās disciplīnās, kurās konstatēts augsti priekšlaicīgas studiju pārtraukšanas rādītāji;
- atbalstīt konkrētas studentu grupas;
- pierādīt, ka augstākā izglītība ir noderīga.

17. Augstskolu pabeigšanas rādītājus ir iespējams uzlabot, radot iespējas nākamajiem un pašreizējiem studentiem sazināties ar veiksmīgiem absolventiem, kā arī nodrošināt piemērotas karjeras konsultācijas.

18. Arī reģionālajai vietējai situācijai ir ietekme uz studiju priekšlaicīgu pārtraukšanu. Reģionu partnerības starp augstākās izglītības iestādēm, darba devējiem un citiem dalībniekiem varētu

palīdzēt, izstrādājot tādas mācību programmas, kas sekmētu vietējo nodarbinātību un studiju pabeigšanu.

19. Ja valsts mēroga pasākumi, kas paredzēti, lai pārraudzītu un atalgotu augstākās izglītības veiksmīgu ieguvu, tiktu ieviesti valsts sistēmās, kas finansē augstāko izglītību, tam būtu pozitīva ietekme priekšlaicīgas studiju pārtraukšanas samazināšanā, jo īpaši tad, ja tā būtu saistīta ar veiksmīgi īstenotu studentu līdzdalības paplašināšanu. Augstākās izglītības iestādes, kurās reģistrējušies daudz studentu, kas nāk no nelabvēlīgas vides, varētu saņemt vairāk līdzekļu atkarībā no tā, kāda proporcionālā daļa nelabvēlīgu grupu studentu reģistrējušies studijām un kāda proporcionālā šo studentu daļa augstskolu absolvē.

20. Studiju pārtraukšana var būt arī pozitīvs lēmums, kad students saprot, ka attiecīgais laiks, vieta vai diploms nav viņam piemērotākā izvēle. Tomēr, lai gan lielākā daļa studentu, kuri pārtrauc studijas sākotnēji izvēlētajā mācību kursā, vēlas studēt citā programmā vai atgriezties studēt vēlāk, pašlaik lielākā daļa dalībvalstu tiem nepalīdz, nosakot pietiekami elastīgus risinājumus. Turklāt darba devēji negatīvi vērtē studentus, kuri nav ieguvuši studiju grādu.

21. Tomēr daudzi studenti gūst panākumus, neskatoties uz izredzēm. Nepieciešams vairāk pētījumu par izturētspēju un panākumu cēloņiem.

Ar datiem saistīta problēma

22. Tikai Dānija, Austrija, Somija, Apvienotā Karaliste un Norvēģija ir internetā darījuši atklāti pieejamu savu statistiku par studiju beigšanas rādītājiem.

23. ES nav saskaņota datu kopuma par piekļuvi studijām vai studiju pabeigšanu un studiju priekšlaicīgu pārtraukšanu. Apjoms, kādā atsevišķas valstis vāc informāciju par šo jautājumu, ir dažāds. Ir vajadzīgi uzticamāki un salīdzināmāki dati gan kvantitatīvi, gan kvalitatīvi pat to, cik studentu nepabeidz studijas, kas viņi ir un kāda iemesla dēļ viņi ir spiesti pārtraukt mācības. Turklāt, ja tiktu izveidotas kopīgas definīcijas par priekšlaicīgu studiju pārtraukšanu un studiju pabeigšanu, tas uzlabotu valstu datu salīdzināšanas efektivitāti.

Sommarju eżekuttiv

1. Wisq studenti fl-UE jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom qabel ma jispicċaw kors fl-edukazzjoni għolja. Din il-problema hija mifruxa fl-UE kollha, peress li s-suċċess fl-edukazzjoni għolja huwa ferm importanti għall-impjegji, għall-gustizzja soċjali u għat-**tkabbir** fl-ekonomija.
2. Il-pajjiżi tal-UE l-aktar ta' suċċess f'termini ta' tlestija ta' korsijiet fl-edukazzjoni għolja huma d-Danimarka, ir-Renju Unit u l-Ġermanja. Madankollu, anke d-Danimarka, li hija l-aktar pajjiż ta' suċċess, kellha biss 80 % tal-istudenti li lestew kors fl-edukazzjoni għolja.
3. Il-pajjiżi li kienu l-inqas ta' suċċess huma l-Italja, l-Ungerija u l-Polonja (għandhom l-inqas proporzjon ta' studenti li lestew il-lawrji tagħhom). Fl-Italja, 46 % biss tal-istudenti jlestu l-lawrji tagħhom.

Liema studenti jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom?

4. **L-istudenti li ġejjin minn sfond soċjoekonomiku baxx huma l-aktar probabbli li jabbandunaw l-iskola.** Barra minn hekk, l-istudenti b'persuni dipendenti fuqhom, speċjalment in-nisa, jsibuha diffiċli li jibbilanċjaw ir-responsabbiltajiet ta' kura mal-istudji tagħhom.
5. **L-irġiel** qegħdin f'riskju akbar min-nisa li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom. Dan x'aktarx iseħħ minhabba l-fatt li jagħzlu li jistudjaw sugġetti li jinvolvu x-xjenza u l-inġenerija, dixiplini li għandhom l-ogħla rati ta' studenti li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom. L-irġiel li ġejjin minn sfond ta' klassi tal-ħaddiema u minn żoni provinċjali f'qar huma partikolarment vulnerabbli.
6. **L-istudenti ta' minoranza etnika** qegħdin f'riskju akbar li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom bħala riżultat ta' fatturi bħar-razziżmu jew il-faqar. Hawn hekk ukoll, l-isfond soċjoekonomiku huwa fattur importanti ħafna: refulġat minn sfond ta' klassi medja huwa aktar probabbli li jiggradwa minn wieheh li ġej minn sfond ta' klassi tal-ħaddiema.
7. L-istudenti **b'dizabbiltajiet** jaffaċċjaw problemi fiżiċi ta' aċċess u ostakoli oħra f'termini tal-attitudnijiet tal-persunal u ta' studenti oħra. Għal darba oħra, l-istatus soċjoekonomiku għandu impatt qawwi: student b'dizabbiltà minn sfond ta' klassi medja huwa aktar probabbli li jiggradwa minn wieheh li ġej minn sfond ta' klassi tal-ħaddiema.

8. **L-istudenti part-time** qegħdin f'riskju akbar li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom minn dawk full-time. Ħafna drabi dan jiġri minhabba r-responsabbiltajiet ta' kura jew minhabba s-siġhat twal ta' hidma f'xogħol li mhuwiex relatat mal-istudji tagħhom.

Għaliex l-istudenti jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom?

9. Hemm sitt fatturi ewlenin (il-fatturi soċjokulturali, strutturali, politiċi, istituzzjonali, personali u ta' tagħlim –ara l-paġna 71) li jikkontribwixxu għad-deċiżjoni tal-istudenti li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom. Ħafna drabi, l-istudenti jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom minhabba taħlita ta' dawn il-fatturi.
10. **Il-fatt li student ikun ġej minn sfond soċjoekonomiku fqir huwa l-aktar fattur sinifikanti li jwassal biex dan jabbanduna l-istudji tiegħu.** Dan il-fattur jiddomina l-fatturi l-oħra, inklużi ġens u l-etnicità, bħala raġunijiet għaliex wieheh jabbanduna l-istudji tiegħu.
11. **Iż-żieda fil-parteciġazzjoni minnha nnifsiha ma tikkawżax li student jabbanduna l-istudji tiegħu.** Id-Danimarka, li hija magħrufa għas-suċċess kbir tagħha fiż-żieda tal-parteciġazzjoni, għandha l-inqas rata fl-UE ta' studenti li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom. Il-problema hija n-nuqqas ta' attenzjoni għall-bżonnijiet ta' popolazzjoni ta' studenti aktar diversifikata u n-nuqqas ta' approċċ iffukat fuq l-istudent fit-tfassil u t-twassil ta' programmi ta' edukazzjoni għolja.
12. Mhux il-pajjiżi kollha jaffaċċjaw l-istess sfidi, jew l-istess taħlita ta' sfidi fir-rigward tal-istudenti li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom. Fl-Italja, pereżempju, l-isfond edukattiv tal-ġenituri huwa ferm importanti.

X'jista' jsir biex jonqsu l-istudenti li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom?

13. Għad fadal ħafna x'jista' jsir biex l-istudenti fl-UE jiġu megħjuna ħalli jiksbu l-lawrji tagħhom, speċjalment dawk l-istudenti li huma l-aktar vulnerabbli. Dak li qed isir mhuwiex konsistenti u uniformi.
14. Hemm bżonn ta' approċċ olistiku għaž-żamma tal-istudenti: approċċ li jagħraf is-sitt fatturi kollha li jwasslu biex l-istudenti jabbandunaw l-istudji u l-interrelazzjonijiet tagħhom. Fuq bażi nazzjonali, il-

politika ta' edukazzjoni għolja trid tiġi appoġġata minn politiki li jindirizzaw l-inugwaljanzi soċjo-ekonomiċi u kulturali usa'.

15. Il-politiki li jidhru li huma ta' suċċess jinkludu l-fatturi li ġejjin:

- ir-rikonoxximent li l-fatturi li jwasslu biex l-istudenti jabbandunaw l-edukazzjoni għolja jibdeu ħafna iktar qabel fil-ħajja u għalhekk hemm bżonn li jiġu indirizzati qabel;
- l-appoġġ finanzjarju għall-istudenti;
- il-programmi ta' involviment immirat;
- it-titjib fil-monitoraġġ u t-traċċar ta' studenti li jabbandunaw u jlestu l-istudji tagħhom, mhux biss fuq livell nazzjonali iżda wkoll fuq livell tal-istituzzjonijiet u tas-suġġetti individwali;
- l-inkluzjoni ta' miżuri biex jipprevjenu li studenti jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom billi jkun hemm zieda fil-pjanijiet ta' parteċipazzjoni;
- ir-rikonoxximent u l-akkreditar tal-ħiliet għall-ħajja li l-istudenti diġà kisbu;
- l-appoġġ extra akkademiku għall-istudenti li ġejjin minn sfondi żvantaġġati.

16. Ħafna istituzzjonijiet ta' edukazzjoni għolja diġà jaħdmu ħafna biex iżommu l-istudenti tagħhom. Eżempji tajba ta' azzjoni jinkludu:

- it-tnejn tal-istudenti għall-edukazzjoni għolja permezz ta' attivitajiet ta' qabel l-induzzjoni
- it-traċċar tal-progress tagħhom
- l-offerta ta' kurrikulum rilevanti u ta' appoġġ
- l-iżgurar li t-tagħlim iqanqal rispons għall-bżonnijiet differenti
- it-trawwim ta' approċċi differenti għat-tagħlim
- it-titjib tal-valutazzjoni formattiva
- it-titjib tal-ħiliet ta' studju tal-istudenti
- l-għoti ta' appoġġ finanzjarju lill-istudenti
- l-għoti ta' servizzi ta' konsulenza u ta' appoġġ personali
- l-għajnuna lill-istudenti biex jagħmlu ħbieb u jiffurmaw in-netwerks tagħhom
- l-appoġġ għal suġġetti speċifiċi li jkollhom rati għolja ta' studenti li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom
- l-appoġġ għal gruppi speċifiċi ta' studenti
- il-prova li kwalifika fl-edukazzjoni għolja hija bżonnjuża.

17. Il-fatt li studenti potenzjali u attwali jkunu f'kuntatt ma' studenti ta' suċċess kif ukoll l-għoti ta' parir

tajjeb dwar il-karrieri, jistgħu jgħinu biex jiziedu r-rati ta' tlestija tal-korsijiet fl-edukazzjoni għolja.

18. Il-kuntesti reġjonali u lokali għandhom impatt fuq kemm studenti jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom. Is-sħubiji reġjonali ta' istituzzjonijiet ta' edukazzjoni għolja, l-impjegaturi u atturi oħra jistgħu jgħinu fl-iżvilupp ta' programmi li jrawwmu l-impjegati u tlestija tal-korsijiet lokali.

19. Il-bini ta' miżuri li jimmonitorjaw u jippremjaw it-tlestija ta' korsijiet f'sistemi nazzjonali li jiffinanzjaw l-edukazzjoni għolja jista' jkollu impatt pożittiv fuq it-tnaqqis tal-istudenti li jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom, b'mod partikolari meta jkunu marbuta mas-suċċess taż-żieda fil-parteci-pazzjoni. L-istituzzjonijiet ta' edukazzjoni għolja b'reġistrazzjoni kbira ta' studenti żvantaġġati jistgħu jirċievu aktar riżorsi, indiċjati fuq is-sehem ta' studenti żvantaġġati li dawn jirreġistraw u jwasslu sal-grad-wazzjoni.

20. Il-fatt li l-istudenti jabbandunaw l-istudji tagħhom jista' jkun deċiżjoni pożittiva meta l-istudenti jindunaw li l-ħin, il-post jew il-grad li qed jistudjaw għalih ma jgħoddx għalihom. Madankollu, anke jekk il-biċċa l-kbira tal-istudenti li jirtiraw minn kors inizjali ta' studju jridu li jiġu trasferiti għal kors ieħor jew li jerggħu jibdeu jistudjaw f'data aktar 'il quddiem, attwalment il-parti l-kbira tal-Istati Membri ma jgħinuhomx biżżejjed permezz ta' arrangamenti flessibbli. Barra minn hekk, l-impjegaturi jħarsu b'mod negattiv lejn dawk l-istudenti li ma jlestu il-grad tagħhom.

21. Minkejja kollox, ħafna studenti jirnexxihom jlestu l-istudji tagħhom b'suċċess. Hemm bżonn ta' aktar riċerka dwar ir-reżiljenza u s-suċċess.

Il-problema tad-dejta

22. Id-Danimarka, l-Awstrija, il-Finlandja, ir-Renju Unit u n-Norveġja biss jipprovdu statistika dwar it-tlestija tal-korsijiet onlajn u disponibbli għal kulhadd.

23. Ma hemm l-ebda sett ta' dejta koerenti dwar l-aċċess jew dwar it-tlestija tal-korsijiet u l-abbandun tal-istudju fl-UE. Il-punt sa fejn il-pajjiżi individwali għandhom jiġbru dejta dwar din il-kwistjoni, huwa varjabbli. Hemm bżonn ta' dejta aktar affidabbli u komparattiva, kemm kwantitattiva kif ukoll kwalitattiva, dwar kemm hemm studenti li ma jkomplu l-istudji tagħhom, min huma u għala jiddeċiedu li jagħmlu din l-għażla. Barra minn hekk, definizzjonijiet kondiviżi dwar l-abbandun u t-tlestija tal-korsijiet jgħinu biex il-paraguni bejn il-pajjiżi jkunu aktar effettivi.

Samenvatting

1. Te veel studenten in de EU voltooien hun hogeronderwijsopleiding niet. Dit vormt voor de hele EU een probleem, aangezien succes in het hoger onderwijs van cruciaal belang is voor werkgelegenheid, sociale rechtvaardigheid en economische groei.
2. De EU-landen waar het hoogste percentage studenten de opleiding met succes afrondt, zijn Denemarken, het Verenigd Koninkrijk en Duitsland. Maar zelfs in het meest succesvolle land, Denemarken, ligt het voltooiingspercentage rond de 80 %.
3. In Italië, Hongarije en Polen is het percentage studenten dat het hoger onderwijs afmaakt het laagst. In Italië bedraagt het percentage slechts 46 %.

Profiel van de uitvallers

4. **Studenten uit sociaaleconomisch kwetsbare milieus vallen het vaakst uit.** Daarnaast hebben studenten die voor afhankelijke gezinsleden zorgen - vooral vrouwen - moeite om zorgtaken met hun opleiding te combineren.
5. **Mannen** vallen vaker uit dan vrouwen. Zij kiezen vaker voor wetenschappelijke of ingenieursopleidingen, die de hoogste uitvalspercentages kennen. Vooral mannen uit arbeidersgezinnen en armere landelijke gebieden krijgen hiermee te maken.
6. **Studenten uit etnische minderheden** lopen meer risico om uit te vallen door factoren zoals racisme en armoede. Ook hier is de sociaaleconomische achtergrond een bepalende factor: vluchtelingen uit de middenklasse maken hun opleiding vaker af dan vluchtelingen uit een arbeidersgezin.
7. **Studenten met een handicap** krijgen zowel met praktische moeilijkheden (toegankelijkheid) te maken als met andere barrières zoals de houding van het onderwijspersoneel en van andere studenten. Ook hier laat de sociaaleconomische status zich gelden: gehandicapte studenten uit middenklassegezinnen maken hun opleiding vaker af dan gehandicapte studenten uit een arbeidersgezin.
8. Wie **deeltijd** studeert valt vaker uit dan wie voltijd studeert, voornamelijk wegens zorgtaken of lange werkdagen op een werkplek die geen verband houdt met de opleiding.

Redenen voor het niet voltooien van een opleiding

9. Zes belangrijke factoren spelen een rol bij de beslissing om een opleiding niet te voltooien: sociaal-culturele, structurele, beleidsgerelateerde, institutionele, persoonlijke en leerfactoren - zie blz. 71. Vaak leidt een combinatie van deze factoren tot het afbreken van de opleiding.
 10. **Een zwakke sociaaleconomische achtergrond is de meest significante factor voor uitval.** Deze factor weegt zwaarder dan alle andere factoren, met inbegrip van geslacht en etnische afkomst.
 11. **De uitval is niet het gevolg van toenemende onderwijsparticipatie.** Denemarken, dat als zeer succesvol wordt beschouwd wat betreft het vergroten van onderwijsparticipatie, heeft het laagste percentage uitvallers in de EU. Het probleem ligt eerder aan een gebrek aan aandacht voor de behoeften van een meer diverse studentenpopulatie en een te weinig studentgerichte aanpak bij het ontwerpen en ontwikkelen van hogeronderwijsprogramma's.
 12. Niet alle landen staan voor dezelfde uitdagingen of combinatie van uitdagingen wat betreft uitvallers. Zo is in Italië de onderwijsachtergrond van de ouders opvallend belangrijk.
- ### *Hoe kan het aantal uitvallers worden beperkt?*
13. Er moet nog veel worden gedaan om studenten in de EU, met name de meest kwetsbare onder hen, te helpen hun opleiding af te maken. De huidige initiatieven zijn gefragmenteerd en onvoldoende op elkaar afgestemd.
 14. Om ervoor te zorgen dat studenten hun opleiding afmaken, is een holistische aanpak nodig die rekening houdt met alle zes factoren die tot uitval leiden alsook met hun onderlinge verbanden. Op nationaal niveau moet het hogeronderwijsbeleid worden ondersteund door beleid dat bredere sociaaleconomische en culturele ongelijkheden aanpakt.
 15. Beleidslijnen die doeltreffend zijn gebleken, omvatten onder meer de volgende elementen:
 - de erkenning dat de factoren die tot uitval uit het hoger onderwijs leiden, zich al veel eerder laten gelden en vroegtijdig moeten worden aangepakt;

- financiële ondersteuning voor studenten;
 - gerichte hulpverleningsprogramma's;
 - verbeterde monitoring en surveillance van uitval alsook van de succesvolle voltooiing van opleidingen, zowel op nationaal niveau als per instelling en per vakgebied;
 - opname van maatregelen ter voorkoming van uitval in plannen voor bredere onderwijsparticipatie;
 - erkenning van de sociale vaardigheden die studenten hebben verworven;
 - meer academische steun voor studenten uit kansarme milieus.
16. Veel hogeronderwijsinstellingen doen al grote inspanningen om uitval van studenten te voorkomen. Een aantal goede voorbeelden daarvan zijn:
- studenten op het hoger onderwijs voorbereiden door middel van voorbereidende activiteiten;
 - de voortgang van studenten volgen;
 - een toepasselijk en ondersteunend programma aanbieden;
 - ervoor zorgen dat het onderwijs op uiteenlopende behoeften inspeelt;
 - een positieve benadering van leren bevorderen;
 - formele beoordelingsmethodes verbeteren;
 - de studievaardigheden van studenten verbeteren;
 - studenten financiële steun bieden;
 - begeleiding en persoonlijke ondersteuning bieden;
 - studenten helpen om vrienden te maken en netwerken op te bouwen;
 - specifieke vakgebieden met hoge uitvalpercentages ondersteunen;
 - specifieke groepen studenten ondersteunen;
 - duidelijk maken dat een hogeronderwijsdiploma nuttig is.
17. Door potentiële en ingeschreven studenten in contact te brengen met succesvolle afgestudeerden en goed loopbaanadvies te verstrekken, kunnen hogere afstudeerpercentages worden bereikt.
18. De regionale en lokale context beïnvloedt het uitvalpercentage. Regionale partnerschappen
- tussen hogeronderwijsinstellingen, werkgevers en andere actoren kunnen bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van opleidingen die de lokale werkgelegenheid en hogere afstudeerpercentages bevorderen.
19. Het opnemen van monitoringmaatregelen en beloningsmechanismen in de nationale financieringsstelsels van het hoger onderwijs kan de uitval beperken, vooral wanneer ook de onderwijsparticipatie breder wordt. Hogeronderwijsinstellingen met een grote instroom van kansarme studenten zouden meer middelen kunnen ontvangen naargelang het percentage kansarme studenten dat zich inschrijft en de opleiding voltooit.
20. Voor studenten die inzien dat zij het verkeerde tijdstip, de verkeerde plek of de verkeerde opleiding hebben gekozen, kan het afbreken van een opleiding een positieve beslissing zijn. Hoewel de meeste studenten die met hun eerste opleiding ophouden, op een andere studierichting willen overstappen of op een later tijdstip naar het hoger onderwijs willen terugkeren, zijn er echter in de meeste lidstaten momenteel niet genoeg flexibele regelingen om hen hierbij te helpen. Daarnaast hebben werkgevers een negatief beeld van studenten die hun opleiding niet hebben afgemaakt.
21. Veel studenten zijn, ondanks de vele obstakels, wel succesvol. Er is meer onderzoek nodig naar veerkracht en succes.

