Early warning systems for students at risk of dropping out: LESSONS LEARNED

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Nur-Sultan

unicef

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (EWS)

1. Identifies students at risk of dropping out of school at an early stage
2. Based on the presence of 'red flags': specific factors that contribute to dropout
3. Supports students to stay in school through strategies and interventions to meet their specific needs in a timely and appropriate way
4. A whole-school approach involving a team of school staff
5. Includes capacities of schools in planning and additional external services

Target groups

- Children, who do not attend school
- Children at risk of dropping out of school:
  - Children with poor attendance
  - Homeschool students (for health reasons) or students with disability
  - Children with behavioral and emotional issues

Hypothesis

- awareness of school staff and parents of dropout risks and supportive education within the EWS
- school staff apply techniques to keep children at school, case management and another interventions
- inter-institutional referral system for cases of EWS
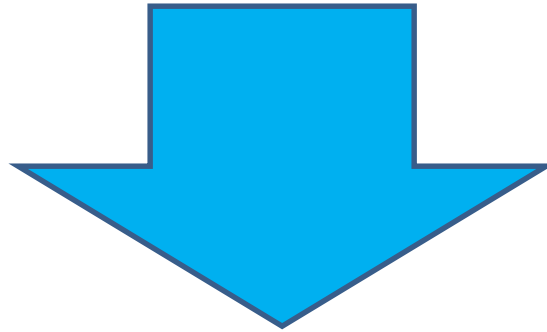
- increased understanding of the needs of children at risk
- all children will be able to complete their education and receive support throughout their education at different levels of the system, and the practice of inclusive education
- Schools will be able to become more inclusive for all children, especially for children with special educational needs related to health, and emotional and behavioral needs.

Implementation of the programme

Nur-Sultan
- **Secondary School №21**
- **Secondary School №25**
- **Secondary School №58**
- **№10 «Bobek» kindergarten**

Karaganda region
- **Secondary School №27 of Karaganda city**
- **Mini-center at the Secondary School №27 of Karaganda city**
- **Secondary School № 3 of Pionerskoe village**

The three tiers of dropout prevention

Tailored (individual at high risk): high intensity individualized interventions for a few students at high risk – multi-agency coordination usually required
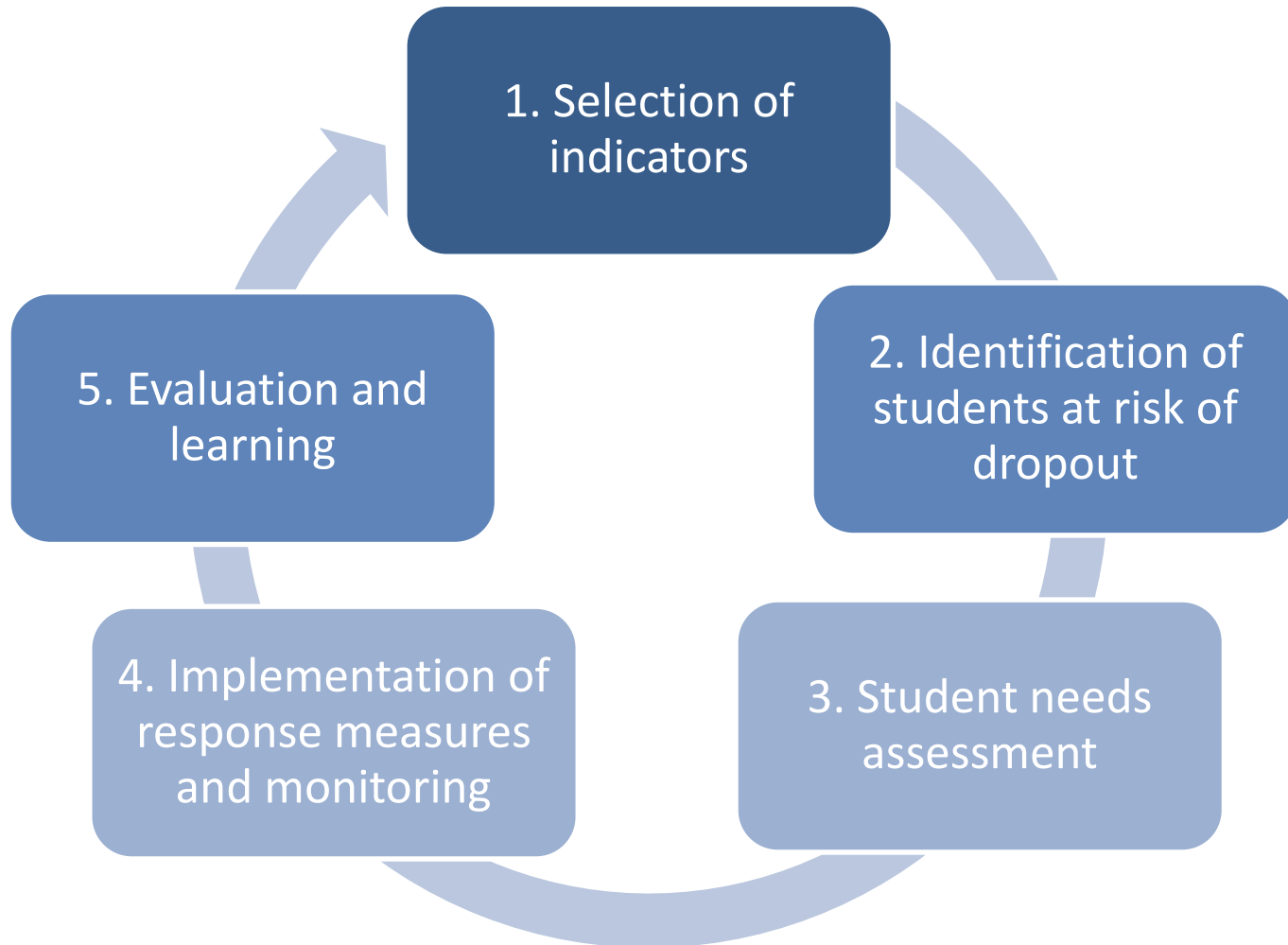
Targeted (groups of students at risk) early intervention: additional support for students at-risk

