

TECHNICAL REPORT

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CONTENT

1. The sample selection and preparation activities	3
Target population	3
Target sample	3
Sampling designs.....	4
Slovenia	4
Croatia	5
Sweden.....	6
Germany.....	6
2. Evaluation and monitoring.....	8

The experiment was planned to be carried out in the same way across all the countries conducting the HAND in HAND field trial: Slovenia, Sweden, Croatia, and Germany. The steps of the experimentation protocol with the detailed description of the implemented activities that took place in the second year in the four countries involved in the planning of the field trials are presented below.

1. The sample selection and preparation activities

Target population

Target populations of the HAND in HAND project are schools (lower secondary level of education) with higher percentages of students at risk. Due to the different percentages of refugees and immigrant students in the countries implementing the field trials (e.g. higher percentages of refugees and immigrants in Germany and Sweden and lower in Slovenia and Croatia) we have reframed our target group to “schools with a high percentage of students at risk” (e.g. refugee students and other students with migration background, students from other minorities groups, such as Roma, low SES students...). According to national sampling plans, 12 schools in Slovenia, Croatia, Germany and Sweden were targeted to participate in the field trials.

Target sample

Slovenia has focused on students with a first language different from the language of instruction (the sampling plan is based on the number of additional hours of Slovene on a school level). In Croatia the focus is on schools with significant proportions of Roma children, schools with significant numbers of children from families who migrated from ex- Yugoslav countries, mainly Bosnia and Herzegovina, and schools with immigrant children. In Sweden, the national sampling will consider schools and students with a variation of SES-background including a group with low SES-background that also have a proportion of immigrant students. The German school sample was planned to be located in Munich where schools will be selected with a stratification of three school types (Mittelschule, Realschule, Gymnasium) because one specificity of the German school system is the very early sorting of students to different secondary school types according to their prior achievement. Stratifying the German sample according to these school types is consequently taking into account different levels of student achievement. Nevertheless, this is a “convenience sample” in terms of accessibility and proximity. The schools in Munich are reflecting a heterogeneous student body with the largest possible catchment area. A special focus on the category of citizenship (immigration) was rejected so that no stigmatization of a specific group takes place. The HAND in HAND programme aims at building more inclusive classrooms, schools and societies for all (not only for students at risk), so the overarching aim is to initiate changes in the classrooms in a direction of better inclusion for all students. In the four countries involved in the policy experimentation (Slovenia, Croatia, Germany Sweden) twelve schools per country (with one classroom in each school) was planned to be sampled. The target group is the same in all countries: 13 – 14-year-olds (grade 8 students). The target group is also school staff (teachers, school management, school counsellors) at the schools where 13-14-year olds are taught. Specific procedures in sampling and school recruitment in every country that took part in the field trial are presented below.

Sampling designs

The sample design of each partner actively involved in HAND in HAND field trials was closely monitored and aligned according with the project goal in order to reach higher numbers of students (immigrants, refugees and native), their teachers and leadership of the school (principals, counsellors..).

Slovenia

- Invitation procedures:

According to the sampling plan, the schools that were higher in proportion of students with non-native Slovene speakers were invited to participate in the HAND in HAND project. Each school was contacted via mail with: detailed description of the project (2 pages) and a description of randomisation procedures [e.g. the assignment of schools for conditions (whole school (D condition), school staff only (C condition), students only (B condition), control (A condition)) has been random after gaining the consent of schools to participate in every condition], a participation consent form (a statement that the school will participate in every condition that will be randomly assigned to them, naming the school coordinator, listing the number of 8th grade classes with the respective number of students and the number of teachers teaching them) and a leaflet in Slovene. In the first wave we obtained the participation consent from 9 schools and we continued with the second wave of the same procedures with additional schools from the list of schools with higher proportions of non-native Slovene speakers until we reached 12 schools.

- Randomization procedures:

After getting the consent to take part in the project regardless of the condition the list of 12 schools was sent to our evaluation partner, DIPF, who assigned each school to their condition: 3 schools in the control condition (A condition), 3 schools in the students-only condition (B condition), 3 schools in the school-staff-only condition (C condition) and 3 schools in the whole-school-approach condition (D condition). In each school, one 8th grade class (there were two to three 8th grade classes per school) was randomly selected for participation by DIPF.