Problemen inzake gegevens

22. Alleen Denemarken, Oostenrijk, Finland, het Verenigd Koninkrijk en Noorwegen stellen hun statistieken over succesvol afgeronde opleidingen online beschikbaar.
23. Er bestaan geen samenhangende gegevens over de toegang tot hogeronderwijsopleidingen of voltooiings- en uitvalpercentages in de EU. De mate waarin afzonderlijke landen hierover gegevens verzamelen loopt uiteen. Er zijn meer betrouwbare en vergelijkbare gegevens nodig (zowel kwantitatief als kwalitatief) over het aantal studenten dat de opleiding niet afmaakt, wie zij zijn, en waarom zij met hun opleiding stoppen. Daarnaast zouden gemeenschappelijke definities van "uitval" en "voltooiing" vergelijkingen tussen de landen effectiever maken.

Streszczenie

1. Zbyt wielu studentów w UE przerywa studia wyższe przed ich zakończeniem. Jest to problem dla całej UE, ponieważ wyższe wykształcenie ma kluczowe znaczenie dla zatrudnienia, wyrównywania szans i wzrostu gospodarczego.
2. Najwyższy odsetek osób kończących studia wyższe odnotowuje się w Danii, Wielkiej Brytanii i Niemczech. Nawet jednak w Danii, w której odsetek ten jest najwyższy, studia kończy jedynie 80% studentów.
3. Najgorsze wyniki odnotowuje się we Włoszech, na Węgrzech i w Polsce (w państwach tych studia kończy najniższy odsetek studentów). We Włoszech jest to tylko 46% studiujących.

Kto najczęściej przerywa naukę?

4. **Zjawisko to dotyczy najczęściej studentów ze środowisk o niskim statusie społeczno-ekonomicznym.** Ponadto studentom – zwłaszcza kobietom – mającym osoby na utrzymaniu trudno jest pogodzić obowiązki opiekuńcze ze studiami.
5. **Mężczyźni** częściej przedwcześnie przerywają studia niż kobiety. Częściej podejmują oni studia na kierunkach ścisłych oraz inżynierskich, na których odsetek osób przerywających naukę jest najwyższy. Szczególnie trudno jest ukończyć studia mężczyznom z rodzin robotniczych i pochodzącym z uboższych części kraju.
6. **Studenci, którzy są członkami mniejszości narodowych** częściej przerywają naukę z powodów takich jak rasizm czy ubóstwo. Także w tym przypadku status społeczno-ekonomiczny jest jednym z kluczowych czynników: uchodźca pochodzący z klasy średniej ma znacznie większe szanse na ukończenie studiów niż uchodźca z rodziny robotniczej.
7. Studenci **niepełnosprawni** mają trudności z dostępem do budynków uczelni i napotykać na innego rodzaju przeszkody związane z nastawieniem pracowników uczelni i innych studentów. Tu również status społeczno-ekonomiczny ma silny wpływ: niepełnosprawny student pochodzący z klasy średniej ma znacznie większe szanse na ukończenie studiów niż osoba niepełnosprawna z rodziny robotniczej.
8. **Studenci zaoczeni** mają mniejsze szanse na ukończenie studiów niż studenci dzienni, co często wynika z obowiązków opiekuńczych lub długich godzin pracy niezwiązanej ze studiami.

Dlaczego studenci przerywają studia?

9. Za decyzje o przerywaniu studiów odpowiada sześć głównych czynników: społeczno-kulturowy, strukturalny, polityczny, instytucjonalny, osobisty i związany ze sposobem uczenia się – zob. s. 71. Często do decyzji tej przyczynia się połączenie kilku z ww. czynników.
10. **Najważniejszym czynnikiem przerywania studiów jest pochodzenie ze środowiska o niskim statusie społeczno-ekonomicznym.** Ma on większe znaczenie niż wszystkie pozostałe czynniki, w tym płeć i pochodzenie narodowościowe.
11. **Ogólne zwiększenie liczby studentów nie prowadzi do częstszego przerywania przez nich studiów.** W Danii, w której, jak się uważa, udało się znacznie zwiększyć liczbę studentów, występuje najniższy w UE odsetek osób przerywających studia. Problem polega raczej na tym, że nie bierze się pod uwagę potrzeb bardziej zróżnicowanej grupy studentów oraz że opracowywanie i wprowadzanie programów studiów nieodpowiadających oczekiwaniom studentów.
12. Jeśli chodzi o zjawisko przerywania studiów, nie wszystkie państwa stoją przed tymi samymi wyzwaniami lub takim samym połączeniem kilku wyzwań. Na przykład we Włoszech szczególnie istotne jest wykształcenie rodziców.

Co można zrobić, aby ograniczyć zjawisko przedwczesnego przerywania studiów?

13. Aby pomóc europejskim studentom, szczególnie tym w najtrudniejszej sytuacji, w ukończeniu studiów, pozostaje wiele do zrobienia. Obecne działania są niespójne i rozproszone.
14. Aby zatrzymać studentów na studiach, potrzebne jest podejście całościowe, tzn. takie, które uwzględni wszystkie sześć czynników przerywania studiów oraz ich wzajemne oddziaływanie. Na szczeblu krajowym politykę w dziedzinie szkolnictwa wyższego należy wspierać działaniami na rzecz zmniejszania szeroko pojętych nierówności społeczno-ekonomicznych i różnic kulturowych.
15. Działania, które uważa się za skuteczne, obejmują następujące środki:

- uznanie, że czynniki przerywania studiów mają swoje źródło w dużo wcześniejszym okresie życia i że należy oddziaływać na nie również odpowiednio wcześniej;
 - wsparcie finansowe dla studentów;
 - odpowiednio ukierunkowane programy informacyjne;
 - poprawa śledzenia zjawiska przerywania i kończenia studiów nie tylko na szczeblu krajowym, ale również na poziomie poszczególnych uczelni i kierunków studiów;
 - włączenie środków zapobiegających przerywaniu studiów do programów zwiększania liczby studentów;
 - uznawanie i akredytacja zdobytych uprzednio przez studentów umiejętności;
 - dodatkowe wsparcie dla uczniów pochodzących ze środowisk znajdujących się w niekorzystnej sytuacji materialnej.
16. Wiele uczelni już prowadzi intensywne działania, aby zatrzymać studentów na studiach. Do dobrych przykładów takich działań należą:
- zajęcia przygotowujące studentów do studiów;
 - śledzenie postępów w nauce;
 - opracowywanie programów nauczania odpowiednich do potrzeb i sprzyjających nauce;
 - nauczanie biorące pod uwagę zróżnicowane potrzeby studentów;
 - propagowanie pozytywnego podejścia do nauki;
 - poprawa oceniania kształtującego;
 - zwiększanie umiejętności samodzielnego uczenia się;
 - wsparcie finansowe dla studentów;
 - poradnictwo i wsparcie osobiste;
 - pomoc studentom w zawieraniu znajomości i tworzeniu sieci kontaktów;
 - wspieranie studentów na tych kierunkach, które cechuje wysoki współczynnik przerywania studiów;
 - wspieranie określonych grup studentów;
 - uwidacznianie korzyści z ukończenia studiów wyższych.
17. Ułatwianie przyszłym i obecnym studentom kontaktów z odnoszącymi sukcesy absolwentami oraz wysokiej jakości poradnictwo zawodowe mogą również przyczynić się do zwiększenia liczby studentów kończących studia.
18. Sytuacja w różnych częściach danego kraju także wpływa na zjawisko przerywania studiów. Współpraca partnerska między jednostkami szkolnictwa wyższego, pracodawcami i innymi podmiotami może pomóc w opracowywaniu programów nauczania, które sprzyjają ukończeniu studiów i zatrudnieniu w miejscu zamieszkania.
19. Włączenie do krajowych systemów finansowania szkolnictwa wyższego mechanizmu śledzenia poziomu ukończenia studiów i nagradzania za ich ukończenie może mieć pozytywny wpływ na ograniczenie zjawiska przerywania nauki, zwłaszcza w połączeniu ze skutecznym zwiększaniem liczby studentów. Instytucje szkolnictwa wyższego kształcące wysoką liczbę studentów w niekorzystnej sytuacji mogłyby otrzymywać więcej środków, uzależnionych od liczby takich studentów, którzy podejmują i kończą studia.
20. Decyzja o przerwaniu studiów może być właściwa, jeśli dana osoba stwierdzi, że podjęła studia w nieodpowiednim czasie lub miejscu lub na niewłaściwym kierunku. Niemniej jednak, chociaż większość studentów, którzy rezygnują z pierwotnie obranego kierunku studiów, chciałaby przenieść na inny kierunek lub powrócić na uczelnię w późniejszym terminie, w przeważającej liczbie państw członkowskich osoby takie nie otrzymują wystarczającej pomocy w przenoszeniu się na inne studia. Również pracodawcy źle postrzegają osoby, które przerwały studia.
21. Wielu studentów kończy jednak studia mimo wielu przeciwności. W związku z tym konieczne są badania na temat odporności na tego rodzaju przeciwności i umiejętności osiągnięcia celu.

Problem związany z danymi

22. Statystyki dotyczące ukończenia studiów są ogólnodostępne w Internecie jedynie w Danii, Austrii, Finlandii, Wielkiej Brytanii i Norwegii.
23. W UE nie ma spójnego zasobu danych dotyczących dostępności studiów, ich ukończenia i przerywania nauki. Stopień, w jakim poszczególne państwa gromadzą dane na ten temat, jest zróżnicowany. Potrzebne są bardziej rzetelne i porównywalne dane, o charakterze ilościowym i jakościowym, dotyczące liczby studentów, którzy przerywają naukę, ich profilu i przyczynie nieukończenia studiów. Ponadto przydatne byłyby wspólne określenia zjawisk przerywania studiów i ich ukończenia, aby można było bardziej skutecznie porównywać sytuację w poszczególnych państwach.

Resumo

1. Demasiados estudantes na UE abandonam os estudos antes de terminarem o seu curso universitário. Este é um problema para toda a UE, dado que o êxito no ensino superior é vital para o emprego, a justiça social e o crescimento económico.
2. Os países mais bem sucedidos da UE em termos de conclusão dos estudos são a Dinamarca, o Reino Unido e a Alemanha. No entanto, mesmo a Dinamarca, apesar de ser um país bem sucedido, só tem cerca de 80 % de êxito escolar.
3. Os países menos bem sucedidos são a Itália, a Hungria e a Polónia (têm a proporção mais baixa de estudantes que concluem os seus estudos). Na Itália, apenas 46 % dos estudantes terminam o ensino superior.

Quem abandona?

4. **Os estudantes que provêm de um contexto socioeconómico desfavorecido são os mais suscetíveis de abandonar.** Do mesmo modo, os estudantes com pessoas a cargo, em especial as mulheres, lutam para equilibrar as suas responsabilidades de cuidados com os estudos.
5. **Os homens** estão mais em risco de abandono escolar do que as mulheres. São mais propensos a seguir ciência e engenharia, disciplinas que apresentam as mais elevadas taxas de abandono escolar. Os homens oriundos da classe trabalhadora e de áreas pobres na província são particularmente vulneráveis.
6. **Os estudantes de minorias étnicas** estão mais em risco de abandono escolar em consequência de fatores tais como o racismo ou a pobreza. Também neste caso, a origem socioeconómica é um fator fundamental: um refugiado da classe média tem muito mais probabilidades de concluir a universidade do que um estudante proveniente da classe trabalhadora.
7. Os estudantes **com deficiência** enfrentam problemas físicos de acesso e outros obstáculos em termos de atitudes do pessoal e dos outros estudantes. Mais uma vez, o estatuto socioeconómico tem um forte impacto: um estudante com deficiência de uma família da classe média tem muito mais probabilidades de concluir um curso superior do que um estudante com deficiência proveniente da classe trabalhadora.

8. **Os estudantes a tempo parcial** estão em maior risco de abandono escolar que os estudantes a tempo inteiro, na maior parte das vezes por terem pessoas a cargo ou devido às longas horas de trabalho num emprego não relacionado com os seus estudos.

Por que é que os estudantes abandonam?

9. Seis fatores essenciais (socioculturais, estruturais, políticos, institucionais, pessoais e de aprendizagem —ver página 71) estão na origem da decisão de abandonar os estudos. Frequentemente, é uma combinação desses fatores que provoca o abandono escolar.
10. **A proveniência de um meio socioeconómico precário constitui o fator mais significativo que leva um estudante ao abandono escolar.** Este fator predomina sobre todos os demais, incluindo o sexo e a etnia, no abandono escolar.
11. **Não é o alargamento da participação, por si só, que provoca o abandono escolar.** A Dinamarca, que é reconhecida como tendo muito êxito no alargamento da participação, tem a taxa mais baixa de abandono escolar na UE. O problema tem mais a ver com uma falta de atenção às necessidades de uma população estudantil mais diversificada e com a ausência de uma abordagem orientada para o estudante na conceção e desenvolvimento de programas de ensino superior.
12. Nem todos os países enfrentam os mesmos desafios, ou a mesma combinação de desafios, no que respeita ao abandono escolar. Na Itália, por exemplo, o nível de habilitações escolares dos pais é especialmente significativo.

O que pode ser feito para reduzir o abandono escolar?

13. Muito há ainda a fazer para ajudar os estudantes na UE, sobretudo os mais vulneráveis, a terminarem os seus estudos universitários. O que está a ser feito é incoerente e fragmentado.
14. É necessária uma abordagem holística em relação à continuação dos estudos: uma abordagem que reconheça os seis fatores conducentes ao abandono escolar e a sua inter-relação. A nível nacional, a política de ensino superior deve ser apoiada por políticas para combater as desigualdades socioeconómicas e culturais.
15. As políticas que provam ser bem sucedidas incluem os seguintes elementos:

- o reconhecimento de que os fatores geradores de abandono escolar do ensino superior têm início muito mais cedo na vida e devem ser resolvidos mais cedo;
 - apoio financeiro aos estudantes;
 - programas de sensibilização específicos;
 - um melhor acompanhamento e seguimento do abandono escolar e da conclusão dos estudos, não só a nível nacional, mas também ao nível de cada instituição ou disciplina;
 - medidas para prevenir o abandono escolar como parte integrante dos planos para o alargamento da participação;
 - reconhecimento e certificação das competências de vida já adquiridas pelos estudantes;
 - maior apoio académico aos estudantes de meios desfavorecidos.
16. Muitas instituições de ensino superior já trabalham afincadamente para manter os seus estudantes. Bons exemplos de ação incluem:
- preparar os estudantes para o ensino superior mediante atividades prévias de iniciação
 - seguimento dos seus progressos
 - proporcionar aos estudantes um currículo favorável e pertinente
 - assegurar um ensino capaz de responder a diversas necessidades
 - promoção de abordagens positivas à aprendizagem
 - melhorar a avaliação formativa
 - melhorar aptidões de estudo dos estudantes
 - proporcionar apoio financeiro aos estudantes
 - prestar aconselhamento e apoio pessoal
 - ajudar os estudantes a fazer amigos e a criar redes
 - apoiar disciplinas específicas que registem elevadas taxas de abandono escolar
 - apoiar grupos específicos de estudantes
 - demonstrar a utilidade de um diploma do ensino superior.
17. Pôr os atuais e potenciais estudantes em contacto com antigos alunos bem sucedidos, bem como assegurar uma boa orientação de carreira pode contribuir para aumentar as taxas de conclusão escolar.
18. Os contextos regionais e locais têm um impacto sobre o abandono escolar. As parcerias regionais de instituições de ensino superior, empregadores e outros intervenientes podem ajudar a desenvolver currículos que promovam o emprego local e a conclusão dos estudos.
19. A adoção de medidas destinadas a monitorizar e a recompensar a conclusão dos estudos nos sistemas nacionais de financiamento do ensino superior pode ter um impacto positivo em termos de redução da taxa de abandono escolar, em especial quando ligado ao sucesso no alargamento da participação. As instituições de ensino superior com uma participação elevada de estudantes desfavorecidos poderiam receber mais recursos, indexados à quota de estudantes desfavorecidos inscritos e que terminam os estudos.
20. O abandono pode ser uma decisão positiva quando os estudantes se dão conta de que o momento, o local ou o curso não são adequados à sua situação. No entanto, ainda que a maioria dos que renunciam numa fase inicial de estudos pretenda transferir-se para um outro curso ou regressar aos estudos em data posterior, atualmente a maioria dos Estados-Membros não prestam suficiente apoio a estes estudantes através de disposições flexíveis. Além disso, os empregadores têm uma opinião negativa sobre os estudantes que não terminaram os seus cursos.
21. Muitos estudantes triunfam em situações adversas. É necessário desenvolver mais investigação sobre a resiliência e o êxito.

O problema com os dados

22. Apenas a Dinamarca, a Áustria, a Finlândia, o Reino Unido e a Noruega elaboram estatísticas em matéria de conclusão dos estudos publicamente disponíveis em linha.
23. Não existe um conjunto coerente de dados sobre o acesso ou a conclusão dos estudos e o abandono escolar na UE. A natureza e a profundidade dos dados recolhidos por cada país são variáveis. São necessários dados mais fiáveis e comparáveis, tanto do ponto de vista quantitativo como qualitativo, sobre os estudantes que não concluem os estudos, quem são, qual o seu número e as razões por que abandonam. De igual forma, o facto de existirem definições comuns sobre o abandono escolar e a conclusão dos estudos poderia ajudar a tornar as comparações entre países mais eficaz.

Sinteză

1. Prea mulți studenți din UE își abandonează prematur studiile de nivel superior. Acest lucru reprezintă o problemă în întreaga UE, având în vedere faptul că succesul în învățământul superior este esențial pentru ocuparea locurilor de muncă, justiția socială și creșterea economică.
2. Țările din UE care înregistrează cel mai mare succes în ceea ce privește absolvirea cursurilor universitare sunt Danemarca, Regatul Unit și Germania. Cu toate acestea, rata cea mai mare de absolvire înregistrată în Danemarca este doar de aproximativ 80 %.
3. Țările cu rata cea mai mică de absolvire sunt Italia, Ungaria și Polonia (ele au cea mai mică proporție de studenți care își termină studiile). Doar 46 % din studenți își termină studiile în Italia.

Cine își abandonează studiile?