Universal (all students): school-wide regular prevention interventions in the area of academic, attendance, behaviour and socio-emotional wellbeing support

Source: adapted from of Ryan and Brattman (2012), Heppen (2010), National Educational Welfare Board (not defined) and UNICEF (2017)

1. Universal level – Supportive education

- To help children feel their own involvement
- To create a favourable environment for supportive learning and exploring blocks
- To support in-class learning
- To promote an inclusive environment and culture

2. и 3. Targeted and tailored approach

1. Predictors and indicators

Name	Frequency	Threshold for the danger
Attendance	monthly; during the evaluation session (or semester); at the end of the academic year	Absence rate more than 10 % of the class time (for homeschool students – more than 10% of instructive time)
Academic performance	during the evaluation session (or semester); at the end of the academic year	(defines EWS team) Low academic performance in one or two subjects, low marks in all subjects, repetition and etc). (Note: special thresholds can be set for children with disabilities and homeschool children)
Behaviour	during the evaluation session (or semester); at the end of the academic year	Defines EWS tesm) Two or more minor violations or serious misconduct, non-participation, use of alcohol, drugs, etc. (Note: special thresholds can be set for children with disabilities and homeschool children)

2. Identification of students

- Databases (NEDB, e-learning):
  - determine the method of data collection and registration for each indicator (who: homeroom teachers, head teachers and how: indicators)
  - regularly make a list of students at risk and/or high risk of dropout
  - protect personal data.

- Social passport of the child/family - monthly updates have become a useful strategy for monitoring data for internal use in school and NEDB.