- Introductory visits:

After randomisation procedures, schools were informed about their condition and a date for introductory visits was set. Each participating school had one introductory visit scheduled. Each introductory visit was composed of: (a) a project presentation, (b) the description of the condition the school is in; (c) the roles and responsibilities related to the participation in the project regarding implementation of the HAND in HAND programmes; (d) a detailed description of the HAND in HAND programme for students and school staff with presentation and trying out the selected activities; (e) procedures for gaining parental consent (distributing forms for informed consent with a description of the project, its procedures and a leaflet); (f) procedures for gaining school staff consent (distributing forms for informed consent with a description of the project, its procedures and a leaflet). Within the schools, in the conditions that involve the HAND in HAND programme for school staff, all teachers teaching in the selected 8th grade class were invited to participate, together with the representative of the school leadership and the school's counsellors. After the introductory visit one of the schools refused to participate due to the overload of the school staff and a replacement school (in coordination with DIPF) was assigned. In participating schools, the number of teachers taking part in the HAND in HAND school staff programme (conditions C and D) was limited to 6, due to the feasibility of implementing the activities of the HAND in HAND programme. In schools where more than 6 teachers were interested in the program, a selection process took place – teachers were selected based on their amount of

lessons per week in the selected class, the teachers who had more lessons were prioritized and selected. The list of teachers and the amount of lessons in the selected target grade was provided by the school coordinator.

Croatia

- Invitation procedures:

According to the sampling plan 12 schools that were higher in proportion of non-native Croatian speakers or children of diverse ethnic and socio-economic background were invited to participate in the HAND in HAND project. Each school was contacted via e-mail with detailed description of the project. In order to explain the project in more detail, introductory meetings were held with school principals of the schools which expressed their interest in the project. During the meetings the randomisation procedures were explained in more detail (e.g. the assignment of schools for conditions (whole school (D condition), school staff only (C condition), students only (B condition), control (A condition)). We obtained the participation consent from 11 schools and we invited a school that participated in the pilot programme to participate in the field trials as well, since there are few schools in Zagreb that meet the criteria for higher proportion of non-native speakers.

- Randomization procedures:

After getting the consent to take part in the project regardless of the condition, the list of 12 schools was sent to evaluation partner, DIPF, who assigned each school to their condition: 3 schools in control condition (A condition), 3 schools with students only condition (B condition), 3 schools in school staff only condition (C condition) and 3 schools in whole school approach condition (D condition). In each school one 8th grade class was selected for participation by the school.

- Introductory visits:

The dates for introductory visits were set after randomisation procedures. Each participating school had one introductory visit scheduled, during which they were informed about the condition their school will be participating in. All of the school staff were present during introductory visits. Each introductory visit was composed of: (a) project presentation, (b) the description of the condition the school is in; (c) the roles and responsibilities related to the participation in the project regarding implementation of the HAND in HAND programs; (d) detailed description of the HAND in HAND program for students and school staff. After the school provided the list of students which will participate in the project, consent forms were distributed to their parents with description of the project and its procedures. In participating schools, the number of teachers participating in the HAND in HAND school staff program (conditions C and D) was limited to 4, due to the feasibility of implementing the activities of the HAND in HAND program. Teachers were selected based on their number of lessons per week in the selected class, the teachers that had more lessons were prioritized and selected.

Sweden

- Invitation procedures:

The first step was to gather a list of all Schools with grade 8 in in the Mid Sweden region. A total of 78 Schools were identified and the next step was to compile information and variables about the schools. The list contained these variables: municipality, public/private, parents' highest educational level, proportion of immigrant students with less than four year in country, proportion of boys, proportion of students with pass grades in all subjects, mean grading, total number of students, proportion of immigrant students. Only public schools were selected. The first selection criteria were schools with high proportion of immigrant students, low mean grading or relative low level of highest parental educational level. Several of the schools that fulfilled these criteria either were admitted to other development projects which means that they had problem themselves to participate or were judge by us as unsuitable due to the risk of other projects influencing Hand in Hand. This meant that the 22 Schools that were selected were from a wider spread in the distribution in the selection criteria but still with a focus on Schools with more demanding conditions. We contacted all schools and negotiated with them and this process ended up with 12 Schools that agreed to participate with one eight-grade class each in Hand in Hand.

- Randomization procedures:

The list of 12 schools was sent to evaluation partner, DIPF, who assigned each school their condition: 3 school in control condition (A condition), 3 school with students only condition (B condition), 3 school in school staff only condition (C condition) and 3 school in whole school approach condition (D condition).

After randomisation procedures the schools were informed about their condition and a date for introductory visits were set. One School that were selected as a Schools staff only school (C condition) was not able to fulfil their commitment and were moved to A condition and one school was then moved from A to C.

- Introductory visits:

Each participating school had one introductory visit scheduled. Each introductory visit was composed of: (a) project presentation, (b) the description of the condition the school is in; (c) the roles and responsibilities related to the participation in the project regarding implementation of the HAND in HAND programs; (d) detailed description of the HAND in HAND program for students and school staff with presentation and trying out the selected activities; (e) procedures for gaining parental consent (distributing forms for informed consent with description of the project, its procedures and a leaflet); (f) procedures for gaining school staff consent (distributing forms for informed consent with description of the project, its procedures and a leaflet). All teachers teaching in the selected 8th grade class were invited to participate, together with the representative of school leadership and the school's counsellors. In participating schools, the number of teachers participating in the HAND in HAND school staff program (conditions C and D) was limited to 6, due to the feasibility of implementing the activities of the HAND in HAND program.