4. **Studenții care provin dintr-un mediu socio-economic defavorizat sunt cei mai susceptibili să-și abandoneze studiile.** De asemenea, studenții care au persoane în îngrijire, în special femeile, depun eforturi mari pentru a găsi un echilibru între responsabilitățile de îngrijire și studiile lor.
5. **Bărbații** sunt mai expuși riscului de abandon școlar decât femeile. Aceștia studiază mai des științe și inginerie, discipline care au cele mai ridicate rate de abandon școlar. Bărbații care provin din rândul clasei muncitoare și din zone rurale sărace sunt deosebit de vulnerabili.
6. **Studenții din minoritățile etnice** se confruntă cu un risc mai ridicat de abandon școlar ca rezultat al unor factori precum rasismul sau sărăcia. Și în acest caz, contextul socio-economic este un factor cheie: un refugiat care provine din clasa de mijloc are mai multe șanse să își ducă studiile la bun sfârșit decât un refugiat care provine din clasa muncitoare.
7. Studenții cu **handicap** se confruntă cu probleme de acces de ordin fizic și alte bariere în ceea ce privește atitudinea personalului și a celorlalți studenți. Din nou, statutul socio-economic are un impact puternic: un student cu handicap care provine dintr-o familie din clasa de mijloc are mai multe șanse să își ducă studiile la bun sfârșit decât un student cu handicap care provine din clasa muncitoare.

8. **Studenții la fără frecvență** prezintă un risc mai ridicat de abandon școlar decât studenții la zi, deseori ca rezultat al responsabilităților de îngrijire sau a orelor prelungite de muncă în cadrul unui loc de muncă care nu are legătură cu studiile lor.

De ce renunță studenții la studiile lor?

9. Șase factori principali (socioculturali, structurali, instituționali, personali și factori de învățare - a se vedea pagina 71) stau la baza deciziei studenților de a abandona școala. Adeseori este o combinație a acestor factori care duce la abandonul școlar.
10. **Proveniența dintr-un mediu socio-economic sărac reprezintă factorul cel mai semnificativ care conduce un student la abandonul școlar.** Acesta este cel mai important dintre toți factorii, inclusiv genul și originea etnică, în ceea ce privește abandonul școlar.
11. **Extinderea participării în sine nu generează abandonul școlar.** Danemarca, care este recunoscută ca fiind un exemplu de mare succes în ceea ce privește extinderea participării, are rata cea mai mică de abandon școlar din UE. Problema este mai degrabă o lipsă de atenție față de nevoile unei populații studențești mai diverse și lipsa unei abordări orientate spre student în ceea ce privește definirea și punerea în aplicare a unor programe de învățământ superior.
12. Nu toate țările se confruntă cu aceleași provocări sau cu aceeași combinație de provocări în ceea ce privește abandonul școlar. În Italia, de exemplu, nivelul de educație al părinților este deosebit de important.

Ce se poate face pentru a reduce abandonul școlar?

13. Mai sunt multe de făcut pentru a-i ajuta pe studenții din UE, în special pe cei mai vulnerabili, să-și termine studiile. Măsurile actuale sunt inconsecvente și puse în aplicare în mod disparat.
14. Este necesară o abordare holistică: una care recunoaște toți cei șase factori care conduc la abandonul școlar și inter-relaționarea acestora. La nivel național, politica privind învățământul superior trebuie să fie însoțită de politici care să abordeze inegalitățile socioeconomice și culturale mai vaste.
15. Politicile care se dovedesc a fi de succes includ următoarele elemente:

- recunoașterea faptului că factorii care conduc la părăsirea studiilor superioare apar mult mai devreme în viață și trebuie să fie abordați într-o fază incipientă;
 - sprijinul financiar acordat studenților;
 - programele de sensibilizare specifice;
 - o mai bună monitorizare și urmărire a abandonului școlar și a absolvirii, nu numai la nivel național, ci și la nivelul instituțiilor considerate în mod individual și al disciplinelor;
 - inclusiv măsuri pentru a preveni abandonul școlar prin lărgirea planurilor de participare;
 - recunoașterea și acreditarea aptitudinilor pentru viață pe care studenții le-au dobândit deja;
 - îndrumarea academică suplimentară pentru studenții din medii defavorizate.
16. Numeroase instituții de învățământ superior fac deja eforturi pentru a-și păstra studenții. Exemplele bune de acțiuni includ:
- pregătirea studenților pentru învățământul superior prin activități de formare prealabilă
 - urmărirea evoluției lor
 - furnizarea unei programe de învățământ relevante și care le oferă sprijin
 - asigurarea faptului că predarea se adaptează la nevoi diverse
 - promovarea abordărilor pozitive privind învățarea
 - îmbunătățirea evaluării formative
 - îmbunătățirea competențelor de studiu ale studenților
 - furnizarea de sprijin financiar pentru studenți
 - furnizarea de consiliere și sprijin cu caracter personal
 - sprijinirea studenților în ceea ce privește socializarea și crearea unor rețele sociale
 - sprijinirea disciplinelor specifice care înregistrează rate ridicate de abandon școlar
 - sprijinirea grupurilor specifice de studenți
 - demonstrarea faptului că o calificare obținută în învățământul superior este utilă.
17. Punerea în contact a studenților potențiali și a celor actuali cu foști studenți, precum și acordarea unor sfaturi bune în materie de orientare profesională poate contribui la creșterea ratelor de absolvire.
18. Contextele regionale și locale au un impact asupra abandonului școlar. Parteneriatele regionale ale instituțiilor de învățământ superior, ale angajatorilor și ale altor actori pot contribui la dezvoltarea programelor de învățământ care promovează ocuparea forței de muncă locale și absolvirea.
19. Punerea în aplicare a unor măsuri de monitorizare și de recompensare a absolvirii în sistemele naționale de finanțare a învățământului superior poate avea un impact pozitiv asupra reducerii abandonului școlar, în special atunci când este legată de lărgirea cu succes a participării. Instituțiile de învățământ superior care înregistrează un număr ridicat de studenți defavorizați ar putea primi mai multe resurse, indexate în funcție de ponderea studenților defavorizați înmatriculați și absolvenți.
20. Abandonarea studiilor poate constitui o decizie pozitivă atunci când studenții își dau seama că momentul, locul sau diploma nu sunt potrivite pentru ei. Cu toate acestea, deși majoritatea celor care se retrag doresc să se reorienteze către alte studii sau să-și continue studiile mai târziu, în prezent, majoritatea statelor membre nu îi ajută suficient prin dispoziții flexibile. De asemenea, angajatorii tind să judece în mod negativ studenții care nu își încheie studiile.
21. Mulți studenți triumfă în ciuda dificultăților. Trebuie intensificate activitățile de cercetare privind reziliența și succesul.

Problema datelor

22. Doar Danemarca, Austria, Finlanda, Regatul Unit și Norvegia pun la dispoziția publicului statistici online cu privire la absolvirea cursurilor.
23. Nu există niciun set coerent de date referitoare la accesul sau la absolvirea și abandonul școlar în UE. Măsura în care diferitele țări colectează date cu privire la această problemă variază. Sunt necesare mai multe date fiabile și comparabile, cantitative și calitative cu privire la numărul de studenți care nu își încheie studiile, cine sunt aceștia și motivul pentru care își abandonează studiile. De asemenea, definiții comune privind abandonul școlar și absolvirea ar contribui la eficientizarea comparațiilor între țări.

Zhrnutie

1. V EÚ je počet študentov, ktorí predčasne ukončia vysokoškolské vzdelávanie, príliš vysoký. Toto je problém v celej EÚ, keďže úspešné ukončenie vysokoškolského vzdelávania má rozhodujúci význam z hľadiska zamestnanosti, sociálnej spravodlivosti a hospodárskeho rastu.
2. Najúspešnejšími krajinami EÚ, pokiaľ ide o úspešné ukončenie štúdia, sú Dánsko, Spojené kráľovstvo a Nemecko. Avšak i v Dánsku, ktoré dosahuje v tejto oblasti najlepšie výsledky, úspešne ukončí vysokoškolské štúdium len približne 80 % študentov.
3. Najmenej úspešné krajiny sú Taliansko, Maďarsko a Poľsko (majú najnižší podiel študentov, ktorí štúdium ukončia získaním príslušného diplomu). V Taliansku je to len 46 %.

Akí študenti nedokončia štúdium?

4. **Najväčšia pravdepodobnosť predčasného ukončenia štúdia je u študentov pochádzajúcich zo slabého sociálno-ekonomického prostredia.** Takisto študenti, ktorí sa starajú o deti a závislé osoby, osobitne ženy, musia vynakladať veľké úsilie o nájdenie rovnováhy medzi svojimi povinnosťami pri starostlivosti o tieto osoby a svojim štúdiom.
5. Predčasné ukončenie štúdia hrozí viac **mužom** ako ženám. Muži s väčšou pravdepodobnosťou študujú vedecké a technické odbory, ktoré majú najvyššiu mieru predčasného ukončenia štúdia. Obzvlášť ohrození sú muži pochádzajúci z robotníckeho prostredia a chudobných regiónov.
6. **Študenti z radov etnických menšín** sú viac ohrození predčasným ukončením štúdia v dôsledku takých faktorov, ako sú rasizmus alebo chudoba. Aj tu je sociálno-ekonomický pôvod kľúčovým faktorom: úspešné ukončenie štúdia je oveľa pravdepodobnejšie u utečenca pochádzajúceho zo strednej spoločenskej vrstvy ako u utečenca, ktorý pochádza z robotníckej rodiny.
7. Študenti so **zdravotným postihnutím** čelia problémom spojeným s fyzickým prístupom do vzdelávacích inštitúcií a iným prekážkam, ktoré súvisia s postojmi zamestnancov a ostatných študentov. Aj v tomto prípade má sociálno-ekonomické postavenie silný vplyv: úspešné ukončenie štúdia je oveľa pravdepodobnejšie u študenta so zdravotným postihnutím pochádzajúceho zo strednej spoločenskej vrstvy ako u študenta so zdravotným postihnutím, ktorý pochádza z robotníckej rodiny.
8. **Externí študenti** sú vystavení väčšiemu riziku predčasného ukončenia štúdia ako denní študenti, často v dôsledku svojich povinností pri starostlivosti o iné osoby alebo z dôvodu veľkej pracovnej vyťaženia v zamestnaní, ktoré nesúvisí s ich štúdiom.

Prečo študenti nedoštudujú?

9. V pozadí rozhodnutia študentov predčasne ukončiť štúdium je šesť kľúčových faktorov (sociálno-kultúrny, štrukturálny, politický, inštitucionálny, osobný a študijný – pozri stranu 71). Často ide o kombináciu týchto faktorov, ktorá vedie k predčasnému ukončeniu štúdia.
10. **Slabý sociálno-ekonomický pôvod je najvýznamnejším faktorom, ktorý vedie študenta k predčasnému ukončeniu štúdia.** Tento faktor ďaleko prevažuje nad všetkými ostatnými faktormi vedúcimi k predčasnému ukončeniu štúdia, a to vrátane faktorov pohlavia a etnickej príslušnosti.
11. **Samotné zvyšovanie počtu vysokoškolských študentov nie je príčinou predčasného ukončenia štúdia.** Dánsko, ktoré je uznávané ako krajina s veľkou úspešnosťou zvyšovania počtu študentov, má najnižšiu mieru predčasného ukončenia štúdia v EÚ. Problémom je skôr nedostatok pozornosti venovanej potrebám stále viac rôznorodnej populácie študentov a nedostatočná orientácia na študenta pri príprave a poskytovaní programov vysokoškolského vzdelávania.
12. Nie všetky krajiny čelia v súvislosti s problémom predčasného ukončenia štúdia rovnakým výzvam alebo rovnakej kombinácii výziev. Napríklad v Taliansku je osobitne významným faktorom vzdelanie rodičov.

Čo možno urobiť pre zníženie miery predčasného ukončenia štúdia?

13. Je ešte treba spraviť veľa, ak chceme pomôcť študentom, osobitne tým najohrozenejším, úspešne ukončiť ich štúdium. Úsilie, ktoré sa v súčasnosti v tomto smere vyvíja, je nekonzistentné a nesystematické.
14. V úsilí o predchádzanie predčasnému ukončeniu štúdia je potrebný komplexný prístup: taký, ktorý zohľadňuje všetkých šesť faktorov vedúcich k predčasnému ukončeniu a ich vzájomné prepojenie. Na úrovni jednotlivých členských štátov musí existovať politika vysokoškolského vzdelávania

podporovaná politikami na riešenie hlbších sociálno-ekonomických a kultúrnych nerovností.

15. Politiky, ktoré sa ukazujú ako úspešné, obsahujú tieto prvky:

- poznatok, že faktory vedúce k predčasnému ukončeniu vysokoškolského vzdelávania vznikajú v oveľa skorších etapách života a je potrebné sa nimi zaoberať čo najskôr,
- finančná podpora pre študentov,
- ciele programy práce v teréne,
- lepšie monitorovanie a sledovanie predčasného ukončenia štúdia a jeho úspešného ukončenia, a to nielen na celoštátnej úrovni, ale aj na úrovni jednotlivých inštitúcií a odborov,
- začlenenie opatrení na predchádzanie predčasnému ukončeniu štúdia do plánov na zvyšovanie počtu študentov,
- uznávanie a potvrdzovanie získaných zručností, ktoré študenti získali informálnym učením sa,
- osobitná akademická podpora pre študentov zo znevýhodneného prostredia.

16. Mnohé inštitúcie vysokoškolského vzdelávania už intenzívne pracujú na tom, aby ich študenti predčasne nekončili štúdium. Medzi dobré príklady takých opatrení patria:

- príprava študentov na vysokoškolské vzdelávanie prostredníctvom prípravných kurzov,
- sledovanie ich pokroku,
- ponuka relevantných a podporných učebných plánov,
- zabezpečenie adekvátnosti výučby rôznym potrebám,
- podpora pozitívnych prístupov k učeniu sa,
- zlepšenie formatívneho hodnotenia,
- zlepšenie študijných schopností študentov,
- ponuka finančnej podpory pre študentov,
- ponuka poradenstva a osobnej podpory,
- pomoc študentom pri nadväzovaní priateľstiev a vytváraní širších sociálnych väzieb,
- podpora špecifických odborov, v prípade ktorých sa zaznamenáva vysoká miera predčasného ukončenia štúdia,
- podpora osobitných skupín študentov,
- preukázanie užitočnosti kvalifikácie na úrovni vysokoškolského vzdelania.

17. Zoznamovanie potenciálnych a súčasných študentov s úspešnými absolventmi, ako aj poskytovanie dobrého kariérneho poradenstva môže pomôcť zvýšiť mieru úspešného ukončenia štúdia.

18. Na predčasné ukončenie štúdia majú vplyv aj podmienky existujúce v danom regióne a na miestnej úrovni. Regionálne partnerstvá inštitúcií vysokoškolského vzdelávania, zamestnávateľov a ďalších aktérov môžu prispievať k rozvoju učebných osnov, ktoré podporujú miestnu zamestnanosť a úspešné ukončenie štúdia.

19. Zapracovanie opatrení na monitorovanie a odmeňovanie úspešného ukončenia štúdia do vnútroštátnych systémov financovania vysokoškolského vzdelávania môže mať pozitívny vplyv na znižovanie predčasného ukončenia štúdia, najmä v spojení s úspešným zvyšovaním počtu študentov. Inštitúcie vysokoškolského vzdelávania s vyšším počtom prijatých znevýhodnených študentov by mohli získať viac finančných prostriedkov v závislosti od podielu znevýhodnených študentov, ktorých prijali na štúdium a ktorí ukončia štúdium získaním príslušného diplomu.

20. Predčasné ukončenie štúdia môže byť dobrým rozhodnutím v prípade, keď si študent uvedomí, že čas, miesto alebo diplom nezodpovedá jeho potrebám. Avšak aj keď väčšina študentov, ktorí prerušia štúdium svojho počiatočného odboru chce začať študovať iný odbor alebo sa chce k štúdiu vrátiť neskôr, väčšina členských štátov im v súčasnosti neposkytuje dostatočnú pomoc prostredníctvom vytvárania podmienok na flexibilné prispôsobenie štúdia ich situácii. Takisto zamestnávatelia nemajú pozitívny postoj k študentom, ktorí úspešne neukončili svoje štúdium.

21. Mnoho študentov však napriek všetkým prekážkam úspešne doštuduje. Je potrebné venovať väčšiu pozornosť preskúmaniu húževnatosti a úspešnosti.

Problém s údajmi

22. Iba Dánsko, Rakúsko, Fínsko, Spojené kráľovstvo a Nórsko vypracúvajú štatistiku o úspešnom ukončení štúdia, ktorá je verejne dostupná na internete.

23. Žiadny súdržný súbor údajov o prístupe k vzdelávaniu alebo o úspešnom ukončení a predčasnom ukončení štúdia v EÚ neexistuje. Rozsah zberu údajov o tejto problematike sa líši v závislosti na konkrétnej krajine. Sú potrebné spoľahlivejšie a porovnateľné údaje, tak kvantitatívne ako kvalitatívne, o počte študentov s predčasne ukončeným štúdiom, o ich charakteristikách a dôvodoch ich predčasného ukončenia štúdia. Takisto spoločné vymedzenie pojmov predčasného ukončenia štúdia a úspešného ukončenia štúdia by pomohlo lepšiemu porovnaniu jednotlivých krajín.

Povzetek

1. Preveč študentov v Uniji opusti študij in ne zaključi visokošolskega izobraževanja. Gre za problem celotne Unije, saj je uspešno visokošolsko izobraževanje bistvenega pomena za delovna mesta, socialno pravičnost in gospodarsko rast.
2. Najuspešnejše države Unije v smislu dokončanja študija so Danska, Združeno kraljestvo in Nemčija. Vendar celo v Danski kot najuspešnejši državi študij dokonča le okoli 80 % študentov.
3. Najmanj uspešne so Italija, Madžarska in Poljska (kjer najmanj študentov dokonča študij). V Italiji študij uspešno zaključi le 46 % študentov.

Kdo opusti študij?

4. **Verjetnost za opustitev študija je največja pri študentih iz družin z nizkim socialno-ekonomskim položajem.** Prav tako študentje z vzdrževanimi osebami, zlasti ženske, študij težko usklajujejo z obveznostmi oskrbe.
5. **Moški** opustijo študij pogosteje kot ženske. Pogosteje študirajo naravoslovje in tehnične discipline, kjer so stopnje osipa najvišje. Zlasti so ranljivi moški iz delavskih družin in revnih podeželskih območij.
6. Pri **študentih iz etničnih manjšin** je zaradi dejavnikov, kot sta rasizem ali revščina, verjetnost za opustitev študija večja. Tudi tukaj je socialno-ekonomski položaj bistvenega pomena: veliko verjetneje je, da bodo diplomirali begunci iz srednjega razreda kot tisti iz delavskih družin.
7. **Invalidne osebe** se srečujejo z oteženim dostopom in ostalimi omejitvami, povezanimi z odnosom osebja in ostalih študentov. Tudi pri njih ima socialno-ekonomski položaj velik vpliv: veliko verjetneje je, da bodo diplomirale invalidne osebe iz srednjega razreda kot tiste iz delavskih družin.
8. Prav tako je nevarnost za opustitev študija pogostejša pri **izrednih** kot pri rednih študentih, pogosto zaradi ostalih odgovornosti ali dolgotrajnega delavnika, ki ni povezan s študijem.

Razlogi za opustitev študija

9. Na odločitev za opustitev študija vpliva šest osnovnih dejavnikov (družbeno-kulturni, strukturni, vezani na politike, institucionalni, osebni in vezani na učenje – glej stran 71). Odločitev o

opustitvi študija je ponavadi kombinacija navedenih dejavnikov.

10. **Slab socialno-ekonomski položaj je najpomembnejši dejavnik pri opustitvi študija.** Ta dejavnik na osip vpliva bolj kot vsi ostali, vključno s spolom in etnično pripadnostjo.
11. **Razširitev udeležbe sama po sebi ni razlog za osip.** Danska, za katero je znano, da zelo uspešno razširja udeležbo, ima najnižji delež osipa v Uniji. Težava je v tem, da se potrebam bolj raznolike studentske populacije ne posveča dovolj pozornosti ter da pri oblikovanju in izvajanju visokošolskih programov pristop ni dovolj osredotočen na študente.
12. Države se pri problemu osipa srečujejo z različnimi izzivi ali kombinacijami izzivov. Tako je na primer v Italiji posebno pomemben dejavnik izobrazba staršev.