3. Students needs assessment

Who?
- Homeroom teachers
- Social pedagogue
- Multidisciplinary teams

Tools and approaches
- Meetings (students, parents, specialists, peers..)
- Questionnaires
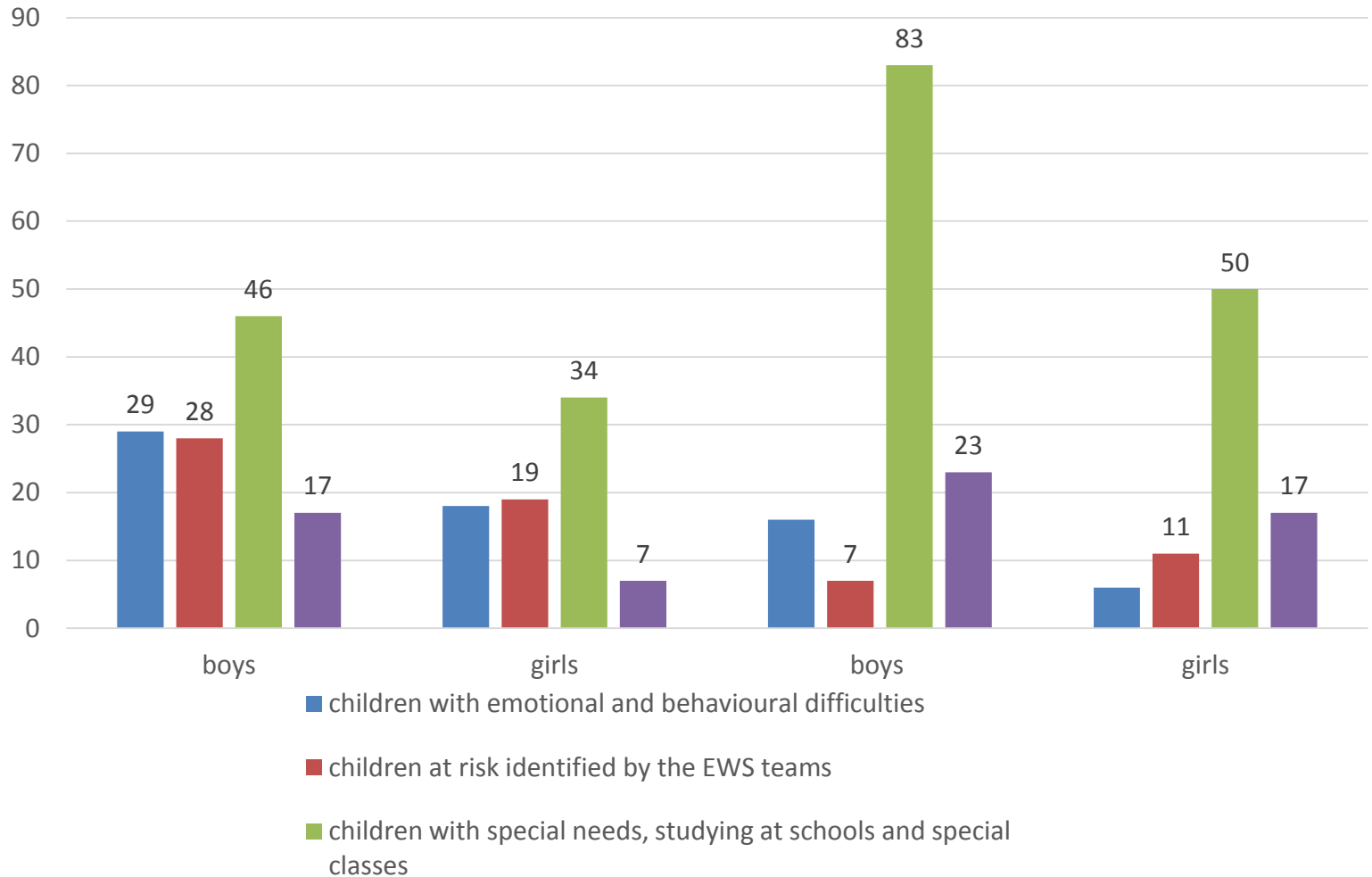- Triangulation of information

Individual Plans for students at risk
- Integrated
- Based on needs
- Targeted questions **AND** talents/capacity of the child
- Case coordinator
- Regular reviews

4. Response measures on the school level

Legend:
- children with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- children at risk identified by the EWS teams
- children with special needs, studying at schools and special classes

4. Response measures on the school level (methods)

- **Children with special needs:** additional lessons (49,4%), differentiated pedagogy and individualized learning(48,2%); mentoring and counselling (41,5%); work with parents in family education(34,8%); and skills training: learning how to study and self management(34,8%).

- **Homework clubs(4.9%)**

# 4. Response measures on the school level (methods 2)

Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties:

- text messages or phone calls to notify parents (43,1%),
- extracurricular activities (41,3%);
- mentoring and counselling(37,5%).
- Individual behaviour plans (31,9%) and additional lessons (25,6%).
- **11,9% did not know what interventions should be applied to children with emotional and behavioural difficulties in their school.**

Lessons learned

- In cases of non-attendance, information is provided to the homeroom teacher and social pedagogue, that is why they can be the main contact persons in the EWS team

- Only 10% of employees received training on supportive education and were aware of techniques to keep students at school and knew how to work with homeschool students and students with emotional and behavioural difficulties

- 50% of school principals responded that they did not have a clear procedure on how to make a plan for a child and implement it.
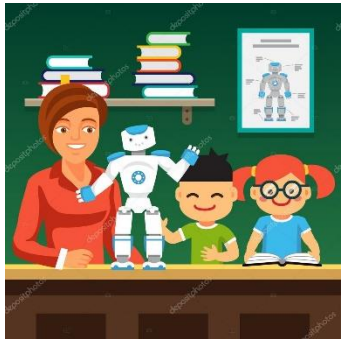
Possible outcomes
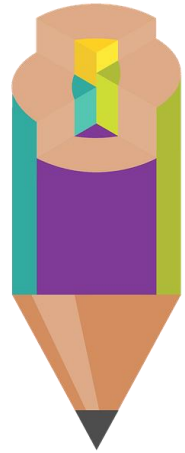
Decrease in dropouts, non-attendance, absenteeism and expulsion

Increased awareness of schools and education authority staff of signs of potential dropout

Improved school-home relationships

Improved relationships between teachers and students

Improved capacities of schools in planning and in the use of data in decision-making

Increased collaboration between schools and other stakeholders and services

Sources

- http://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/

- Improving Education Participation (UNICEF, 2017)

- Early warning systems for students at risk of dropping out(UNICEF, 2018)

- Practical guide in collaboration with Cambridge University