



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# EU PROJECT LIFELONG LEARNING ESPIL

## European School Psychologists Improve Lifelong Learning

**Lifelong Learning:**

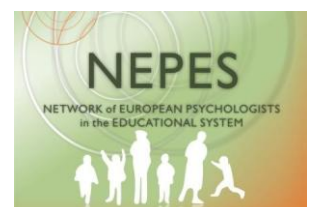
**What's in it for Psychologists in the Educational System?**

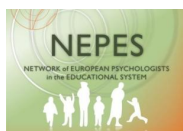
**Organised by the European Federation of Psychologists Associations EFPA  
and the Network of European Psychologists in the Educational System NEPES  
with the support of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency  
EACEA**

**Lifelong Learning: Comenius, ICT and Languages**

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### **EFPA Position Paper on Psychologists in the Educational System and their contribution to Life Long Learning**





## **EFPA POSITION PAPER ON PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO LIFE LONG LEARNING**

**15.10.2010**

The following is based on the outcomes of the project 'European School Psychologists Improving Life Long Learning' (ESPIL), conducted by the EFPA Network of Psychologists in the Educational System (NEPES) in 2009-2010 with the support of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency EACEA - Lifelong Learning: Comenius, ICT and Languages

### **1. PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

Psychologists in the educational system are professional psychologist with a Master's degree in psychology and expertise in the field of education. Most of them are school psychologists\* working in pre-schools, primary schools and secondary schools, as well as school-related settings. They cover a broad range of students, aged 2-20 years.

Meeting children at early stages of their development, in the daily environment of the school, these psychologists are in a privileged position to help individual children in their development. Their main activities are:

- Helping children to adjust to the school environment at different stages of their development
- Helping in the formation of a positive attitude towards school & education, which provides a fertile ground for learning
- Helping students to develop a balanced life style since an early age
- Identifying behaviour difficulties
- Identifying learning difficulties, either of a general nature (e.g. a deficit in cognitive ability) or a specific nature (e.g. dyslexia and ADHD), help to design suitable education programmes, and help children to deal with these difficulties from an early stage as to achieve their full potential and avoid negative attitude towards education.
- Helping to prevent and identify behaviour & mental health difficulties
- Identifying social skill deficits and intervene to help the student from an early age on
- Helping where social deprivation, discrimination or family difficulties are hindering child's progress – identify these difficulties

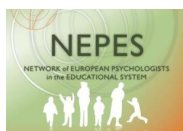
The work of psychologists in the educational system is not limited to children but also includes students, and it extends to activities addressing the educational system (school, college, local community) and structures of society. Their roles comprise prevention, evaluation and intervention at each of these three levels: the individual child or student, the educational institution, and society.

### **2. CONTRIBUTIONS TO LIFE-LONG LEARNING**

Psychologists in the educational system play an important and vital role in implementing Life Long Learning policies. They contribute to the promotion, implementation and evaluation of lifelong learning in a number of ways.

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\* Other terms used in Europe are 'Educational Psychologist', 'Pedagogical Psychologist', 'Orientateur Psychologue', and 'Psycho-pedagogical Counsellor'.



First of all, they provide guidance and counseling to European citizens in a critical formative part of their life:

- They help in forming positive attitudes towards learning and try to work with children and teenagers whose attitude toward learning is not that positive.
- They assist in remedial learning, helping adults to learn what they have not learned at school (literacy skills etc) and in learning new skills needed in societies which are experiencing rapid technological, social and economic changes.
- They assist in assessing those who missed on school due to specific learning difficulty and require remedial learning.
- They offer advice on pedagogical issues.

In addition to this:

- They provide teacher training and systemic school counselling, and assist in devising school development plans and enhancing school leadership.
- They support the implementation and evaluation of cross-sectoral Lifelong Learning policies in the Educational System and provide feedback of results into the knowledge-triangle of research, policy and practice, thereby generating valuable information for government level decision makers.

### **3. DEVELOPING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

#### **3.1 Where we are now**

In Europe there is currently a great diversity between countries with respect to

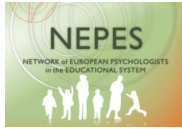
- The organization of Psychological Services in the Educational System
- The working conditions of Psychologists in the Educational System
- The roles and practices performed by Psychologists in the Educational System
- The legal status of Psychologists in the Educational System
- The ratio of psychologists to student and teachers
- The availability of adequate assessment tools
- The basic education of Psychologists in the Educational System
- Continued Professional Development opportunities for Psychologists in the Educational System
- The provision of supervised practice.

#### **3.2 What we aim for**

##### **3.2.1 Development of European Standards for Psychological Services in the Educational System**

These Standards shall comprise:

- Standards regarding the type and quality of services offered
- Standard for procedures and best practices across Europe
- Standards for the ratio of Psychologists to student population (1: 1000)
- Standards for uniform assessment tools across Europe



### **3.2.2 Development of an integrative support structure**

Such a structure shall provide for coordination of the activities Psychologists in the Educational System with those of other professionals, as well as activities of health and social services, in the best interest of the students on the short term as well as the long term, i.e. as life-long learners.

### **3.2.3 Development of European Quality standards for the Education and Training of Psychologists in the Educational System, as part of EuroPsy**

- EFPA has developed the European Certificate on Psychology, 'EuroPsy', a benchmark of common minimal quality standards in the education and training of European Psychologists including 5 years of academic training and 1 year of supervised practice as well as regular participation in continuous professional development (CPD). 'EuroPsy' meets the requests of European Policies on recognition, transparency and comparability of professional qualifications and on mobility of the labour workforce.
- This benchmark needs to be applied to the specialization of Psychologists in the Educational System.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION**

On the basis of the foregoing EFPA recommends to:

- Initiate EU Projects to help Psychologists in the Educational System across Europe to identify and disseminate best practices
- Initiate EU Projects which facilitate peer-learning, job-shadowing and study visits
- Create an EU study group to make an inventory of adequate assessment tools for psychological services in the educational system, to translate and adapt such tools, and to develop further assessment tools
- Create an EU expert group (Eurydice) to evaluate and improve knowledge on data regarding Psychologists Services in the Educational System
- Establish a Pilot Project 'EU School Support Network – EU School SUN' to promote innovative, evidence-based and sustainable solutions to support schools
- Promote the development and implementation of a Specialized EuroPsy Certificates for Psychologists in the Educational System
- Provide guidance and support for the induction phase of Psychologists in the Educational System
- Establish a European Vocational Training / Resource Centre for Psychologists in the Educational System

## **NEPES**

**Executive Council of EFPA Oct 2010**