Načini za zmanjšanje osipa

13. Še veliko je treba storiti, da bi študentom v Uniji, zlasti najranljivejšim, pomagali, da dokončajo študij. Dosedanji ukrepi so neusklajeni in razdrobljeni.
14. Potreben je celosten pristop, pri katerem se upošteva vseh šest dejavnikov, ki so vzrok za opustitev študija, in njihova medsebojna povezanost. Na nacionalni ravni morajo politiko visokošolskega izobraževanja podpirati politike za odpravo širših družbeno-ekonomskih in kulturnih neenakosti.
15. Politike, ki dokazano delujejo, vključujejo naslednje dejavnike:
 - priznanje, da dejavniki, ki vodijo v opustitev visokošolskega študija, nastanejo precej pred začetkom študija in jih je treba začeti reševati zgodaj;
 - finančno podporo študentom;
 - ciljno usmerjene dopolnilne programe;
 - boljši nadzor in spremljanje osipa in dokončanja študija, ne samo na nacionalni ravni, pač pa tudi na ravni posameznih ustanov in disciplin;
 - vključitev ukrepov za preprečevanje osipa v načrte za razširitev udeležbe;
 - priznavanje in potrditev življenjskih veščin, ki so jih študentje že pridobili;

- dodatno akademsko podporo študentom iz prikrajšanih skupin.
16. Veliko visokošolskih ustanov se že trudi, da bi zadržale študente. Dobri primeri ukrepov so na primer:
- priprava študentov na visokošolsko izobraževanje s pripravljalnimi dejavnostmi pred začetkom študija,
 - beleženje napredka študentov,
 - primerni in ustrezni učni načrti,
 - poučevanje, ki ustreza različnim potrebam,
 - spodbujanje pozitivnega pristopa k učenju,
 - boljše formativno ocenjevanje,
 - izboljšanje učnih tehnik študentov,
 - finančna podpora za študente,
 - svetovanje in osebna podpora,
 - pomoč študentom pri iskanju prijateljev in vzpostavitvi socialnih mrež,
 - podpora disciplinam z največjimi zabeleženimi stopnjami osipa,
 - podpora določenim skupinam študentov,
 - prikaz koristnosti visokošolske izobrazbe.
17. Stopnje dokončanja študija se lahko povečajo tudi, če imajo bodoči in sedanji študentje stik z diplomanti izobraževalne ustanove in če jim je zagotovljeno dobro svetovanje glede poklicnih možnosti.
18. Tudi regionalno in lokalno okolje vpliva na dokončanje študija. Regionalna partnerstva visokošolskih ustanov, delodajalcev in ostalih akterjev lahko pomagajo razvijati učne načrte za spodbujanje lokalnega zaposlovanja in dokončanja študija.
19. Vključitev ukrepov za nadzor in nagrajevanje dokončanja študija v nacionalne sisteme financiranja visokošolskega izobraževanja lahko pozitivno vpliva na zmanjšanje osipa, zlasti v povezavi z uspešno razširitvijo udeležbe. Visokošolske ustanove z višjim deležem študentov iz prikrajšanih skupin bi lahko glede na delež takšnih študentov, ki se vpišejo in dokončajo študij, prejele več sredstev.
20. Opustitev študija je lahko primerna, kadar študentje ugotovijo, da jim čas, kraj ali smer študija ne ustrezajo. Čeprav večina študentov, ki preneha s študijem vpisane smeri, želi študij nadaljevati na drugi smeri ali v prihodnosti, jim večina držav članic zdaj pri tem ne pomaga v zadostni meri s prilagodljivimi rešitvami. Tudi delodajalci imajo o študentih, ki niso končali študija, negativno mnenje.
21. Veliko študentov je uspešnih kljub neugodnim razmeram. Vztrajnost in uspeh je treba bolj podrobno raziskati.

Pomanjkljivi podatki

22. Samo za Dansko, Avstrijo, Finsko, Združeno kraljestvo in Norveško so statistike o dokončanju študija prosto dostopne na spletu.
23. Za Unijo ne obstajajo usklajeni podatki o vpisu ali dokončanju in opustitvi študija. Posamezne države podatke o tem zbirajo v različnem obsegu. Potrebni so bolj zanesljivi in primerljivi številčni in vsebinski podatki o tem, koliko študentov opusti študij, kdo so ti študentje in kateri so razlogi za opustitev študija. Skupna opredelitev osipa in dokončanja študija bi prav tako pomagala k učinkovitejši primerjavi med državami.

Sammanfattning

1. Alltför många studenter i EU avslutar sin högre utbildning innan examen. Detta är ett problem för hela EU eftersom en avslutad högre utbildning är avgörande för sysselsättning, social rättvisa och ekonomisk tillväxt.
2. De EU-länder där flest studenter avslutar sin utbildning är Danmark, Förenade kungariket (Storbritannien och Nordirland) samt Tyskland. Fastän Danmark leder när det gäller andelen studenter som avslutar utbildningen är det dock endast cirka 80 % som gör det.
3. De länder där den lägsta andelen studenter avslutar utbildningen är Italien, Ungern och Polen. Bara 46 % av studenterna i Italien avslutar utbildningen.

Vem avslutar utbildningen i förtid?

4. **Studenter från låg socioekonomisk miljö är de som oftast avslutar utbildningen i förtid.** Det gör också studenter, särskilt kvinnor, som tar hand om familjemedlemmar och därmed har svårt att förena omsorgsansvar med studier.
5. **Män riskerar att avsluta studier i förtid oftare än kvinnor.** De läser oftare naturvetenskapliga ämnen eller ingenjörsutbildningar där andelen avhoppare är störst. Män med arbetarklassbakgrund och från mindre utvecklade landsbygdsområden är särskilt utsatta.
6. **Studenter från etniska minoritetsgrupper** löper större risk att hoppa av till följd av sådana faktorer som rasism och fattigdom. Även här är den socioekonomiska bakgrunden en avgörande faktor: en invandrare med medelklassbakgrund kommer med mycket större sannolikhet att avsluta studierna än en med arbetarklassbakgrund.
7. Studenter med **funktionsnedsättning** ställs inför fysiska problem med tillträde och andra hinder som attityden hos personalen och övriga studenter. Även här har den socioekonomiska miljön stor inverkan: en funktionshindrad student från en medelklassfamilj kommer med mycket större sannolikhet att avsluta studierna än en med arbetarklassbakgrund.
8. **Studenter som läser på deltid** riskerar oftare att hoppa av än studenter som läser på heltid, ofta till följd av omsorgsansvar eller eftersom de arbetar långa timmar och har ett jobb som inte har med studierna att göra.

Varför avslutar studenter utbildningen i förtid?

9. Sex avgörande faktorer (sociokulturella, strukturella, politiska, institutionella, personliga och akademiska – see page 71) ligger bakom studenternas beslut att avsluta studier i förtid. Ofta är det flera av dessa faktorer tillsammans som leder till avhoppet.
10. **Den mest betydande faktorn som leder till avhopp är att studenten kommer från en låg socioekonomisk miljö.** Detta överskuggar alla andra faktorer, inbegripet kön och etniskt ursprung.
11. **Det är inte den bredare rekryteringen till högskolan i sig som orsakar avhopp.** Danmark ses som ett land som i hög grad lyckats med att bredda rekryteringen och har den lägsta andelen avhopp i EU. Problemet är snarare bristande uppmärksamhet på behoven hos en mer varierad studentgrupp och avsaknaden av ett studentcentererat tillvägagångssätt när det gäller att utforma och genomföra utbildningar på högskolan.
12. Inte alla länder har samma utmaningar, eller samma kombination av utmaningar, när det gäller avhopp. I Italien är det till exempel föräldrarnas utbildningsbakgrund som är av särskild betydelse.

Vad kan man göra för att minska avhoppet?

13. Mycket återstår att göra för att hjälpa studenterna i EU, särskilt dem som är mest utsatta, att avsluta sina utbildningar. Det som görs är splittrat.
14. Det är nödvändigt med ett heltäckande tillvägagångssätt för att hålla kvar studenterna. Man måste beakta alla sex faktorer som leder till avhopp och hur de är sammankopplade. Den nationella högskolepolitiken måste stödjas av åtgärder som tar itu med bredare socioekonomiska och kulturella ojämlikheter.
15. Lyckade åtgärder har bland annat omfattat följande:
 - Erkännande av att faktorerna som leder till avhopp från högre utbildning börjar mycket tidigt i livet och behöver tas itu med tidigare;
 - Ekonomiskt stöd till studenter;
 - Riktade uppsökningsprogram;
 - Bättre övervakning och uppföljning av avhopp och fullbordade studier, inte bara på nationell

- nivå men också vad gäller enskilda högskolor och ämnen;
 - Åtgärder för att förebygga avhopp i planer för bredare rekrytering till högre utbildning;
 - Erkännande och ackreditering av färdigheter som studenterna redan förvärvat;
 - Extra akademiskt stöd för studenter från mindre gynnade miljöer.
16. Många högskolor gör redan mycket för att behålla sina studenter. Bland goda exempel på insatser återfinns följande:
- Förbereda studenter för högre utbildning genom aktiviteter före kursstart;
 - Följa deras framsteg;
 - Erbjud en relevant och stödjande kursplan;
 - Se till att man i undervisningen reagerar på olika slags behov;
 - Främja positiva synsätt på lärande;
 - Förbättra formativ bedömning;
 - Förbättra studenternas studieteknik;
 - Erbjud studenterna ekonomiskt stöd;
 - Erbjud rådgivning och personligt stöd;
 - Hjälpa studenterna få vänner och bilda nätverk;
 - Stödja särskilda ämnen där avhoppet är särskilt vanliga;
 - Stödja särskilda studentgrupper;
 - Visa att högskoleexamen är något användbart.
17. Att sätta dem som studerar eller funderar på studier i kontakt med framgångsrika utexaminerade och tillhandahålla god yrkesvägledning kan bidra till att höja andelen som avslutar sin utbildning.
18. Regionala och lokala omständigheter kan påverka avhoppet. Regionala partnerskap mellan högskolor, arbetsgivare och andra aktörer kan bidra till
- att utarbeta kursplaner som främjar sysselsättning i närsamhället och fullbordade studier.
19. Att ta med åtgärder för att övervaka och belöna studieavslutning i nationella system för finansiering av högre utbildning kan minska avhoppet, särskilt om detta kopplas till framgångsrikt breddad rekrytering. Högskolor med en hög andel mindre gynnade studenter skulle kunna få mer resurser, indexerat i förhållande till andelen mindre gynnade studenter som skrivs in och utexamineras.
20. Avhopp kan vara ett positivt beslut om studenterna inser att tidpunkten, platsen eller examen inte passar för dem. Även om de flesta som hoppar av en första utbildning vill flytta över till en annan utbildning eller tar upp studierna senare, får de för närvarande i de flesta medlemsstaterna inte tillräcklig hjälp med flexibla lösningar. Arbetsgivare ser också negativt på studenter som inte avslutat studierna.
21. Många studenter klarar av svårigheterna. Det behövs mer forskning om återhämtningsförmåga och framgång.

Problemet med uppgifter

22. Danmark, Österrike, Finland, Förenade kungariket och Norge är de enda länder som för en statistik över avslutade studier som finns allmänt tillgängligt på nätet.
23. Det finns inga enhetliga uppgifter om rekrytering eller om avslutade studier och avhopp i EU. Olika länder samlar in uppgifter i denna fråga i mycket olika utsträckning. Det behövs mer tillförlitliga och jämförbara uppgifter, både kvantitativa och kvalitativa, om hur många studenter som inte avslutar studierna, vilka de är och varför de hoppar av. Jämförelserna mellan länderna skulle också bli mer effektiva om man hade gemensamma definitioner av avhopp och avslutade studier.

Introduction

Why is drop-out and completion in Higher Education an important issue?

The European policy context

Higher Education is vital in promoting employment opportunities, social justice and economic progress. Increasing attainment levels in higher education is a key priority in the European Union's agenda for the Modernisation of Higher Education. It is enshrined in the Europe 2020 benchmark of attainment in higher education whereby 40% of 30-34 year olds in the EU should have completed tertiary or equivalent education by 2020.

To achieve this target, all groups in society should have access to and also be enabled to succeed in higher education, including those who can be defined as under-represented (e.g. those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, or adult learners). There are also issues of gender representation, particularly in certain disciplines. To achieve the aim of equality in access and completion, the issue of high drop-out rates in higher education needs to be addressed.

In recent years, policy-makers have increasingly focused on the social dimension of higher education in Europe. Within the Bologna Process, widening access and facilitation of completion of studies, particularly for students from underrepresented groups, was highlighted in the Leuven/Louvain Communiqué from 2009 and reiterated in the Bucharest Communiqué from 2012. The latter commits to stepping up efforts and providing adequate student support services, flexible learning paths and access routes and guidance and counselling.

The social dimension of higher education has been highlighted in a series of European Council Conclusions (2006, 2010 and 2013). In May 2013, the Council adopted conclusions on the social dimension of higher education wherein the responsibility of Member States to ensure equal opportunities in accessing and completing higher education is stressed¹. The Council Conclusions propose measures to ensure greater access to, participation in and completion of higher education for non-traditional learners and students from disadvantaged backgrounds as a contribution towards reaching the Europe 2020 target on 40% attainment.

The Bologna Process London Communiqué of 2007 asserted that "students should be able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background". The Leuven Communiqué of 2009, which established priorities for 2010-2020, endorsed this stating: "Access into higher education should be widened by fostering the potential of students from underrepresented groups and by providing adequate conditions for the completion of their studies".

¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/137144.pdf

Attracting a broader cross section of society into higher education, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and reducing drop-out rates have both been identified as key targets within the key documents of the Europe 2020 Strategy for growth and jobs² and the Education and Training 2020³ strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training. Achieving this will help improve employment opportunities and promote social justice and growth. This requires increased participation from all social groups including the most disadvantaged. However, drop-out from higher education is seen to threaten these targets, particularly amongst groups such as those from low socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

There is also a financial dimension. In an era of recession all public services including universities need to be more efficient. Drop-out can be seen as a drain on public finance and a waste of valuable resources. Equally, it can be seen as a symptom that universities are not meeting contemporary public need.

Lack of comparable data and common understanding of the phenomenon of drop-out

Assessing the scale and nature of drop-out is difficult mainly because the data is not readily available and because different EU Member States define and measure drop-out in different ways. National differences in the duration of courses also add to the complexity of the issue. Experts agree that there is no coherent set of data on access or on completion and drop-out in the EU. The extent to which individual countries collect data on this issue is highly variable and even when figures exist they need careful contextualised interpretation which in the main has not yet happened.

Many different terms are used in discussing this issue, which tend to emphasise one of the following: individual responsibility of the student, responsibility of the institution or system, shame/blame of the student, positive connotations for student success. The term "drop-out" does not necessarily reflect the reality that most students wish to return to education at a later stage. As used in this report it is understood as referring to the phenomenon of students not completing their study programmes, devoid of pejorative connotations.

Most of the existing widening participation data and research across countries relates to access to higher education rather than to completion of study. At a national policy and local institutional level the drive has been to open up Higher Education to greater numbers of students (see Bohonnek, et al, 2010). Much less attention has been paid to what happens to them once they enter higher education and how to ensure their success.

Despite the importance of the issue, drop-out tends to be neglected in key documents and instruments. Research does exist on the issue, much more developed in some nations than others, and not necessarily systematic in approach. What we do know is fragmented and patchy and has not been synthesised and analysed across the EU. The purpose of this report is to analyse trends in what we do know about drop-out and completion and to discuss what can be done to increase the retention of students, particularly those from under-represented groups.

² http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/framework_en.htm

Broad issues of the quality and relevance of higher education can also have a positive impact on successful completion. However, these are not the main focus of this report, which concentrates on identifying particular groups of under-represented students who may be more vulnerable to drop-out, and via a review of research, analyses factors relating to drop-out and sets out key elements of national and institutional strategies to support these students. The report also draws on examples of national and institutional good practice for combating drop-out and increasing retention discussed at a Peer Learning Activity on this theme in Prague in March 2013⁴.

The most comprehensive data set was achieved by the OECD by means of a survey but did not include all EU Member States. However by looking at this data, plus data from national sources, some trends can be observed. **The most successful countries in terms of completion are Denmark, United Kingdom and Germany and the least successful are Italy, Hungary and Poland.** However even Denmark as most successful only has around 80% completion and Italy's rates are as low as 46%. Therefore completion appears to be a significant problem across the EU.

Despite the lack of quantitative data there have been some significant qualitative studies of retention which we can draw upon, such as RANLHE (2011a, b, and c) an in-depth seven country study.

Report structure

Chapter One covers the following issues: the key dimensions and main issues in the debate, including definitions, existing data and its reliability, patterns across EU nations and the three key approaches to understanding and addressing drop-out.

Chapter Two focuses on why students drop-out. It covers the following issues: the six factors that lead to drop-out, the consequences of drop-out, whether widening participation leads to drop-out, who is most likely to drop-out and patterns amongst ethnic minorities, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, women and men and students with disabilities.

Chapter Three looks specifically at the issue of adult part time students, discussing why part time study is important, the relationship between part time study and widening participation, whether part time students are more likely to drop-out and what can be done to improve the retention of part time students.

Chapter Four concentrates on what can be done to improve retention. It considers national approaches such as outreach, financial support, flexibility, alternative access, regional and community engagement, distance learning and expert advice. It also outlines what institutions have done to improve retention, developing a 14-point typology of actions as guidance to what higher education institutions could undertake.

Chapter Five outlines the main conclusions of the report.

⁴ Peer Learning Activity of national representatives from EU Member States with some role in the development and implementation of policy in this field. Within the work programme of the Thematic Working Group on the Modernisation of Higher education set up by the European Commission in the context of the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

Some key findings of this review

- **Six key factors** lead students to drop-out. These factors are inter-related and it is usually a combination of them that leads to drop-out:
 - socio-cultural factors
 - structural factors
 - policy factors
 - institutional factors
 - personal factors
 - learning factors(Note: see on page 71 what each of these factors involves)
- Drop-out can sometimes mark a **positive** turning point when students recognise that the time, place or degree is not right for them. However, even though most students want to return to education in the future, in most countries they have little idea how to do this and it is not facilitated for them. Although many feel they have gained valuable experience and skills, some research suggests that employers look negatively upon students who have dropped out.
- It is often assumed that it is widening participation that leads to drop-out but **this is not necessarily true**. Denmark, which appears to have been very successful in widening participation, has the lowest rate of drop-out in Europe, while countries which have done little to widen participation still have considerable drop-out. The problem is rather a lack of attention to diverse student needs. There is some evidence that certain groups face problems that put them at risk of drop-out but charting those problems is not straightforward.
- Coming from a **lower socio-economic background** has been found to dominate all other factors including gender and ethnicity in leading to drop-out. This is not because of any essential characteristics but because of the associated inequalities that coming from a poor socio-economic background brings. The most significant elements are lack of equal access to good education at a school level and subsequent lower qualifications, financial issues and whether a parent has had experience of higher education.
- Drop-out is also gendered. **Women** are now the majority of students in many countries, but it is men who are most likely to drop-out. This is partly because disciplines are still gender segregated and Science and Engineering where men still dominate tend to have the highest rate of drop-out. It is certain groups of men who are most at risk of drop-out, for example men from a working class background and disadvantaged provincial areas. Nevertheless parents, especially women, still face substantial problems such as caring responsibilities and the higher education sector is still highly male dominated with few women in senior positions. The drop-out of women from STEM subjects is also a matter of concern in some of the best-performing countries in terms of drop-out, such as Denmark.
- **Minority ethnic students** may experience issues of cultural exclusion in university but there is also evidence that even when integrated they still drop-out, pointing to the importance of external factors such as racism. Some ethnic groups do better than others. Completion is also related to socio-economic status. So for example if a refugee is from a higher socio-economic group they have more likelihood to complete.
- Evidence about drop-out and **students with disabilities** is not extensive. However qualitative studies indicate that such students face both the physical problems of access and adjustments and the attitudinal problems of staff and students. Again socio-economic status has a strong impact. Those from middle class families tend to have a good sense of their rights and entitlements whilst those from lower socio-economic backgrounds often face other problems on top of their disability.