Germany

In Germany the field trial could not be implemented due to the rejection from Bavarian ministry to contact and conduct the field trials in Munich area as it was planned in the proposal. In more details, any contact with a school in Bavaria (such as for piloting, assessment, intervention) requires the approval of the Ministry. At first, a specialist department reviews the content of the application and then an expert committee will vote on it. The application period takes at least three months and a ministry application always requires all finalized contents. In December

2017, TUM was able to submit a first application for the pilots. Since most of the program contents and assessment instruments were developed during the project, an earlier submission was not possible. This first application was rejected in March 2018 on the grounds that there was no significant pedagogical and scientific gain in the sense of § 24 of the Bavarian School Regulations. Specifically, the underlying research questions and the legitimization of education policy goals were criticized. It was also said that the application was too short. Following a further development, a significantly revised, second application was submitted in April / May 2018 for the main study. In August 2018, at the request of the Ministry, a revision was made and submitted. Finally, in September 2018, the application for the main study was rejected. Again, no significant gain in knowledge in the sense of § 24 of the Bavarian School Regulations (BaySchO) was recognized with relevance for the school sector. Now it was said that the request was too long. In particular, the timeframe of our program is not reasonable for schools (the length of the workshops). Other reasons have been mentioned, such as that similar concepts already exist at the Bavarian schools (f.i. Lions Quest „Future in Diversity “). Unfortunately, without the permission of the Ministry, access to public schools is not possible (Enclosed are both rejection letters). Due to the difficulties with obtaining Ministry approval in Germany, the field trials have not yet taken place in Germany. Without the approval by the Bavarian Ministry, implementation is not possible. The team has tried various alternative ways of realization, but they were unsuccessful. All private schools (regardless of school type) were contacted in and around Munich. Unfortunately, not enough schools could be gained for the sample. At one of the private schools, the program was piloted with two classes in November 2018. Another attempt was launched with schools that are under the sponsorship of the city of Munich. Again, there was little interest. Recurring refusals were based on the time required especially for teachers (6 full training days) and due to the missing of a ministerial approval. ERI and VIA have made an attempt to attract schools in the city of Berlin, but unfortunately this was without success. After consultation with ERI and DIPF, TUM tried to invite only teachers for training. An attempt was made to work with the Bavarian teachers' association. Unfortunately, this was not successful again. Through a contact person (Prof. Sälzer) in Baden-Württemberg, access to one single class could be gained. The same rules apply there as well - in a multi-class study, we always need a permit from the ministry. An overview on this webpage (<https://www.forschungsdaten-bildung.de/genuehmigungen>) shows the necessary regulations in the individual federal states to get access to schools. In principle, it should be noted that the study in Germany is only feasible with a ministry approval. Unfortunately, no data can be collected without it.

2. Evaluation and monitoring.

The project's Quality Assurance activities ensured that the quality of the deliverables follow the plan in the application, field trials are performed according to the plan in the application, potential risks are identified and action to handle risks are taken, all partners deliver regular reports about plans, timeliness and results, and Quality Assurance effectiveness indicators are measured. According to the plan also quality assurance visits during field trials in Croatia and Slovenia by Sweden team were carried out. The web-based tool was continuously updated and all activities in the work packages were monitored. Additionally, the implementation at schools has been followed over time, from introduction meeting to training activities with students and school staff. A web-based implementation questionnaire with both Likert-scale and open reflections has been developed. The trainers have filled in the questionnaire immediately after each Hand in Hand session (teaching day). All in all, 121 answers from the 3 countries Slovenia, Croatia and Sweden are collected – the first from May 18th and the last from December 14th - 2018. The importance of following the quality of implementation of SEL programs is e.g. discussed by Durlak (2015). "Implementation" can be followed focusing on a range of factors. The Implementation questionnaire (available on the web-page) used in the Hand in Hand program focuses among other things on the aims, timing and organisation of each session, the trainers' experience in succeeding in relation to the active ingredients in the project as discussed by the project partners, and described in the manuals (various types of exercises, gearshifts and contact/dialogue with the participants), and the social climate/atmosphere during the sessions. Demographics and all other data from participating students, teachers and leadership can be found in the Evaluation report (Vieluf, Rožman, and Roczen, 2020). Instruments that were used and their psychometric characteristics can be found in Documentation of the Questionnaire Scales (Roczen et al., 2020). Two databases from the field trial (for students, for school staff) are publicly available.