



AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

DELIVERY in Erasmus+ project Solution By Inclusion

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1: Summative report on the comparative analysis of dropout (W.P.7.3).

Delivered by project partner: CaBE, Aalborg University



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Solution By Inclusion



**DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURE AND LEARNING**

**AALBORG
UNIVERSITY**

Hanne Kathrine Krogstrup, Nanna Møller
Mortensen, Martin Brygger Andersen og Leonora
Hedegaard

01-04-2023

Table of contents

1. SUMMATIVE REPORT ON DROPOUT	1
2. METHOD	2
2.1. DATA COLLECTION	2
2.2. DATA AND VARIABLES	3
2.3. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND TOOLS	3
3. ANALYSIS	4
3.1. COMMON CAUSES OF DISCHARGE	4
3.2. DROPOUT RATES IN 2021 AND 2022	7
3.3. BACKGROUND VARIABLES AND DROPOUT	8
<i>Ethnicity and dropout</i>	8
<i>Gender and dropout</i>	9
<i>Age and dropout</i>	10
3.4. GENDER AND ABSENCE	12
4. LIMITATIONS	13
5. CONCLUSION	14
REFERENCES	16

List of tables

Table 1. Dropouts at the partnering VET/SCL schools in 2021 and 2022	p. 7
Table 2. Dropouts by ethnicity	p. 9
Table 3. Dropouts by gender	p. 10

List of figures

Figure 1. Cause of discharge at the partnering VET/SCL schools	p. 5
Figure 2. Dropouts by age	p. 11
Figure 3. Absence by gender	p. 12

1. SUMMATIVE REPORT ON DROPOUT

This report constitutes project partner CaBE's (from Aalborg University) delivery on **Intellectual Output 4 (IO4)** in the Erasmus+ project "Solution By Inclusion: Development of Digital, Innovative, Prevention & Intervention Solutions to Strengthen Social Inclusion, Well-Being, and Combat Early School Leaving in Vocational & Training (VET) and Second Chance Learning (SCL) Schools".

This report thus constitutes the summative evaluation on dropout (**W.P.7.3**) of **IO4**, which builds on data from work package (**W.P.3.3**) of **IO1** and the newest data.

As in the initial report on student dropout, the newest data on dropout were collected at the partnering schools between 1 September and 31 December 2022 (in the same months that the 2021 data were collected to allow for valid comparative analysis; cf. Krogstrup et al., 2021a). Each partnering school employed the standardised statistical tool for measuring and monitoring dropout – a tool developed in collaboration between CaBE and the partnering schools in 2021.

The main aim of this summative evaluation report is to identify general patterns on the causes of dropout (using data on students who have been formally discharged).¹ To clarify, each school was asked to reach out to the students and ask them to clarify their reasons for dropping out from the VETs/SCL, which is why the data can be utilised to identify some common reasons, which may indirectly point to some underlying causes or causal tendencies (cf. Bhaskar, 1975).

By collecting empirical data on the reasons for dropout, and by monitoring the development in the dropout data, it is the project's ambition and aim that the VETs/SCLs can build evaluation capacity over time and thereby enhance their ability to identify critical developmental and organisational needs, which places them in a strengthened position to understand the underlying causes of dropout and thus formulate new strategies to reduce dropout more in the future.

In this final dropout report, the second round of measurement is analysed (T2), specifically the data gathered in the aforementioned four-month period in 2022. The 2022 data are analysed specifically in this report and comparisons are made with reference to the first baseline report (see Krogstrup et al., 2021a).

In relation to the dropout rate, the results of this report (T2) are directly compared to the baseline results from the first measurement round (T1) and the change in dropout rate is calculated to determine whether the dropout rate has been reduced.

¹ When a student is discharged, he/she is no longer enrolled at the particular educational programme. Thus, students who are currently in the *process of dropping out* (i.e. not formally discharged) are not included in the statistical analysis.

The project has aimed at reducing the dropout rate by 20%, and thus this report documents whether this specific aim has been accomplished.

In the following section, the main method is briefly described, including the data collection process, the general statistical approach, the categories used in the statistical tool, and the variables included in the analysis. Furthermore, some methodological limitations are clarified.

2. METHOD

2.1. DATA COLLECTION

In the period between 1 September and 31 December 2022 quantitative data on students' dropout were gathered by the three partnering VETs/SCL schools: GEM16+, Tradium, and IAL FVG.

A standardised statistical tool was employed, which was developed in collaboration between CaBE and the partnering schools as part of **IO1** in 2021 to ensure that the dropout rates among the three schools were comparable.

When utilising this statistical tool, the schools can select/register one main reason of discharge among 13 categories for each student. The schools contacted each student who had been formally discharged in this period to collect information on why a decision was made to opt out of the educational programme.