- **Part time study** is increasingly common in the EU, even when students are registered as officially full time. However, policy, research and practice tend to ignore this. There is some evidence that part time students are more likely to drop-out than full time students. The factors that lead them to drop-out are linked to their responsibilities outside higher education such as jobs or childcare.
- Across Europe there is little consistency in national approaches to access and retention and many challenges remain. National higher education **policy needs to act in concert with other policy areas** in order to tackle the aspects of drop-out that are influenced by the unequal trans-generational transmission of educational experiences and resources and by socio-cultural inequalities.
- However, there are a number of **key policy approaches** that national evidence shows can make a strategic difference. These include:
 - targeted outreach programmes;
 - public financial support of students;
 - monitoring and tracking drop-out and completion;
 - integrating measures against drop-out into a strategic widening participation plan;
 - developing a process to recognise and accredit prior life skills
 - developing collaborative regional bodies linking higher education institutions, employers and other key organisations.
- At an **institutional level** initiatives are sometimes piecemeal or marginalised and not always well evaluated. However, in many institutions and at national systems level, considerable efforts are being made to support students throughout their higher education experience and aid completion. This report outlines a **14 point typology of good practice** which follows the student life-course and covers the following issues:
 - Type 1: Preparing students for higher education
 - Type 2: Supporting transition into higher education
 - Type 3: Tracking student engagement with higher education
 - Type 4: Creating a more relevant and supportive curriculum
 - Type 5: Creating more responsive pedagogies
 - Type 6: Fostering positive approaches to learning
 - Type 7: Improving formative assessment
 - Type 8: Improving student study skills
 - Type 9: Offering financial support to students
 - Type 10: Offering counselling and personal support to students
 - Type 11: Fostering student personal networks
 - Type 12: Targeting support for specific disciplines
 - Type 13: Targeting support at specific groups of students
 - Type 14: Demonstrating the future utility of higher education
- We need **more reliable evidence**, quantitative and qualitative, about how many students do not complete, who they are and why they drop-out. Shared definitions of calculations of drop-out and completion would help to make comparisons across countries more effective.
- We need a better understanding of the consequences of drop-out in later life; therefore **more qualitative longitudinal studies are necessary**.

- It is often assumed that it is widening participation that leads to drop-out but **this is not necessarily true**. The problem is rather massification coupled with a lack of attention to diverse student needs, and a lack of a student-centred approach in devising and delivering higher education programmes.
- Drop-out is not confined to under-represented students, such as students with low socio-economic status, minority ethnic students and students with disabilities. However, there is some evidence that **certain groups seem more likely to drop-out**. In terms of how different groups are affected, drop-out is influenced by social factors as well as by higher education policies and practices. The most significant determinant is socio-economic status and how it interacts with other factors such as ethnicity and disability to produce drop-out. Low socio-economic status can lead to poor early education opportunities, limitations in choice of subjects and a channelling towards less elite higher education institutions and all of these are significant factors in drop-out.
- However, many students succeed despite facing considerable problems. We need more research focusing on **resilience** and success.
- Not all countries face the same challenges, or the same combination of challenges, with regard to drop-out. Certain issues are particularly salient in different countries, for example parental education is especially significant in Italy in influencing drop-out.
- It is not necessarily negative to withdraw from an initial course of study providing there are flexible (and cost-effective) opportunities available to transfer to another course or to return to study at a later date.
- Many students combine their studies with other activities and many are effectively studying part time. Working long hours in employment unrelated to their degree increases the possibility of student drop-out. Policies tend to focus on full time students so greater attention to part timers is now needed. Part time can be a **positive** option but only if such students are given equal treatment. The whole question of who is part time, what it means and whether it is a positive choice or a survival measure needs reassessing.
- Regional and local contexts have an impact on drop-out. Regional partnerships of higher education institutions, employers and other organisations can help develop curricula which foster local employment and completion.
- Building measures to monitor and reward completion into national systems of funding higher education can have a positive impact on reducing drop-out, in particular when linked to success in widening participation.
- Institutions can make a difference in fostering completion by developing good practice in the 14 types of initiative identified in this report.
- Outreach and pre-induction activities can be useful in supporting completion, as can greater contact with alumni and those who have successfully graduated and found employment. This needs to be linked to better careers advice and clearer demonstrations of the future utility of higher education for potential students.

Chapter 1

Key issues in analysing drop-out

What terms do we use and what do they mean?

One of the commonly acknowledged problems in addressing the issue of retention and drop-out is that there is no universal definition of these terms, and in practice different countries employ different measures. This means that comparison across countries is extremely difficult. Some of the difficulty can be illustrated by Van Stolk, et al, (2007) which addressed retention across just four countries: Ireland, USA, the Netherlands and Australia. None of these countries gathered data in the same way, or used the same terms for what they were measuring.

As Van Stolk, et al (2007) pointed out, and as shall be further discussed in this report, this diversity is also connected to the differing nature of the higher education system across countries, and the differing nature of the student populations. Ireland, for example has shorter and more fixed degree courses than the Netherlands which has a longer and modular credit based system; students in Ireland are relatively homogeneous, whilst the Netherlands has sizeable minority groups of students. If the picture is difficult to assess across only 4 countries then it is inevitably difficult across the countries of the EU.

There is no generic and universally agreed definition of retention, drop-out and completion rates. The commonly held conception of retention is the extent to which learners remain within a higher education institution and complete their programme of study within a given time frame. The concomitant is that the drop-out is one who leaves university early and does not complete when they should. The term completion rates refer to an estimate of the proportion of commencing students who will complete their studies.

The problem is that the elements that go to make up this picture differ markedly across countries. For example in some countries completion rates will include an estimate of those who change course before completing. Different components are put together in different ways across different time frames. Moreover, the systems tend to be rigid in their formulations and do not reflect the complexity and fragmentation of student lives in the 21st century.

The term "drop-out" itself can be controversial⁵. It does not necessarily reflect the reality that most students wish to return to education at a later stage. As used in this report it is understood as referring to the phenomenon of students not completing their courses, devoid of pejorative connotations.

A further confusion is caused by the plethora of terms used across countries. In their study of ten countries Thomas and Quinn (2007) found 20 terms relating to students completing a degree course within the agreed time frame, or students not conforming to this norm. The terms emphasised different factors:

⁵ Some researchers, for example RANLHE (2011c), Rose-Adams (2012), rejected the term 'drop-out' as being pejorative and also inaccurate when many either do or would like to return to education. Nevertheless it is such a familiar term that it is difficult to avoid using it completely. Consequently, in line with Quinn, Thomas, Slack, Casey, Thexton and Noble (2005) in this report drop-out is understood to be in quotation marks to indicate its questionable validity.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emphasis on the individual responsibility of the student: | <p><i>Non-completion, non-continuation:</i> when students leave their enrolled course and institution early before completing their studies.</p> <p><i>Persistence:</i> A term commonly used in the USA to describe students succeeding with their study and completing despite hardships.</p> |
| Emphasis on the responsibility of the system or institution | <p><i>Attrition rate:</i> proportion of students who leave university early over a one year period.</p> <p><i>Retention:</i> normally used to mean the positive goal of keeping students in university until they successfully complete their course. However, in Spain retention seems to mean staying for an overly prolonged time on a course and has negative connotations.</p> <p><i>Survival rate:</i> measuring a cohort and the proportion of new entrants to the specified level of education who successfully complete a qualification.</p> |
| Connotations of shame/blaming the student | <p><i>Drop-out:</i> when students leave university early (but may possibly return to education in the future).</p> <p><i>Stop out:</i> when students leave their course and do not return to education at any point.</p> |
| Positive connotations for the student experience | <p><i>Student mobility/transfer:</i> when students change course or institution. Some of these students may complete within their allotted time and some may not and this causes further confusion in the statistics. Some countries like Sweden and Norway see this as a regular part of degree study.</p> <p><i>Student success:</i> when students ultimately complete their desired course of study (which may include elements of transfer).</p> |

A potential model

Because of the multiple and confusing nature of this issue it is very difficult to make hard and fast recommendations as to what definitions should be used. A future Eurostat study has now been commissioned with the aim of improving methodologies for collecting data. However, from the evidence we have, it seems **Netherlands** provides a useful model as to how to approach retention as it has a systematic approach to collecting data via nationally collected cohort studies and a good and relatively stable level of completion, with some positive aspects in relation to minority groups. The following are the five main aspects that are measured:

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Intake | The number of first year students entering university for the first time. |
| Progress | The number of students who continue in their higher education course as expected. |
| Drop-out | Students who leave higher education after a particular number of years without achieving graduation, drop-out is usually measured over the first two years of study. |
| Transfer | Students who move across to another course of studies are not systematically collected in the statistics but some studies consider the effect of transfer on retention. |
| Yield | The number of students in a given cohort who graduate on time. |

There are some limitations to this approach. For example it does not seem to capture those students who drop-out after the first two years (an aspect that seems to disproportionately affect ethnic minority students in the Netherlands). It also does not systematically measure transfer between study programmes or universities.

An adopted model which covered drop-out, transfer, withdrawal and return over the potential years of study (as is done in Australia, for example, over a period of 7 years) would better reflect the realities of contemporary study and give a more accurate picture.

What do we know about drop-out?

Experts agree that there is no standardised data across the EU about disadvantage for all higher education applicants and a lack of evidence about the effectiveness of policies. In particular, more information is needed about what policies work in relation to reducing "drop-out" (NESET, 2011). Most of the widening participation data and research that exists across countries relates to access to higher education rather than to completion of study. This partly derives from a limited understanding of what widening participation means. At a national policy and local institutional level the drive has been to open up higher education to greater numbers of students (see Bohonnek, et al, 2010, reporting for Equinet). Much less attention has been paid to what happens to them once they enter higher education and how to ensure their successful completion.

However, since 2007 the EU has provided greater clarification of what is meant by the **social dimension** of higher education, and this has included a specific statement of the importance of all students being able to complete their studies without obstacle. For example, the Council Conclusions, Bucharest 2012, stated:

The student body entering and graduating from higher education institutions should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations. We will step up our efforts towards underrepresented groups to develop the social dimension of higher education, reduce inequalities and provide adequate student support services, counselling and guidance, flexible learning paths and alternative access routes, including recognition of prior learning. We encourage the use of peer learning on the social dimension and aim to monitor progress in this area.

The Eurostudent Surveys (see Orr et al, 2011) have started to build a more detailed picture of student life but since they only capture students within their study period they contain no information about completion or success. Moreover since response rates seem very low in some countries (although not all), there are obvious limitations to this data. Nevertheless there is obvious potential to use the surveys to gain a better picture of the pressures and barriers students are facing that may lead them to drop-out, and also to chart whether students have considered dropping out and what factors have enabled them to decide to stay in Higher Education.

The OECD *Education at a Glance 2013* contains information about the majority of European countries. There is also the UOE Administrative data collection (from Unesco, OECD and Eurostat) and some available data on the Eurostat website. Some further analysis of the data available from 2008 can be found in the Bologna Stocktaking Report (2012).

The European Community Household Panel (ECHP) is a useful dataset which could be used more widely. One example has been found (Aina, 2012) where this data enabled researchers to trace access and drop-out rates in Italy in the context of parental and family characteristics. However, it should be noted that there are limitations in the use of ECHP for looking at drop-out in higher education because of the small numbers in the relevant age groups.

Much information about drop-out and completion comes from USA and Australia, therefore this report refers to research from these countries. In Europe, it is important to note that the UK, the Netherlands and Sweden are amongst those countries with most data and therefore the report draws heavily on these countries too.

This report therefore draws upon evidence from available data sets and research literature but the data for making conclusions is necessarily limited and geographically variable.

What are the problems with the data?

One of the problems in addressing this issue is that in looking across Europe we are not comparing like-for-like. RANLHE (*Retention and Access: experiences of Non-Traditional Learners in Higher Education*) an EU funded in-depth study of access and retention of non-traditional students in higher education across seven countries (England, Ireland Germany, Poland, Scotland, Spain, Sweden) made the following points about comparability:

- higher education systems vary widely for example in course duration, participation, models of progression and accreditation.
- National agencies use different terms e.g. non-completion, non-continuation, retention, drop-out and survival and sometimes identical terms are defined differently.
- A wide range of methodologies are employed to compile data and calculate retention rates.
- Definitions of "non-traditional" differ across nations sometimes including mature students, people with disabilities, first generation students, and minority ethnic groups.

They therefore suggested that in order to make sense of figures at a national level, attention must be paid to:

- The terms used nationally
- Methods of calculation employed
- Historical context
- Current use of figures on retention in national policy documents
- Possible issues and pitfalls in national statistics
- Relationship of national statistics to OECD completion rates.

This approach is a useful way forward but requires substantial attention and access to national statistics and the RANLHE project did not have the scope to apply it in a comprehensive way.

Another key problem is getting access to students when they have dropped out. Researchers have faced a number of problems: many institutions keep poor records of who has not completed; students are reluctant to record experiences commonly perceived as failure. Surveys have had very low response rates, for example in the UK (Davies and Elias, 2003) had only a 10% response to their survey. Qualitative research has proved more effective in accessing students and exploring their experiences using in-depth interviews (see for example Quinn et al, 2005 who interviewed 80 students who had dropped out in four areas of industrial decline in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales). Recent research in England (Rose-Adams, 2012) has analysed a data set of 36,574 students who had left university early and who were being tracked by a three year HEFCE funded "back on course" project aimed at encouraging them back to higher education. Consequently we have some valuable in-depth data and some useful quantitative evidence but lack reliable large scale patterns of analysis across the EU.

How reliable is what we know?

Reviewing the Social Dimension of Higher Education (Eurydice, 2011) finds that over half of European countries have policies to increase levels of completion and reporting on progress is usually provided by the Ministry in charge of higher education. However, only Denmark, Austria, Finland, UK and Norway make statistics on completion openly available online. According to Eurydice (2011), Bulgaria and Ireland have specific policies to increase retention, but no requirement on higher education institutions to report completion rates. The Bologna Stocktaking Report (2012) also highlighted that there are significant differences across countries in data collection on drop-out and completion.

There are great differences in the types of national data collected and for how long. The Swedish model is particularly comprehensive allowing Statistics Sweden to easily track individuals throughout their education. However, even when a mass of data is collected, many countries do not systematically analyse the data they have, nor aggregate it to establish trends on issues such as drop-out.

Institutional data collection on drop-out and completion remains often inadequate. For example the Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency in the UK (2008) reviewed 59 institutional audit reports from between 2004 and 2006 and concluded that most had not created fully effective data gathering systems or make effective use of statistical data on retention progression and completion.

Long, et al (2006) raised the issue that non-completion rates may not be as high as they appear. Their study, based at Monash University, Australia, extended previous research on university attrition and course completion by tracking the subsequent enrolment and other outcomes of students who discontinue their university studies. It also looked at older students as well as students from younger groups. It found that attrition from first year university undergraduate degree courses is lower than has been suggested by previous research if movement of students between universities and courses and potential re-entry are included as retention.

Another issue is that comparing patterns of educational success, between minority ethnic groups and others for example, often paints a general picture and does not drill down to the specific issue of non-completion.

A focus on completion does not follow the patterns of student behaviour. There is little data on those who withdraw but do want to return and on those who leave but then return successfully to education later. Drop-out can be most usefully seen as part of a continuum, for example Smidt (2013) pointed to a range of student behaviours that are allied to drop-out but not necessarily captured by a focus on completion, including: students who have been inactive for a certain period of time, students who decide not to take up their study place, students who change their academic subject at the same institution, students who transfer to another institution within the higher education system or abroad.

Finally the Bologna Stocktaking Report (2012) demonstrated that there is still no uniformity in the length and types of programmes across different countries. Some programmes such as Medicine and Architecture stand outside the Bologna structure and last longer than others; some short programmes are not well integrated or even seen as part of the higher education system. There is no single model and models vary not only across countries but also within individual countries. In many countries the 180 ECTS first-cycle model coexists with 240 ECTS programmes, as well as programmes following other structures. This diversity is another reason why comparisons across countries are very difficult.

What are the patterns across countries?

Drawing on available literature, the following patterns across EU countries where data is available can be traced. It should be noted that the OECD Education at a Glance (2013) was their most recent analysis of drop-out and statistics were compiled by means of a survey of members. This means that they are reliant on information which is often not readily and accurately available and which can be very dated. Some countries, for example Ireland, have not provided the OECD with data on completion and some who provided it for *Education at a Glance* 2008 did not do so for 2013, for example, Italy. In some cases, for example, the Czech Republic, more recent data from policy makers suggests a different pattern than that shown by the OECD indicators. In some countries, for example Finland, completion rates appear to have improved, in others, for example Portugal, they appear to have declined.

A similar problem exists with the UOE tables where data on completion is included, but countries do not always provide data and what they provide is not always comparable.

Croatia is added in this report as it has become an EU member in 2013. Norway is added because although not an EU member it has significant information relating to drop-out and completion.

There are two sets of OECD figures referred to in the following table. Both figures are used as together they give a sense of what is happening in relation to drop-out and completion across the range of both Tertiary A (the more traditional degree) and Tertiary B (the shorter, usually more vocational courses).

Completion rates: The OECD defines completion rates as the number of degrees awarded per 100 students enrolled in a given year.

The OECD average for completion rates of degrees is 70%.

| Patterns of Drop-out and Completion across Europe | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Country | Key Points | Source |
| Austria | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 65%. 1 in 10 students have interrupted their studies for longer than a year. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) <i>Eurostudent Survey IV</i> (2011) |
| Belgium (Flanders) | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 69%. Completion rate for Tertiary B is 73%. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) |
| Bulgaria | Has specific policies to increase completion rates but no requirement on higher education institutions to report them. | Eurydice (2011) |
| Croatia | Between 1990 and 2003 96 % of the students at higher education institutions were from the majority (Croats) and 4 % from the minority (Serbs). The number of students enrolled has increased by more than 80% in the last 15 years whilst the number of those repeating their first year has tripled. No national data set exists but an analysis of 8 cohorts of one higher education institution analyses the probability of drop-out, finding that part time and mature students are more likely to drop-out. | Dujic (2006) Kosor (2009) PLA on Drop-out, Prague, 2013 |

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | National goals are: to reduce the amount of time students are taking to complete and to improve completion rates in Technical, Biomedical, Biotechnical and Natural Sciences. | |
| Cyprus | There are 30 higher education institutions in Cyprus, most of them private. Approximately 67% of secondary school leavers are admitted to a higher education institution. The government has introduced reforms to regulate and control private universities and specifically to improve access to the "least restricted environment possible" for students with disabilities. Data on drop-out is not available. | BIS (2009) |
| Czech Republic | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 75%. Completion rate for Tertiary B is 59%. Drop-out rates have been rapidly increasing over the past five years, particularly amongst first year undergraduates. In certain subjects such as Engineering, Agriculture, Humanities and Informatics drop-out rates are higher than 50%. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) PLA on Drop-out, Prague, 2013 |
| Denmark | Completion rate of Tertiary A degrees is 80% but 3% are reoriented with success to a tertiary B programme. Completion rate for Tertiary B is 68%. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) |
| Estonia | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 68%. In the last 15 years enrolment in higher education has grown rapidly. Three times as many students entered HE in 2008 as in 1993. 1 in 10 students have interrupted their studies for more than a year. No data on completion rates from Estonia in <i>Education at a Glance 2013</i> . | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2008) Beerkens, et al (2011) <i>Eurostudent Survey IV</i> (2011) |
| Finland | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 76%. 1 in 10 students have interrupted their studies for more than a year. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) <i>Eurostudent Survey IV</i> (2011) |
| France | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 68%. Completion rate for Tertiary B is 73%. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) |
| Germany | Completion rates for tertiary A degrees is 75%. Completion rate for Tertiary B is 75%. Drop-out rates differ across courses, for example in social science courses drop-out has reduced to 10%, whereas in the sciences it has not reduced. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) RANLHE (2011,a) |
| Greece | Since educational reform in 1997 there has been an increase in the number of students entering higher education and a range of new university departments. The system is highly stratified with choice being driven largely by social class. | Sianou-Kyrgiou (2010) |

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | No data on completion is available. | |
| Hungary | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 48%. Completion rate for Tertiary B is 42%. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) |
| Ireland | Have specific policies to increase completion rates but no requirement on higher education institutions to report them. The Higher Education Authority has not traditionally collected retention rates or disaggregated them for non-traditional students. Completion rates for Tertiary A and B combine at 78%. No data on completion rates from Ireland in <i>Education at a Glance</i> , 2008 or 2013. | Eurydice (2011) RANLHE (2011,a) |
| Italy | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 46%. No data on completion rates from Italy in <i>Education at a Glance 2013</i> . Drop-out fluctuated between 35,000 to 113,000 students per year in the period 1969-2009. Reform of the university system in 2011, expansion of higher education and shorter courses increased enrolment but only partially reduced drop-out rates. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2008) Rai (2012) |
| Latvia | In 2010/2011 annual percentage drop-out for full time students was 14.2% and 19.8% for part time students. Currently proposals to close many universities in Latvia because of concerns about quality. Only 40% of lecturers have a degree. No data on completion rates from Latvia in <i>Education at a Glance 2008</i> or 2013. | PLA on Drop-out, Prague, 2013 <i>University News</i> , 2012 |
| Lithuania | No relevant data currently available | |
| Luxembourg | No relevant data currently available | |
| Malta | No relevant data currently available | |
| Netherlands | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 72%. A multi-level study of 9,000 students and 60 courses indicates that completion is reliant on a combination of 3 factors: student level, course/institute level and government level. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) Hofman and Berg (2005) |
| Poland | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 62%. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) |
| Portugal | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 67%. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) |
| Romania | No relevant data currently available. | |

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Slovak Republic | Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 71%. Completion rate for Tertiary B is 76%. | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) |
| Slovenia | <p>Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 65%.</p> <p>Almost one third of 1st year students do not proceed to their 2nd year, this has been increasing over the past 5 years.</p> <p>The Research and Innovation Strategy is to lower drop-out rates by 35% by 2020.</p> <p>No data on completion rates from Slovenia in <i>Education at a Glance 2013</i>.</p> | <p><i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2008)</p> <p><i>Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia, 2011-2020</i></p> |
| Spain | <p>Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 78%.</p> <p>Completion rate for Tertiary B is 73%.</p> <p>A variety of terms are used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>rate of abandon</i>: the number of students who did not enrol in the last 2 years compared to the number who enrolled in the year they began their studies. - <i>drop-out/desertion</i>: involuntary abandonment, moving to another course or institution, entering other forms of education outside higher education or the labour market. - <i>retention or prolongation of studies</i>: difference between time spent and expected time for completion. | <p>Hernandez (2006)</p> <p>RANLHE (2011a)</p> |
| Sweden | <p>Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 48%. Completion rate for Tertiary B is 50%.</p> <p>(These figures include students entering single courses who may never intend to study all courses needed for a degree).</p> <p>In Sweden the terms drop-out and retention are not used and students are allowed to pick up their studies when they wish, with no set time period for finishing a degree. The term used is completion and this is measured. Completion rates are calculated as an index of studies over a 1 year period (HAS). In the year 2006/7 the average student completion was 83% at universities, 77% university colleges and 93 % in special institutions.</p> | <p><i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013)</p> <p>RANLHE (2011a)</p> |
| United Kingdom | <p>Completion rate for tertiary A degrees is 79%.</p> <p>Completion rate for Tertiary B is 50%.</p> | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) |
| Norway | <p>Completion rate for Tertiary A degrees is 59%.</p> <p>Completion rate for Tertiary B is 59%.</p> | <i>Education at a Glance</i> (OECD, 2013) |

What are the key approaches taken in the literature to address and understand drop-out and completion?

By analysing existing research it is possible to generate the following three theories. These theories are helpful in structuring possible policy responses: a) responses that seek to help students adapt; b) those that modify the nature of higher education; and c) actions that address the broader environment in which higher education operates.

1. **Student Assimilation:** Where the student must change and learn to succeed and fit in to higher education. Here the emphasis is on improving the student's academic performance and ability to adapt to the higher education environment. This implies a remedial approach, offering support to remedy any deficit in studying and writing skills and taking measures to enhance individual confidence and resilience.
2. **Higher Education Transformation:** where higher education policy and institutional practices must change to meet the needs of diverse students. Here there is a focus on "institutional habitus", the ways in which the institution, as shaped by current policy, creates a sense of belonging for all students, including those who have not traditionally accessed higher education. This addresses matters such as pedagogy, curriculum change, the cultural, social and physical environment; at a policy level it traces how factors such as financial support for students and flexibility of higher education structures may facilitate retention.
3. **Socio-cultural Change:** where students, policy and institutions are all shaped by the dominant values and practices of the society and these values are what need to change. Here the focus is on such factors as "class", "race", gender and disability which have an overarching function in shaping assumptions and cultural messages about what types of educational opportunities are deemed suitable for different groups of students. These assumptions shape both provision and the expectations of students themselves in multiple ways, some overt and some more subtle.

The third may be the most important. For example in their study of working class students who had dropped out Quinn et al (2005), found that even where policy prioritised widening participation and some institutional measures were in place both to change pedagogic practice and to provide remedial support for students, there was still a cultural narrative of working class drop-out, in society, family and early schooling, which suggested that such students probably would drop-out. This had a negative shaping effect on student behaviour and expectations. It is also the most difficult to address because it cannot be tackled by individuals or institutions alone but requires a broader cultural shift across organisations and society.

Chapter 2

Why do students drop-out?

From research evidence this report has generated **six key factors** leading students to drop-out. Research indicates that it is often a combination of these factors that leads to drop-out and there is no one essential reason. There is no complete agreement amongst researchers as to which factors are the most significant and it is very difficult to create an absolute hierarchy of impact amongst them. However the six factors are listed here in what seems from most studies to be the order of overall importance.

1. **Socio-cultural factors:** where there is an expectation and self-fulfilling prophecy on the part of families, local communities and university staff that non-traditional students will not complete their studies. This influences the way such students are treated and the way they think of themselves, normalising drop-out for them. Regional cultures and local job markets also have a strong influence on patterns of drop-out, helping to shape student expectations as to whether it is worth completing their studies.
2. **Structural factors:** where the unequal positioning of the student in society because of poverty, class, race, gender causes pressures that make it difficult to persist. Such pressures might include coming from communities where higher education is not valued and even disparaged, or not having sufficient family income to pay for the resources needed to support study. Structural factors also help determine the quality of education they have received at school level and the range of subjects available to study.
3. **Policy factors:** where strategic decisions about HE negatively impact on the ability of students to complete. This can include aspects such as removing financial support to students, cutting resources for universities, removing transition programmes from Further Education (FE) to higher education.
4. **Institutional Factors:** where institutional cultures and practices do not support students to succeed. This can include factors such as poor assessment practices, unsupportive staff who do not respect student difference, curricula and pedagogies that are rarely student-centred and fail to acknowledge diverse forms of knowledge; inaccessible buildings and facilities and lack of recognition of the needs of students with disabilities.
5. **Personal Factors:** where illness, mental health issues, traumatic experiences or the influence of family, peers or cultural, work or religious commitments lead students to withdraw. Caring responsibilities have been found to have a strong impact on drop-out, as has living at home and travelling long distances to get to university.
6. **Learning Factors:** where student approaches to learning and/or poor quality higher education teaching prevents them from completing their studies. This might include such aspects as prior ability and poor qualifications, choosing the wrong course of study, poor attendance at lectures and seminars, problems with conventions of academic writing, problems with metacognition and goal-setting, difficulties in recognising how their studies relate to future career opportunities, poorly organised and non-stimulating teaching.

All of these factors are **inter-related**, for example, personal factors such as the influence of having to work during study, are determined by structural factors such as poverty; and poor approaches to learning can be the result of lack of access to good quality school education and lack of cultural capital within the family. For this reason a holistic approach to retention is necessary: one which acknowledges all these factors and their inter-relationships.

One question that has preoccupied researchers is why some students experiencing these problems are able to complete their studies and some are not. The RANLHE project (2011) for example focused on student **resilience** in overcoming what for many were very difficult circumstances. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation project (Thomas, 2012) explicitly linked retention with student success more generally, arguing that creating benefits for all students will assist retention. A small scale quantitative survey in Scotland comparing students who had left university with those who had continued (Christie, Munro and Fisher, 2007) found that students who continued had experienced some of the same risk factors as those who had dropped out, such as loneliness, isolation, poor choice of course and financial problems. Hence for some students problems can be insurmountable and for some they are not. However, that study lacked a qualitative element and so could not reveal how this insurmountability might be socio-culturally or structurally influenced.

Does widening participation lead to drop-out?

The relationship between widening participation and drop-out is complex and one cannot be understood without the other. It is not widening participation per se that causes drop-out. For example Denmark which is recognised as being highly successful in widening participation, has the lowest drop-out rates in Europe, whilst countries like Germany where students are relatively homogeneous still have high rates of drop-out in comparison to Denmark.

It is important to distinguish between widening participation and massification. Massification is when higher education is taken up by large numbers of people, rather than being the preserve of only a small percentage of the population. Widening participation is when those accessing and succeeding in higher education are fully representative of the diversity of the population and when there is equality of outcome across these groups. Massification can occur without the changes in the system that would actually widen participation and can also lead to a stratified system. In the UK, for example, numbers of students attending university have increased greatly, but the proportion of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds has actually dropped since the 1970s (Reay, David and Ball, 2005). In Poland it is this massification of higher education without full attention to the diverse needs included within this greater number of students that experts believe has led to an increase in drop-out (RANLHE, 2011a).

Widening participation also implies that types of students are evenly distributed across different types of higher education institutions and degree subjects. This is not the case. In the UK, for example, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are concentrated in those institutions and subjects considered to be of a lower level.

Drop-out is not confined to non-traditional students. However there is some evidence, for example in Sweden, that drop-out rates are low from elite institutions and elite subjects but higher in those where non-traditional students are more likely to attend, (RANLHE, 2011a). In the UK only 2% of students drop-out of Medicine and Dentistry. The elite Russell group of universities had the highest continuation rate and the "new" universities created since 1992 had the lowest rate (National Audit Office, 2007).

What are the consequences of drop-out?

Quinn et al (2005) and RANLHE (2011 a, b and c) have found that for the student, withdrawing early need not be inherently seen as negative, as students who had dropped out often felt they had gained from their period of university study, now had a clearer idea of what they wanted to do and felt more prepared to return and succeed in the future. For many students realising that this was not the right time place or course for them allowed them to make a positive decision to move forward in the future.

Nevertheless this is dependent on opportunities being open to them after drop-out. For example amongst the 80 students in the UK interviewed by Quinn et al (2005) only one did not intend to return to education at a later stage. However, they had little information of how they might do that and were not aware of existing opportunities to study in higher education part time, or switch course, or of the funding issues involved in returning. In the UK the emphasis is on full time completion in 3 years and flexibility is not the norm.

These students also found that although they felt they had gained valuable skills and experience from their time in HE this was not recognised. Job agencies did not have strategies to build on this and prospective employers looked negatively upon students who had dropped out. Consequently most students were only able to get low level low paid jobs.

In contrast, RANLHE found that in Sweden it is the norm to be able to leave university, work and then pick up your credits and return later and therefore the prevalent conception of drop-out as a life crisis does not apply.

It would be most useful to have a study which compared labour market and other outcomes for higher education completers and non-completers, but currently such a study has not been identified.

What patterns exist for different under-represented groups?

➤ Students from a low socio-economic background

While much of the literature surveyed for this report dates to the previous decade (an indication of the dearth of recent research), the evidence suggests that drop-out is a particular problem for students of low economic status. A study of access and retention compared data from across ten countries. Socio-economic status seems to have the most important impact on drop-out and to dominate all other factors such as ethnicity and gender (Thomas and Quinn, 2007). There are also patterns of retention within this group. For example in the UK white working class men in provincial areas are the most likely to drop-out (National Audit Office, 2007).

Statistical analysis of the probability of withdrawal for UK university students indicated that non-completion was more probable for students from classes ranked low according to occupation than for other classes (Smith and Naylor, 2001). In Scotland the poorest students were most likely to withdraw early (Forsyth and Furlong, 2003). Using a combination of school and university administrative data sets, Powdthavee and Vignoles (2009) show that there is a sizeable and statistically significant gap in the rate of withdrawal after the first year of university between the most advantaged and disadvantaged English students. Entry qualifications are a crucial factor (NAO, 2007) but they need to be placed in context. They are themselves strongly shaped by structural factors such as class and poverty which determine opportunities to access good school education and the resources available within the family to support study. Thus those from lower-socio-economic groups are likely to have lower entry qualifications overall.

The interviews with students conducted by RANLHE (2011c) across England, Ireland, Germany, Poland, Scotland, Spain and Sweden indicated that even those with high qualifications, but from lower socio-economic groups, may be at risk of drop-out, because of poverty, family problems and peer pressures.

A survey of 462 students based on a cross section of higher education institutions in the UK who did not enter their second year of study at their original university during 2006-7 found that those from less privileged circumstances had more negative experiences and were more likely to work more than 13 hours a week, a factor that has been found to contribute to early withdrawal. Finance and employment issues were more likely to lead to the drop-out of older students, male students, ethnic minority students, and students with dependents (Yorke and Longden, 2008).

Being a first generation entrant where no-one in the family has had previous experience of higher education is linked to socio-economic status and also has a significant impact on drop-out. For example in Italy undergraduates with fathers or both parents who only have compulsory schooling are more likely to drop-out (Aina, 2012).

Analysis of data from 36,574 students who had left university early in England suggested that students who come from areas with low participation in HE are less likely to re-apply to higher education once they have dropped out (Rose-Adams, 2012).

➤ **Male and female students**

There are gendered patterns in drop-out. OECD (2013) reports that overall, completion for women is 10% higher than for men. As participation increases, women now make up more than half of all higher education students in many countries, but **is often men who are less likely to complete**. For example, in Italy it was found that male students were more likely to drop-out (Aina, 2012). Davies and Elias (2003) who conducted a survey of students dropping out in the UK found several differences between women and men in reasons for withdrawing from higher education. Men cited academic and financial issues whilst women emphasised non-academic personal issues. Rose-Adams, (2012) also found that men they are less likely to spontaneously re-apply to HE once they have dropped out.

The inter-relationships between gender and ethnicity are also complex. Fielding et al, (2008) explored the interaction of factors such as institution and subject area in relation to minority ethnic and gender related differences in degree attainment, via a multilevel statistical analysis of data from The Higher Education Statistics Agency and the National Satisfaction Survey in the UK. They found that there was much variation across ethnic groups and subject disciplines. However their findings indicate that female minority ethnic students outperformed their male counterparts in most subjects and were less likely to drop-out.

Subject choice also has a relationship to gender and drop-out. For example science and engineering subjects remain male-dominated and these are the disciplines where drop-out tends to be higher, (e.g. in Germany). A survey of 1,718 students in University College Oslo, cross referenced with student register data on drop-out found that in female dominated programmes such as nursing and early childhood education there was very low probability of women dropping out (Mastekaasa and Smeby, 2008). So it may be the case that the gendered nature of subject choice may help explain some of the differences in drop-out between males and females.

➤ **Minority ethnic students**

Singh (2009) concluded that there is generally very little raw data in the public domain on minority ethnic students and retention. Most research originates in the UK and the Netherlands.

In his review of the literature Singh (2009) showed that there is increased recognition that direct and indirect racism is a significant cause of problems facing BME students. His review also suggested that ethnic minority students are less likely to travel away from home and also more likely to choose institutions with high drop-out rates, thus suggesting issues with integration and with well-informed preparation for higher education.

Non completion varies between ethnic groups. For example in England, 88% of Chinese entrants continued into their second year as opposed to 86% of white entrants. However, the rate for black entrants was lower at 82% and only 79% for Pakistani and Bangladeshi entrants (HEFCE, 2010).

Research in the Netherlands also showed that **students from ethnic minority backgrounds on average have lower completion rates than non-minority students** (see for example Crul and Wolff, 2002, Jennisen, 2006). A number of reasons have been found: less contact with other students and lecturers, so less socially and academically integrated; greater work and family commitments; negative cultural atmosphere and a sense that they do not belong; and financial problems because ethnic minority students are often associated with being from low socio-economic backgrounds.

However, the results are not conclusive. Serveriens and Woolf's 2008 survey of 523 students across the Netherlands is one of a number that found no difference in social and academic integration amongst ethnic minority and majority students and yet the ethnic minority students performed less well academically. This appears to suggest that factors external to the university have impact and this is supported by qualitative studies such as RANLHE (2011c).

Hofman and Berg (2003) investigated the extent to which ethnic-specific differences occur in higher education and the underlying factors behind them. The research sample was made up of about 7,000 students at universities in the Netherlands. The authors established that ethnic-specific differences in achievement do indeed exist, even after background variables such as sex have been corrected. Structural modelling shows that it is prior education, and income that has the significant impact on study success. This suggests that problems associated with low socio-economic status become magnified when the student is BME.

There has been some exploration of access and completion in relation to migrant groups. Crul and Schneider (2005) compared the experiences of Turkish second generation migrants in the Netherlands and Germany. The more open educational system in the Netherlands has proven beneficial, providing them with greater access and completion in Higher Education than in Germany. Nevertheless in both countries Turkish second generation migrants do less well than the general population and there is also a gender gap with Turkish women facing particular problems.

Herfs 2003 examined the retention of ethnic minority university students in universities in the Netherlands, especially at the University of Utrecht. The study focuses on Surinamese, Antillean, and Aruban students, foreign refugee students, particularly medical doctors, and Turkish and Moroccan locally educated students. The study concluded that although each category may have specific problems, the issue is not academic ability and targeted support would enable them to complete their studies and succeed.

Although little information on access and drop-out exists in this case, another important group to consider are indigenous peoples who are now in a minority. For example Lund (2000) examined the case of the Sami people in Norway and concludes that because of a longstanding policy of assimilation, Norway's adult Sami population has not received an education built on its own language and culture. Although the assimilation policy is now officially abolished, its effects are widespread. The study concluded that adult education specifically designed and organized for Samis is acutely needed, particularly at higher education level.

➤ ***Students with disabilities***

It is difficult to find data relating to students with disabilities and drop-out and this is an area that needs more investigation. Disability is a spectrum and includes very visible physical problems such as paraplegia and hidden disabilities such as mental health issues.

In some countries there is an indication that more people with disabilities are accessing higher education. For example, the number of students with disabilities at Sweden's universities and university colleges is increasing and has increased markedly in the last ten years. It was only in the early 1970s that the first students with disabilities enrolled there.

The issues faced by students with disabilities include physical access and the need for adjustments and support in accessing the curriculum and the social spaces of the university. However, possibly more important are attitudinal changes which encourage staff and fellow students to focus on the abilities of the student and the commonalities they have with them.

RANLHE (2011b) in exploring issues of disability and retention across England, Ireland, Scotland, Poland, Germany, Sweden and Spain found that university staff considered social class to be an important factor when considering disability and drop-out. In the case of some students, particularly those from higher socio-economic groups, their parents have advocated for them throughout education and they are very aware of their entitlements. Those who faced more problems and were less likely to complete were those coming from non-traditional backgrounds or whose disabilities were compounded by other pressures such as being a single parent.

Disability is more prevalent in some countries than others and for different reasons. In Croatia, for example, there are high levels of disability due to the Homeland war. Hence the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) financially supports (i.e. 1st year 50 % of fees) full time students that are disabled, students with 60 % disability, Homeland war veterans or their children.

Other key factors influencing drop-out

There are other factors influencing drop-out and these tend to be linked to available educational opportunities at an earlier age, which again are largely determined by socio-economic status.

➤ ***Prior subject take up and achievement***

There is evidence from research conducted in the UK that low entry qualifications are linked to propensity to drop-out (Jones, 2008). The opportunity to study a range of subjects at school level also has an effect. For example research in the USA indicates that those students who had studied foreign languages at school were more likely to succeed in university (see BIS, 2008).