The 13 available categories in the statistical tool are:

1. Business internship
2. Exam flunked
3. Expelled
4. Not ready to be educated
5. Personal issues
6. Academic level too high
7. Unable to thrive socially
8. Health concerns
9. Regretted educational choice
10. Relocation
11. Not able to establish contact/reason unknown
12. Education to be completed elsewhere
13. Application was withdrawn/never stated

An advantage of using these categories is that they provide the opportunity to formally distinguish between 'dropout' and 'early school leaving'. For instance, the

categories ‘Relocation’ and ‘Education to be completed elsewhere’ suggest that the formal discharge has not led to early school leaving as the former student has been enrolled in further education or training.

According to the European Commission (2019) dropout refers to “*leaving a particular school before graduation*” while ‘early school leaving’ particularly refers to “[...] *people aged 18–24 who obtained no more than a lower secondary diploma and are not enrolled in further education or training*” (p. 51).

Finally, it must be emphasised that the above variables concern the *reasons* for dropout reported by each student. Hence, the collected data do not directly identify the underlying causal mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1975; Brinkmann, 2021).

2.2. DATA AND VARIABLES

The 2022 data contained information on students ($N = 53$) from all partnering schools. The data were analysed in relation to the six variables listed below:

1. Cause of discharge (nominal, categorical)
2. Absence (in %; quantitative/continuous)
3. Partnering VETs/SCL (nominal, categorical)
4. Gender (binary, categorical)
5. Ethnicity (nominal, categorical)
6. Age (quantitative/discrete)

Depending on the type of analysis, the above variables were applied as either independent (predictor) or dependent (outcome) variables.

In this report, mainly the 2022 data are analysed and compared to the previous measurement when it is deemed relevant, but in relation to the dropout rate specifically, the progression from 2021 to 2022 is evaluated to determine whether the aim of a 20% reduction in dropout has been reached.²

2.3. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND TOOLS

Descriptive analysis was performed to identify patterns in the data and to break it down into simpler and more understandable forms. Mostly, bivariate analyses³ were performed using different combinations of the aforementioned six variables.

² We specifically assess the *relative change* in this evaluation report. The following formula was used: $Relative\ change = \frac{T_2 - T_1}{T_1}$.

³ Bivariate analysis involves the analysis of two variables (often denoted as X and Y) with the purpose of determining the empirical relationship between them.

Due to the limited size of the dataset, many statistical tests were not viable. Thus, the main results of the following analysis are descriptive and not predictive.

The statistical analyses were conducted in IBM SPSS (vers. 28), and all data visualisations were made in Excel (Microsoft 365).

3. ANALYSIS

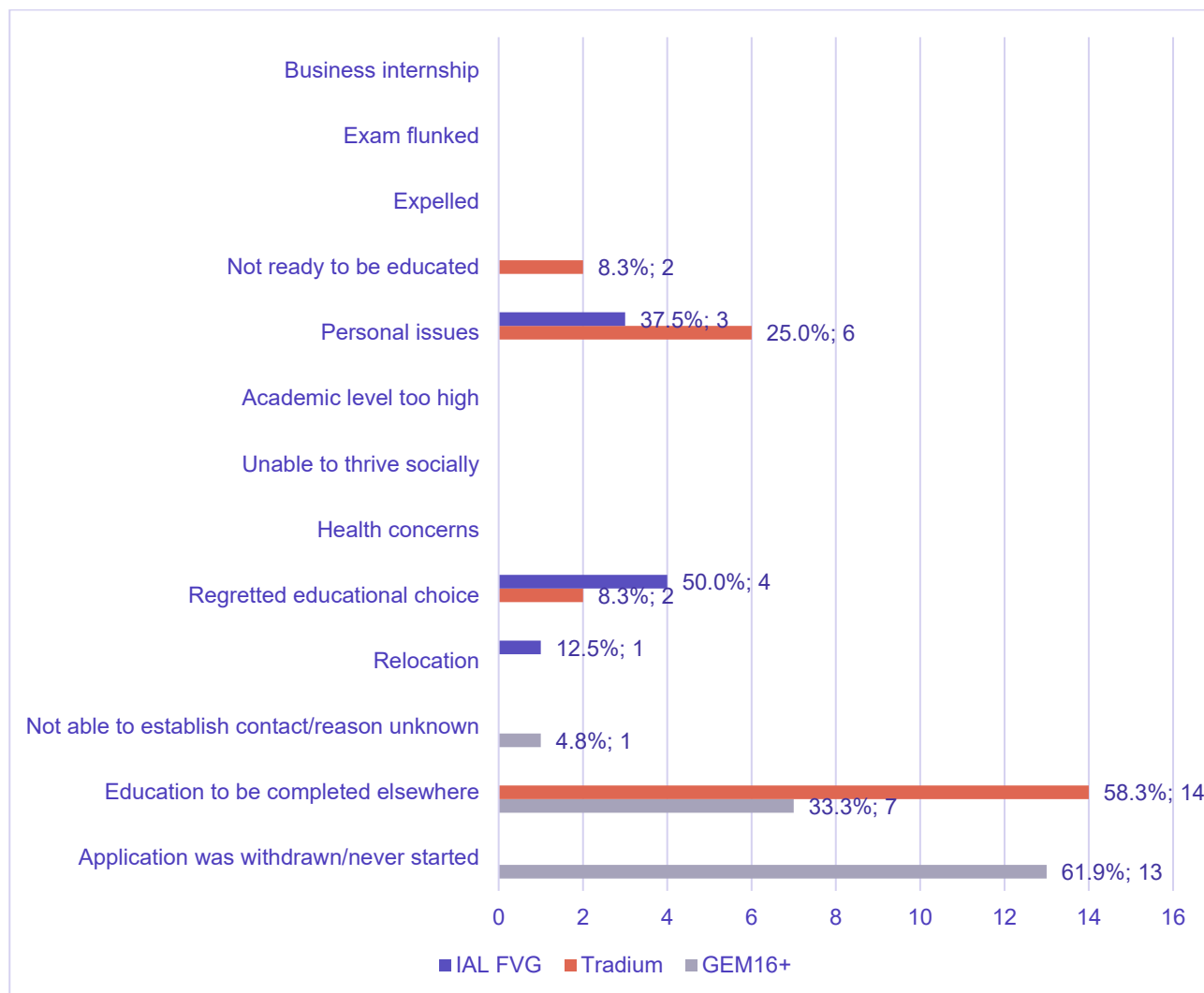
In the following subsections, the main results are presented and interpreted.

First, the students' main reasons for dropping out are highlighted for each partnering school (comparisons are made to the 2021 data; see Krogstrup et al. 2021a for the results of the first baseline report). Second, the dropout rate for each school is calculated and the progression is evaluated. Third, it is examined what characterises students who dropped out in term of ethnicity, gender, and age. Finally, it is examined whether gender is associated with school absenteeism.

3.1. COMMON CAUSES OF DISCHARGE

The standardised statistical tool was applied at each partnering school in autumn 2022. The following results emerged in 13 different categories

Figure 1. Cause of discharge at the partnering VET/SCL schools



$N = 53$. GEM16+, $n = 21$; Tradium, $n = 24$; IAL FVG, $n = 8$. Both percentages and counts are shown for each VET/SCL school. Empty categories are included to enhance transparency.

As Figure 1 shows, the registered causes across the three VETs/SCL mostly follow unique patterns, although they seemingly share a few similarities.

At IAL FVG the top three causes were 1) 'Regretted educational choice' (50%), 2) 'Personal issues' (37.5%), and 3) 'Relocation' (12.5%). In 2021, the top reason for students was also that they had regretted their educational choice (38.9%) (cf. Krogstrup et al., 2021a). However, in 2021 the students also decided to drop out due to health concerns or because they had to complete their education elsewhere.

At Tradium the top three causes were 1) 'Education to be completed elsewhere' (58.3%), 'Personal issues' (37.5%), and – a shared third position – 'Not ready to be educated' (8.3%) and 'Regretted educational choice' (8.3%).

The top reason in 2021 was 'Not able to establish contact/reason unknown', but in 2022 this reason was not registered at all, which indicates that Tradium has been able to identify the dropout reasons more precisely during the second measurement round compared to the first. The second most common reason was the same in 2021 when many students dropped out because of personal issues as well.

At GEM16+ the top three causes were 1) 'Application was withdrawn/never started' (61.9%), 'Education to be completed elsewhere' (33.3%), and 3) 'Not able to establish contact/reason unknown' (4.8%). In 2021, these were also the top three causes, but with twice as many registrations, which equates to 50% less dropouts in 2022 during the formal registration period at this school.

In addition to these observations, it can be noted that the three categories in the top of the diagram were left unused, which could be because all registrations occurred in the autumn/winter. Thus, no students dropped out because they flunked exams, were expelled, or because they completed a business internship (which could be because these activities in general take place at different periods during the academic year). This was also the case in 2021. Still, these categories should not be dropped as they may be relevant at other times during the school year.