➤ ***Type of higher education institution attended***

There is some evidence that drop-out differs across types of Higher Education institution and the more elite the institution the less likely it is for students to drop-out. Cohort studies in the Netherlands indicated that retention rates are higher in research universities than they are in HBOs - those higher education institutions that offer more vocational education (see Von Stolk et al, 2007). RANLHE (2011a) found similar patterns in Germany and Sweden. However, Rose-Adams (2012) found that in England, although drop-out overall was lower in High Tariff higher education institutions (those elite institutions where students needed high qualifications to enter), drop-out amongst non-traditional students was higher from High Tariff higher education institutions than it was from Lower Tariff institutions. Thus, something more than "high quality" academic provision is required in order to retain under-represented students in elite institutions.

The relationship between financial supports and grants, tuition fees and loans is also important but is not within the remit of this report. Assessing the impact of tuition fees in European countries is rather difficult as it is rather early to detect the long term trends and there is very little concrete evidence. Consequently, the Commission has recently launched a major study on the impact of cost-sharing in higher education, which will explore the issues in some detail.

Chapter 3

Part time learners and drop-out

Why are part time learners important?

The findings of Eurostudent Survey IV (2011) point to the predominance of "unofficial" part time study across Europe. While over 80% of students are classified as full time (and in five countries part time study does not formally exist), a very high percentage of students are *de facto* part time, spending no more than 20 hours a week on study and mainly combining it with employment. So, for example, officially there are few part time students in Estonia, but a study of 2,496 students from 24 higher education institutions reveals that 61% of "full time" students were in paid employment, many of them working full time (see Beerkens et al, 2011).

Bohonnek, et al (2010) found that across Europe the employment rate of students with low socio-economic status is higher than among students with high socio-economic status. In 14 of 22 European countries the contribution of students' jobs reaches a substantial share of more than 40% of total income; **the more time spent on the job, the higher the risk of study failure.** It was also found that 80% of all jobs have no close relationship to students' studies.

Instead of being a marginal activity, part time study is a strong feature of the evolving higher education landscape. However, as Jones (2008) pointed out, most measures, policy and research on retention relate to full time not part time students and there is little clarity about data collection for them. In Latvia, for example, budget policy focuses on full time students, whereas drop-out is much more prevalent amongst part time students.

What is the relationship between widening participation and part time study?

There is some evidence that strategies to widen participation result in an increase in part time students. For example, in the academic year 2002-2003 the student support system in Norway went through a major restructuring. The main changes included an increase in the basic support, introduction of progression dependent grants, and abolishing the maximum income limit for obtaining a student loan. Using data from the State Educational Loan Fund and additional data from Statistics Norway, Opheim (2005), demonstrated an increase in the numbers among part-time students, apprentices, and mature students.

Part time study is associated with flexibility and movement across different types of institution and it can also be linked to higher rates of drop-out. In their review of the US system Allen et al (2005) found that in the United States students are more likely to view part and full time as a continuum of activity. Only 67% of students in private institutions and 24% of students in public institutions respectively graduate within 4 years. They concluded that although part time study increased the time to complete and drop-out, it is essential in providing opportunities for non-traditional students.

Are part time students more likely to drop-out?

Part time students appear to have less chance of completion according to OECD data (Education at a Glance, 2013). In Croatia, for example, where they are a significant part of the student body they are more likely to drop-out (Kosor, 2009).

More in depth evidence such as research by Callender (2012) suggested problems leading to non-completion amongst part time students include: timetabling difficulties; poor channels of information; marginalisation from full-time student body. The specific difficulties students face relate to the reasons why they are studying part time. Combining study with employment can also pose problems of reconciling work and study priorities, changes in working patterns and demand, and redundancy. Those studying part time in combination with childcare face problems with the cost, logistics and unreliability of childcare, plus illness and other needs of children.

It appears that it is not working per se that increases the likelihood of drop-out, but **the type of work that is undertaken and the number of hours**. When students undertake work that has some relation to their degree course it can be beneficial, but only 20% of students have employment that is study-related (Equanet, 2012). However, working more than 13 hours a week has been found to increase drop-out (Yorke and Longden, 2008). Qualitative studies such as Quinn, et al (2005) have found that students can drift into working more and more hours and gradually their employment overtakes their studies.

How can we improve retention of part time students?

A number of national level strategies have been employed to improve access and retention of part time students, such as the promotion of distance learning. In Sweden the Net University which coordinates the IT-supported distance learning courses offered by higher education institutions, began to operate in 2002. One of its objectives was to offer higher education to students from different backgrounds and make higher education more accessible both geographically and in terms of time. During an initial period higher education institutions were allocated extra funding for courses offered through the Net University. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (2005) reported that in the autumn semester of 2004 it had 37,900 students enrolled: 11 % of the total student population in higher education.

At an institutional level, curriculum change which focuses on the existing skills and attributes of part time students, rather than seeing them as potential problems has supported part time students and reduced drop-out. For example, in Ireland a study was made of a part-time ordinary degree (Bachelor of Technology) in Electrical Services Engineering (Kelly, 2006). This programme is populated almost exclusively by mature students (mainly electricians) who complete this degree in four-years part-time. Adopting a student centred approach, where recognition is given to their experiential and prior learning, has promoted success and completion. It has reduced the previously high rate of drop-out and improved grades.

Chapter 4

What can be done to promote the completion of under-represented groups in higher education?

National Policies and strategies

"Dropping out is not necessarily an indication of the individual student's failure, but high drop-out rates may well indicate that the education system is not meeting the needs of students" (OECD, 2008, p. 94).

What is the overview in Europe?

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) Bologna Implementation report (2012), reviewing progress from the 47 countries involved, stresses the social dimension of higher education and the importance of widening participation and emphasises the need for students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background.

It concludes that **the expansion of HE has not benefitted all groups in equal measure**: as previously discussed, **certain groups are more likely to drop-out**. Almost all EHEA countries are trying to address this via various policy approaches. Most combine policy actions focusing on selected groups with general policy measures targeted at all or prospective students, such as financial support, outreach, alternative access, guidance counselling.

There is a remarkable diversity of fee and support systems ranging from where no students pay fees and most receive financial support to those where all pay fees and few receive financial support. In-country and between- country levels of fees are very diverse. Student support services are also very heterogeneous.

In 15 countries the stated completion rate has an impact on the funding formula for higher education institutions and in some a bonus is given where completion rates are high. In England institutional funding for widening participation is to be used to help increase retention. Funding is also used to exact penalties on students, so for example in France and Spain the cost of fees for some courses is increased if students enrol a second or third time. Similarly in the Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia and Slovakia courses that are normally free are charged for if the student enrolls a second or third time (Eurydice, 2011).

EHEA (2012) concluded that existing systems of monitoring and reporting do not allow a full evaluation of whether these services are accessible to all and to what extent they respond to needs of a diverse student body.

What are the limitations of policy strategies?

Social policy changes are vitally important in addressing drop-out but other factors also need to be considered. Aina (2012) concluded that intergenerational transmission of education and resources cannot be changed through the implementation of social policies alone. Changes to the university system are not enough to help less privileged children. Although the Italian university system has virtually no entry barriers, tuition fees are low and there are a large number of public universities, which, in principle should give the same opportunities to children regardless of family background, inequalities emerge both in university attendance and the likelihood of withdrawal. Moreover, Italy has a particularly high rate of drop-out.

What examples exist of useful national policy strategies?

➤ **Outreach**

The UK has focused much of its widening participation activity on stimulating demand and on pre-entry interventions, in particular the English *Aimhigher* programme. This programme was a national collaborative programme aimed to widen participation by raising awareness; aspirations and attainment amongst underrepresented groups particularly lower socio-economic groups and the disabled. Activities included university summer schools, subject enrichment programmes, master classes and information and guidance. Although the programme was positively evaluated it has now been disbanded by the government and emphasis has shifted to institutions developing their own initiatives.

In a review of the literature Thomas (2011) found there has been limited research about the impact of such interventions on students' retention and success in higher education. However, research on completion does identify the importance of the factors such interventions address: pre-entry decision making, expectations about higher education, and academic preparation.

Austria has developed a programme *Studienchecker*, to assist pre-university students in their decision making and career and degree choice. Although the programme has not yet been evaluated it should help address Austria's currently problematic retention issues, as drop-out is often linked to the wrong choice of course. In the pre-final school year students are helped to develop a portfolio of information about future choices. They complete a questionnaire Explorix which helps them to evaluate their strengths and potentials and they also receive support from counsellors. In the final year of school this process intensifies with added input from educational institutions and professions.

➤ **Financial Support**

Norway and Denmark national systems involve the state supporting students financially, with social justice goals given pre-eminence. In **Norway** increased support has particularly increased the participation of part time students, apprentices and mature students.

Denmark has the lowest drop-out rates amongst EU countries. In Denmark the national funding system is based on ECTS with an incentive on higher education institutions to retain students. Each higher education institution has a contract with the Minister for Education with a commitment to reduce drop-out. Students receive state funding, including an extra year of funding if necessary. Student evaluations and surveys of study environments are conducted at a national level. All these factors are considered important in promoting completion. However, there is concern that 20% of students are not completing the degree they started and that faster access to the labour market is needed.

Other forms of financial support directed at particular under-represented groups have also proven useful in addressing drop-out. Research in **Canada** (Thompson, 2003) suggested that it is still financial barriers that most deter older learners and lead to drop-out and therefore tuition fee waivers for mature students are beneficial. However, because of poor publicity, take up of fee waivers has been disappointing.

Low income families have been targeted for support in the **USA**. Matched savings accounts such as Individual Development Accounts are tools used to save and secure assets such as higher education. They are essentially a contract between a family and an organization. In a higher education context, amounts saved by families are matched by specific higher education institutions on the basis that the child will study there in the future. Once a student enters the higher education institution the jointly amassed funds are paid directly to the educational institution to cover tuition, books and computers. This is helpful in addressing potential drop-out due to problems of poverty (see BIS, 2009).

➤ **Equity Action Plans**

Addressing completion in a piecemeal fashion is not effective. The *Equity of Access to Higher Education in Ireland Action Plan 2005-2007* is a good model because it addresses widening participation and retention on a number of levels. Financially it embedded access within higher education funding and introduced a new Recurrent Grant Model to support equity and access as part of the core grant to universities. It developed a national framework for access policies built on consultation with stakeholders including disadvantaged groups and evaluation with higher education institutions. New routes from further education to higher education were established with closer links between communities and universities, systematic collection of data on underrepresented groups, and participation targets and evaluation measures were combined with innovative teaching and learning. Specific projects include the *Springboard* project where higher education institutions bid for funding to support unemployed adults into higher education.

➤ **Alternative access**

Providing alternative forms of access to higher education can also support completion. Since 2001, people in **Norway** who have not completed secondary school are able to enter higher education based on documented non-formal learning: *realkompetanse*. Oppheim & Helland (2006) have evaluated this reform based on interviews with key personnel at selected universities and university colleges, and on quantitative data from the applicant register. The evaluation indicates that the reform provides a second chance for learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds and a foundation for their successful completion. Nevertheless there are considerable variations in how the universities and university colleges have adjusted to the reform with geographical location and supply of students the key factors. University colleges in rural areas with a low number of applicants, in general, react more positively and it seems to be easier for applicants to be assessed as qualified for studies in such institutions.

Sweden also has a system for assessing real-life skills as a basis for selection and entry to higher education. Alternative selection is used by 14 higher education institutions. In the majority of cases this involves some form of quota system. Most usually a quota of places is earmarked for students who have completed a college programme. Gender quotas come second. Quotas are also based on ethnic background, vocational experience, where applicants live and the assessment of real-life skills. This system appears to assist in the access and retention of under-represented groups to higher education, particularly in vocational areas such as nursing and teacher-training.

The *Higher Education Access Route* (HEAR) programme runs across all universities in **Ireland** and is specifically targeted at long-term unemployed, low income and first generation students. RANLHE (2011a) suggested that it is having a beneficial impact on access and retention.

➤ **Flexibility**

Flexible pathways such as allowing students to begin their degrees in community college and then transfer to university are a norm rather than an exception in **the USA**. However, in the US context, there has been considerable debate about whether attending a community college "diverts" students from completing a degree. Multiple entry and access points from higher education have become part of provision in **South Africa**. Research in **the UK** (Quinn, et al, 2005) indicated that the ability to make such transfers without penalty is an essential part of creating a flexible lifelong learning higher education, which accommodates the needs of the many students who need to withdraw but wish to return at a later date. These initiatives would promote integration and transfer, but also require a shift in ideas about what "normal" higher education study is.

In Sweden students can leave a degree programme enter the labour market and then return to study later. They do not lose the benefit of modules studied. Drop-out rates in Sweden are comparatively low.

➤ **Strategic engagement with region, community and employers**

As previously suggested, regional factors, such as local cultures and local employment opportunities have a significant impact on drop-out (see Quinn et al, 2005). However, this tends to be ignored when developing national policies. Examples from Canada and Australia provide useful strategies to address the regional dimension. In **Canada** the state of Alberta has developed *Learning Alberta* which is a strong local plan to improve their advanced education system, including improving access and completion in higher education. One of the features of this approach has been to start from the in-depth study of research findings.

Increasing the local applicability of HE and thus the chances of completion and entry to employment requires much better cross-sectoral and regional collaboration between higher education, further education and schools and between the education providers and the community. The Northern Corridor Education Precinct (NCEP) in **Australia** brings together all education providers in this area in collaboration with the community, with a Steering Committee that is very open and representative. It organises specific initiatives bringing sectors together, such as the *Cabbage Tree Creek Learning Project* that focuses on enterprise education.

In Europe, Dalarna University in **Sweden** which is based in a remote rural area has increased access and retention by collaborating closely with local employers, for example on a number of Steering Committees which include input into the curriculum.

➤ **Expert Advice**

Helping the higher education sector to respond to issues such as a multicultural environment requires expert knowledge and a high profile in relation to institutions, policy makers and employers. The National Expert Centre for Ethnic Minorities in Higher Education (ECHO) in **the Netherlands** has provided a successful model whose role is to enhance access, progression and transition to the labour market amongst ethnic minority students. Their research has had impact on drop-out strategies in higher education institutions in a number of EU countries and has been widely disseminated via bodies such as the European Access Network (EAN). The future of ECHO is currently under review.

What Institutional Strategies exist to promote completion?

Tinto (2007) in reviewing the literature concluded there are five key conditions for student retention:

- 1) Expectation - have high expectations for students to succeed
- 2) Advice -provision of clear and consistent advice
- 3) Support -provision of academic, personal and social support
- 4) Involvement -involve students as valued members of the institution
- 5) Learning - develop settings that foster learning.

However, others (for example, NESET, 2011) have argued that there also needs to be more recognition of socio-cultural factors extrinsic to the institution and to higher education, such as access to educational opportunities/attainment at school level. Institutional measures alone cannot fully address the issue.

The RANLHE project (2011b) interviewed diverse staff including lecturers, student support and management including one Vice Chancellor (President) in all eight partner HEIs, which ranged from elite to newer and reform institutions. Staff were specifically asked to identify factors that promoted retention and restricted non-completion. Factors promoting retention were named as: time for academic supervision of students, particularly at the beginning of study; work placements integrated into the courses; extra support sessions in essay writing; being responsive to students' life patterns but acknowledging extenuating circumstances. Factors against included: lack of inclusive practice for both black students, who sometimes experienced ostracisation and isolation and cultural spaces that favour white middle class students. The examples given were not necessarily systematic: in particular they do not map against Tinto's conditions for retention outlined above, nor do they really address extrinsic socio-cultural factors. This suggests that at institutional level the issue of drop-out is often approached in a rather piecemeal way and without much reference to the research literature.

Although there may be questions about how far systematic and fully embedded approaches to drop-out exist at higher education institution level, there is evidence in the literature of much activity at university level designed to support students to complete. Reviewing the range of institutional initiatives reveals a wide range of measures that differ according to the ethos and the targets of the institution. An overarching problem is that initiatives may exist but not be taken up if they are located on the margins. Integration and mainstreaming are most important. Some initiatives may not be specifically labelled as targeting non-completion but it may be a benefit that derives from them.

Thomas (2012), drawing on evaluation and research across 22 institutions in England and Wales, has found that, in order to be successful in promoting completion, institutional initiatives need to display the following characteristics:

- Mainstream
- Proactive and Developmental
- Relevant
- Publicised via well timed and appropriate media
- Collaborative
- Monitored

Turning to the EU, it is possible to identify a range of key issues that need addressing and innovative activities run by higher education institutions that other institutions could potentially learn from. The following should be read as a range of examples of potential approaches to student retention, referencing relevant research and including examples that have been either self or externally evaluated.

The initiatives have been organised into a 14-point typology which follows the pathway students take into, through and out of higher education:

➤ ***Type 1: Preparing students for higher education***

Institutions have an important role in helping students to prepare for higher education. Interviews with 80 students who had dropped out of university in post 1992 universities (ex- polytechnics) in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (Quinn et al, 2005) indicated that lack of access to clear comprehensive information results in choosing the wrong course and consequent non-completion. One of the specific issues raised was lack of understanding amongst prospective students about the level of mathematical understanding required for certain degree courses. Such problems are particularly true for those who lack "hot knowledge" about university study from family or friends familiar with higher education. Therefore clear and full information needs to be provided to prospective students in prospecti, online and in open days and outreach activities. Outreach activities can take multiple forms such as mentoring and summer schools targeted at students from low participation areas and supplemental programmes to improve skills in subjects like Maths.

Andrews et al (2012) have compiled a compendium of effective practice in higher education retention and success based on evaluation and research in 22 higher education institutions in England and Wales over a three year period. This includes pre-entry initiatives such as: the Informed Study Project at Cardiff University which enables students to measure themselves against the detailed requirements of specific degrees and the transition website at Trinity College Dublin, offering support to students with disabilities pre-entry.

➤ ***Type 2: Supporting students into higher education***

The moment of transition into and during the first year of study is the point when students are most likely to leave. This often coincides with early assignments. Consequently many universities focus retention activities on this early stage and on study support skills.

To quote one research study from South Africa, Onsongo (2006) reviewed admissions and graduation statistics at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and assessed the impact of recent academic support programmes on the pass rate from first year to second year in Engineering degrees. Whilst on average Engineering programmes in South African universities currently graduate about 50-60 % of the students admitted and the highest drop-out occurs in the first year of registration, the Engineering transition support programme at Wits has greatly reduced drop-out.

Harvey and Drew (2006) in reviewing the literature on the first year experience suggested that rather than having all induction information concentrated in a short period at the beginning of the degree, there should be what they call a "long thin induction". This means that small amounts of information and training should be spread at regular intervals throughout the first term. The induction should cover the following issues:

- Course material
- Learning support services
- Information about the university and the locality
- Adaptation to university life
- Becoming an autonomous learner
- Course and assessment requirements
- Developing academic skills.

The university of Turku in Finland has a comprehensive first year programme which emphasises inclusion into the community of fellow students as well as to the academic community. This includes aspects such as: orientation courses and other welcoming events and traditions, peer tutoring over the first months followed by tutoring by a nominated teacher. All students draw up personal study plans for their degrees with the help of a study counselor and/ or tutor. They also continue elements of this programme beyond the first year of study.

Some universities such as the University of Limerick in Ireland have devised social and welcome programmes to ease transition for specific groups such as mature students, those over 65 and the Traveller community.

➤ **Type 3: Tracking student engagement with higher education**

Much research indicates that students start to drift away in their first year and often there is no institutional response until it is too late. Better systems of monitoring and tracking attendance are essential. The TRACKIT project (EUA, 2012) provided an overview of the issues involved in tracking students' progress and examples of initiatives. It concluded that synthesis between national and institutional tracking mechanisms is essential, but also suggests that institutions should track students throughout the life-course, including potential students, active students and graduates. A co-ordinated approach would include combining analysis of administrative data with panel surveys, feedback questionnaires and focus groups.

An example of good practice that they quote is from 2007, when the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, surveyed all former Bachelor students who dropped out in a certain period. In addition to collecting the reasons for dropping out, information was sought on the students' socioeconomic background, their living conditions, study motivations, study behaviour, prior education and current occupation. The reasons for dropping out have been clustered and adequate intervention strategies for improvement of student counselling services before and during studies and study programmes have been developed. It is planned to repeat the survey in order to measure the effectiveness of the implemented measures.

Lund University has developed a tracking programme specifically designed to aid retention, based on an in-depth mapping exercise. Key features include a common standard for student support, collaboration between faculties and central administration, improved transfer of data, and common questionnaires: at entry and exit from university.

In Wales a project targeted at non-traditional students in STEM combined bursaries with electronic attendance monitoring. *UniNanny* was not only designed to validate attendance but also to identify and proactively target students showing signs of withdrawal (Newman-Ford, et al, 2012). Statistical evaluation and qualitative interviews indicated that this system increased student motivation to attend, but could not always counter the personal reasons why they were not able to complete.

➤ **Type 4: Creating a more relevant and supportive curriculum**

In the Netherlands Jansen (2004) researched the relationship between curriculum organization and academic success in the first year of university education. Aspects of curriculum organization that contributed positively to academic success were for example, decreasing the study load by spreading exams and programming fewer parallel courses.

Rather than simply making small adjustments to the existing curriculum, widening participation and retention implies reassessing the mainstream curriculum to ensure that the assumptions, materials and perspectives that favour traditional students are addressed (see Crosling, et al, 2008 for examples). Quinn (2003) demonstrated that even in respect to the mass participation of women this kind of overhaul of the curriculum has not yet been fully addressed. In Norway the University of Oslo *Minorities in Focus* project has focused on recruiting and retaining students with a minority background and has combined positive recruitment with a focus on adapting the curriculum.

Feedback from students is important in creating a more relevant and supportive curriculum and in University of Turku, for example, this is built into curriculum development.

➤ **Type 5: Creating more responsive pedagogies**

Students from Spain interviewed in the RANLHE project (RANLHE, 2011c, 101-2) gave a clear picture of the pedagogical problems that often lead to alienation and drop-out. To promote completion lecturers need a dialogical approach which recognises, respects and responds to the life-world of the student and differences amongst the student body. According to the students the good lecturer sees things from the student perspective, taking an interest in their perceived needs and actively questioning and listening to them in order to help motivate them. In particular they need an approach that acknowledges that students are not all the same and that age differences in particular radically affect student interests and behaviour.

A study of withdrawal and retention across seven universities in New Zealand which involved survey responses from of 681 students found that learner-centredness improves retention where students feel they belong in an institutional culture, where they experience good quality teaching and support for their learning and where their diverse learning preferences are catered for (Zepke, et al, 2006).

Interviews with policy makers, teachers, student counsellors and foreign background students in the Netherlands (39 informants in total) indicated that small-scale teaching methods and a directive learning environment are beneficial to the study progress of foreign background students (Wolff and Severiens, 2005). However, this requires commitment and consistent application.

The use of flexible teaching methods, making the best use of physical and virtual environments and conducting exams electronically, as in the University of Turku, can also be helpful.

➤ **Type 6: Fostering positive approaches to learning**

Research has indicated the significance of knowledge construction and transformation to completion. Successful learning is not just acquisition, it is cooperative learning, being self-regulated, and setting goals for self, and addressing complex problems. 180 students in the first year Psychology course at Erasmus University, Netherlands completed a 55 item questionnaire measuring conceptions of learning. The higher tutors rated the students learning activities, the lower the probability of drop-out; the less time students spend on self-study the higher the probability of drop-out.

What students believe concerning knowledge construction, their ability to learn and their motivation to learn has an impact on their learning strategies. If they are highly motivated they will spend more time on self-study and take a more active role in seminar discussion and project work thus increasing their chances of completion (see Loyens, et al, 2007).

Improving metacognition is fundamentally important to student success. The University of Gent has produced a detailed guide for students, *Think Sharp*, designed to improve their attitude to study and provide step-by-step techniques for developing an active study approach.

➤ **Type 7: Improving formative assessment**

Drop-out is often precipitated by fears about assessment and responses to negative assessments. Even if requiring more resources, formative feedback helping students in the process of assignments is an essential tool for both student and lecturer and can help lecturers respond to learner needs. Russell, (2008) analyses how this helps retention.

➤ **Type 8: Improving student study skills**

Universities have been innovative in developing study skills support to improve completion. For example in Ireland in a collaborative project NUI Maynooth, Dublin Institute of Technology and NUI Galway have gathered a data base of study skills resources and initiatives focusing specifically on the needs of non-traditional students, mature, part time, SES disadvantaged, minority students, and international students. Some of these study skills relate to being able to gauge one's own academic performance and some to acquiring confidence in specific activities such as note taking, academic writing and undertaking examinations. Others are targeted at specific groups, including students with dyslexia.

Many students who lack conventional academic skills have advanced digital literacy and are highly competent in communicating in other media. Increasingly universities are recognizing and building on this. The University of Northumbria, for example, has used social networking to set up e learning groups and e mentoring for students before they enter the university (see Andrews et al, 2012)

➤ **Type 9: Offering financial support to students**

The evidence about institutional grants and bursaries is inconclusive. In the USA need-and-merit based financial support programmes such as the *21st Century scholars* programme in Indiana and the Washington State *Achievers* programme have proved very helpful in keeping non-traditional students in college (see BIS, 2008). Perna and Steele (2011), Singell (2004), and Kerkvliet (2005) all provided evidence that suggests that financial aid supports student retention. However, in the UK students have reported that the existence of bursaries has made little impact on their decisions to stay or leave (Newman–Ford et al, 201).

Qualitative research with students such as RANLHE (2011c) suggested that some forms of financial commitment are particularly stressful for students. Housing, for example, is both important for stability and a substantial area of cost. In Finland a housing supplement is provided for students and this has proven useful (PLA on Drop-out, Prague, 2013).

➤ **Type 10: Offering counselling and personal support to students**

Dealing with a personal crisis can often be a trigger which can ultimately lead to drop-out. A report by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2011) identified a rise in mental health problems amongst students in the UK. The evidence they have gathered includes institutions reporting greater demands for counselling services and survey research across four higher education institutions revealing that 29% of students were exhibiting clinical levels of psychological distress. The report linked this rise to the growth in student numbers and to the more complex pressures faced by non-traditional students. It is important that institutions provide expert counselling for students and the report includes examples of good practice.

However, it is equally important that such support be well signposted, integrated into mainstream provision and de-stigmatised. Quinn et al (2005) found that students who had dropped out in the UK were either unaware of available support or reluctant to stand out from their peers by accessing it. In Denmark it appears that access to guidance and counselling is considered very normal, as it is required by law at all education levels.

Personal support should also include advice to students who are considering dropping out, including information about how to re-enrol in future and the options available to them. The three year "back on course" project run by the Open University in England is now finished, but it offered valuable advice and guidance to those they termed 'early leavers' on how to return to HE (see Rose-Adams, 2012).

➤ **Type 11: Fostering student personal networks**

The RANLHE project (2011c) and others such as Thomas (2012) stressed the importance of recognition and belonging in preventing drop-out; stopping students feeling that they are the only one who has experienced the anxieties and problems they face.

Eggen et al (2007) conducted a survey completed by 1,451 university students in the Netherlands measuring attainment, personal networks, social support and self-esteem. They found that the larger the network and the better quality the relationships the less the chance of dropping out. Personal networks influence student behaviour by peer pressure and social control, but also giving them information on how to behave and what goals to aim for. They also act as a safety net at times of difficulty and crisis.

Institutions can help to foster social networks by means of both peer mentoring and peer tutoring (see Sanders and Higham, 2010). In the UK the Peer Assisted Learning PAL programme at the University of Bournemouth <http://pal.bournemouth.ac.uk/> fosters peer learning amongst students from the same course with the assistance of students who have made it to their second year.

Peer mentoring can be especially useful for vulnerable groups. Crul (2005) in the Netherlands proposed a student mentoring programme for migrant students. This builds on a successful project where Turkish and Moroccan higher education students acts as mentors giving guidance and counselling to Turkish and Moroccan pupils in secondary education.

➤ **Type 12: Targeting support for specific disciplines**

As STEM disciplines are those where drop-out is often more prevalent some institutions have targeted support in these areas.

The Progress FDTL project in the UK aims to develop strategies to increase student success and retention in electrical and electronic engineering. Guides and papers are available on <http://www.hull.ac.uk/enprogress>.

Lund Institute of Technology, Sweden has a project to adapt the method of supplemental instruction to their maths course.

Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands has a Smart Study and Career Support programme that includes: workshops and training, personal consultations, a study buddy project and informative sites.

➤ **Type 13: Targeting support at specific groups of students**

(a) students from lower status socio-economic groups

Goteborg University in Sweden has a project supporting low income and ethnic minority students. It has organised workshops with students which have informed the development of alternative forms of recruitment and selection to enable under-represented groups to enter the university. It then offers mentoring, language support, introductory seminars and ongoing advice and support to these students. It has had two comprehensive internal evaluations which indicate its success in supporting completion.

The Higher Education Access Route HEAR programme in Ireland and is specifically targeted at long-term unemployed, low income and first generation students. Each college or university taking part in the HEAR scheme has set aside a quota of places on a reduced points basis for students entering through the scheme. Students applying for the HEAR scheme must: provide satisfactory evidence of their socio-economic circumstances, meet the minimum entry (matriculation) and subject requirements of the colleges or universities to which they are applying, and then compete for one of the quota places based on their Leaving Certificate results. Once they enter university they can access the following types of support: orientation programmes, extra tuition if needed, help with study skills and exam preparation, one-to-one meetings with student advisors, social gatherings, mentoring, advice about grants and scholarships and bursaries when available.

(b) minority ethnic students

The National Union of Students (NUS) (2011) reported on a survey of 900 ethnic minority students in the UK, followed by a series of focus groups. The data suggested that these students are not satisfied with their learning environment and that institutional practices perpetuate inequalities. They make a series of suggestions to improve BME success and retention:

- Awareness: increase awareness of challenges faced by BME students
- Diversity: increase cultural diversity of staff and students
- Equal treatment: adopt policies such as anonymous marking
- Role models: increase the numbers of black academics/speakers
- Representation: provide international and black student officers
- Academic support: provide skill building workshops
- Pastoral care: Assign BME students an adviser to monitor progress
- Teaching: vary teaching approaches
- Information: increase awareness of how courses are taught and what services are available.

Malmö University Language Workshop, in Sweden, has both English and Swedish speaking teachers who assist ethnic minority students in improving their writing skills and prepare them for academic work.

The existing model of multiculturalism in higher education is that minorities should learn to adapt to the institution. This ignores the potential of the heterogeneous student body to create opportunities for mutual learning and cross-cultural communication. However, some positive examples exist. Oslo University College is a good model because as well as providing support for students it ensures that all staff are trained to be aware of multiculturalism and the challenges and opportunities it provides. Malmö University has a strategic approach, which incorporates internationalisation and intercultural communication at all levels of the institution, including the curriculum and learning and teaching. Both these examples illustrate the conceptual and practical shifts needed to promote completion and prevent drop-out.

Oslo University College (OUC) Centre for Multicultural and International Studies was established in 1999. It supports and services students with ethnic minority backgrounds. Students work closely with experts on how to study in higher education and how to handle academic language. It set up a staff competence building project in 2003 the aim being that all employees at OUC should have some knowledge of multicultural challenges and how to meet them.

Internationalisation at Home at Malmö University, Sweden, supports international students and seeks to establish a global outlook. It is a strategy to reach all students and staff, structured along thirteen university wide areas. They are: Policy and Goals; Curricula Transformation; Learning and Teaching; Language Policy; Intercultural communication; Practicum; Student Union and Clubs; Mobility; Learning Outcome and Evaluations; Network and Cooperation; Staff Development; Administration, Service and Information; Commercialisation.

(c) *students with disabilities*

Research with two groups of young people with physical disabilities and with dyslexia in two higher education institutions in Ireland found that access to suitable support was crucial to the students completing their studies. "Supports" included process and product: attitudinal changes in college staff, and provision of assistive personnel and technology (Hanafin, et al, 2007).

University of Stavanger Norway has a detailed programme to support students with disabilities including pedagogical innovations, modifications to exams, and campus facilities, <http://www.uis.no/frontpage>.

The Karolinska Institutet, Sweden has produced a detailed guide for students with disabilities based on existing policy documents and available forms of support <http://ki.se/ki/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=133&l=en>.

➤ *Type 14: Demonstrating the future utility of higher education*

Research at Aarhus University, (Ostergaard, 2013) consisting of 68 telephone interviews with students who had dropped out from programmes in Languages, indicated that they could not see the connection between theory and practice and any future job. This resulted in lack of motivation and drop-out. The conclusions were that the university should provide more focus on usability, linking study with career counselling, providing more project work and internships and more evidence on job opportunities after graduation, for example via graduation surveys and alumni relations.

Research conducted by Slepickova and Fucik (2013) at the university of Brno Czech Republic supports this approach, suggesting that there is often miscommunication on this issue. Interviews with 33 students who were dropping out and 18 representatives across the nine faculties demonstrated that working students expect higher education to significantly improve their competencies connected to a particular job, whereas staff interpret students engagement in paid work outside the university as lack of motivation for study.

In their review of the literature on the role of HE students in supporting retention, Sanders and Higham (2012) suggested that students who have successfully graduated can play a key role in helping to demonstrate the utility of higher education and persuade those contemplating drop-out to continue their studies.

Integrating the 14 types of activity

It is important that institutions pay attention to all these 14 types of activity and, rather than having limited and fragmented activities which exist on the margins, adopt an integrated and embedded approach which follows the life course of the student. Rotterdam University, which has moved "from projects to programmes" is one example of this strategic/corporate approach to retention and the results there so far have been positive, if gradual and consistently challenging. The crucial factors for success they have identified are:

- Leadership: clear and consistent involvement
- Long term perspective
- Programmes at the heart of primary activities (not just separate student support)
- Core investment (not just extra funding)
- Joint decision making
- Specific competence of teaching staff crucial
- Involvement of staff breeds support

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Addressing the social dimension of higher education is essential and part of the EU agenda to reach the 40% attainment target. The Bologna process, for example in the London Communiqué, has explicitly stated that ensuring completion without obstacle for all students is an essential goal. However, this growing focus on completion exposes the lack of available coherent information we currently have on this issue and the contradictions that exist within the current higher education system.

As Bohonnek et al (2012) argued, in most nations, widening participation has not been achieved, and what we are rather seeing is massification without a response to diversity. Proportionately the number of traditional students who can access higher education has increased but the relatively smaller numbers of non-traditional students who enter higher education face a system which is not responsive to them and risk dropping out.

The sheer number of students dropping out across the EU is clearly problematic and indicates that even the most successful national systems still face challenges. If the student is enabled to leave when they need to, but can easily return at a more opportune time, drop-out loses its stigma. However, this needs to be balanced with the potential costs to the system. Such flexibility has a cost and in those countries which currently have flexible systems, such as the Nordic countries, there are currently efforts to make sure that students graduate more quickly.

Amongst researchers there is also a trend to move from a focus on drop-out seen as pejorative to a focus on students' success. More research is needed on why some students from under-represented groups demonstrate high resilience, overcome problems and complete their degrees.

As the Trackit project (2012) suggested, data and analysis on drop-out cannot always produce clear retention solutions, rather point to promising ways forward and indicate remaining knowledge gaps. Two general conclusions can be made:

1. More quantitative and qualitative evidence is needed about how many students do not complete and who they are, including more comparable information and definitions.
2. The prevention of drop-out needs to be addressed at a number of different levels. Existing evidence points to how the necessary change should happen: moving from an emphasis on the non-traditional student being in deficit and needing to assimilate to the university to a recognition that higher education as a sector needs to change in order to address diversity and equality, as well as to an emphasis on the social and cultural factors that shape drop-out.

More specifically, from existing research this report has identified **six key factors** that contribute to cause drop-out: socio-cultural factors, structural factors, policy factors, institutional factors, personal factors, learning factors. Taken as a whole these factors address the student, the institutions as a sector and the social dimensions of higher education and demonstrate the complexity of the issue. These factors are inter-related and it is a **combination** of factors that leads students to withdraw. It is not helpful to create a hierarchy of problems, rather to view drop-out **holistically**.

Researchers have experienced difficulties in accessing students who have dropped out. Data on the long term consequences of drop-out is not readily available, but the indications are that it is not considered favourably by employers and that those who leave early tend to move to low skilled jobs. **Longitudinal qualitative studies on this issue would help to better analyse this dimension of the issue.**

In analysing available research literature it seems that **those most at risk of drop-out are those from low socio-economic backgrounds**. This interacts with other aspects such as ethnicity and disability but ultimately it trumps all other factors. Other factors such as lack of opportunity to study certain subjects at school, poor qualifications on leaving school and the propensity to enter less elite HEIs, all also tend to increase the risk of drop-out. These factors are themselves closely linked to socio-economic status. It therefore seems that **a specific focus of further research on this issue is necessary.**

Although a more unified approach to completion and drop-out would be needed across the EU, it is also true that certain issues are particularly salient in different countries. For example parental education is especially significant in Italy in influencing drop-out. This suggests that countries should consider identifying and targeting drop-out research and policy interventions on key issues of importance to their **national context.**

Although the emphasis of the report is on preventing drop-out, it should be recognised that withdrawing early from an initial course of study need not be inherently negative. Research suggests that for some students it represents a refocusing of their goals and interests combined with plans to return to higher education at a later date. If it is linked to a flexible system that permits movements across and into and out of higher education, as in Sweden, it can become part of a positive overall pattern of student pathways. Transfer to another course, or even another higher education institution, is not the same as drop-out and in some systems such as Norway it is a very common part of university life. In other systems, such as the UK, transfer is possible but not actively encouraged by higher education institutions or even known about by students. Transfer produces costs to the system but far less than drop-out and it can result in much better match of student and course. However, it is important to note that solutions will not be the same across all countries and the feasibility of flexible systems needs to be carefully considered.

The situation of part time students is complex. Data suggests that students registered as part time are more likely to drop-out, but most studies on retention tend to ignore part time students. Moreover, most students in the EU are combining their studies with employment, even if they are formally "full time" students. In this sense being a part time student is increasingly the norm across the EU, even in countries where there is no official part time status. Students with low socio-economic status are most likely to work whilst studying, thus increasing their already high risk factor in relation to drop-out. Part time study can be a positive alternative for students who might otherwise need to drop-out, but only when part time students have equal treatment in relation to financial and other forms of support. It seems that **the whole question of who is part time, what that means and whether it is a chosen alternative or a survival measure needs to be studied further.**

At the level of national policy, countries vary widely in their approaches to retention. Those with relatively high levels of retention tend to monitor and reward higher education institutions for retention and build this into the funding model. However, it is important that this is also linked to success in widening participation so that institutions are not penalised for successfully attracting students who may be more at risk of drop-out. **Retention needs to be part of a national equality strategy at systems level which includes outreach and pre-induction activities specifically focused on students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.** It should be underpinned and informed by both quantitative and qualitative research.

Under-represented students may have greater risks of drop-out but their life skills and extra university experiences should be valued and acknowledged. Recognising and accrediting prior learning and building alternative access programmes for such students can help to build confidence and resilience and have been shown to help reduce propensity to drop-out. Regional and local contexts have an impact on drop-out. **Regional partnerships and consortia of higher education institutions, employers and other organisations can help develop curricula which foster local employment and completion.**

Institutions can make a difference in fostering completion by developing good practices that follow and respond to the student needs before and beyond higher education. There are a range of levels at which this should be done and the report presents a typology of initiatives, all of which need consideration. **Rather than developing small isolated projects that tend to be unsustainable, higher education institutions need to embed a holistic approach to supporting the completion of under-represented students within their core activities and culture.**

As this report has demonstrated, drop-out from higher education is complex and closely linked to issues of social justice and equity in education and training. There is no one solution and each Member State faces different challenges. Nevertheless, **the reasons why under-represented groups are not completing their studies and dropping out of higher education need to be addressed urgently if higher education is to play its full part in contributing to growth and jobs and in fostering a more equal society across the EU.**

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