Secondly, three additional categories were left unused that also had very few registrations (7 in total) in 2021. Thus, it seems rare that students drop out because they feel that the academic level is too high, because they are unable to thrive socially, or because of health concerns. It is likely that these categories are associated with a social stigma. For instance, some students may find it embarrassing to admit that they have trouble socialising with other students or that they find it difficult to keep up academically. Qualitative research on marginalisation in education suggests that some students hide their state of marginalisation because they either feel ashamed or because they are unaware of the problem (Messiou, 2012). Hence, lack of emotional awareness or shame could be some possible reasons that these categories are rarely chosen by students, which has been the case in both 2021 and 2022.

Notably, a relatively high percentage of students who dropped out from IAL FVG had regretted their educational choice, which was similarly the case in 2021. This suggests that more effort should be directed into counselling potential students on their educational choice to meet their expectations and ambitions. As suggested in the previous report, it might also help if educators were more aware of communicating with the students regarding these issues during the school year to prevent additional dropouts. Still, it must be emphasised that the number of registered dropouts (8) from IAL FVG was very low, which makes identification of common problems challenging.

Finally, 6 of every 10 students who were formally discharged from GEM16+ had decided to withdraw their application before study start. In 2021, it was 33.3% (cf. Krogstrup et al., 2021a). At Tradium and IAL FVG, no students withdrew their application during the standardised registration period. This pattern was nearly the same in 2021. Thus, the dropout rate at GEM16+ reflects that many students tend to drop out before study start.

3.2. DROPOUT RATES IN 2021 AND 2022

In this section, the total dropout rate is calculated for each partnering school that occurred in the formal registration period in 2021 and 2022.

Table 1. Dropouts at the partnering VET/SCL schools in 2021 and 2022

	2021			2022		
	GEM16+	Tradium	IAL FVG	GEM16+	Tradium	IAL FVG
Registered dropouts	42	17(26) ^a	18	21	24	8
Enrolled by 1 September 2021	138	845	1631	109	887	1680
Dropout rate	30.4%	2.1%	1.1%	19.3%	2.7%	0.5%

Note. The registration period was open from 1 September to 31 December in 2021 and 2022. ^a Out of 26 dropouts at Tradium, 9 were registered in August 2021, which is why these registrations were not included in the calculation of the total dropout rate of this registration period.

As Table 1 shows, 86 dropouts were registered in 2021 (9 cases from Tradium were dropped as these were registered outside of the formal period; see Krogstrup et al., 2021a), and 53 dropouts were registered in 2022.

It is evident that most dropouts were registered at GEM16+ in the two years combined, even though GEM16+ had much fewer students enrolled by 1 September 2021 (138) and 2022 (109) compared to Tradium, which had a much larger number of students in both 2021 (845) and 2022 (887) than the two other schools.

In total, 19.3% of the students at GEM16+ dropped out during the four-month registration period. As emphasised, about 6 out of every 10 of these students were discharged because they withdrew their application and thus never started. This is because GEM16+ gathered data between 1 September and 31 December 2022 while the academic year commenced later on 4 October 2022 (UnivMeta, 2022). Based on previous dropout statistics from the partnering schools, the dropout rate at GEM16+ approximately halved from 31.5% in 2015 to 15.6% in 2019 (Krogstrup et al., 2021b; see Figure 2).

The current data shows that the dropout rate at GEM16+ has decreased again from 30.4% in 2021 to 19.3% in 2022. Measured in terms of the raw count, the number of dropouts halved from 42 to 21 at GEM16+, a reduction of 50%, but looking at the relative dropout rate, which is calculated by taking the number of enrolled students into account, the dropout rate has fallen by about 37%.

At Tradium, 7 more dropouts were registered in 2022 compared to 2021. However, the number of students also increased from 845 to 887. In total, the dropout rate increased from 2.1% to 2.7%, which represents a relative increase of 22%.

Based on the previous dropout statistics, an average of 18.7% students dropped out annually from Tradium between 2015 and 2019 (Krogstrup et al., 2021b). It is possible that more dropouts generally occur during spring or just before summer, which could explain this lower dropout rate.

At IAL FVG, 8 dropouts were registered out of 1680 students in total. This equates to a very low dropout rate of just 0.5%. This represents a relative decrease of 55% compared to 2021 when the dropout rate was 1.1%, but it must be emphasised that the dropout rate was very low to begin with.

At IAL FVG, the average rate of dropouts increased from 16.7% in 2015 to 20.5% in 2019 (Krogstrup et al., 2021b). Therefore, the dropout rate seems low at IAL FVG compared to the existing statistics provided by the school, which was also the case in 2021. Thus, we concluded in the first dropout report that it should be possible to reach the goal of reducing the dropout rate of 20% in 2022.

Curiously, a very low dropout rate occurred at both Tradium and IAL FVG in 2021 and 2022. As explained in the previous report, it is possible that more dropouts occur in the spring and early summer. As evident from the registration tool, no students dropped out because of flunked exams in the autumn and early winter of 2022 (which was similarly the case in 2021).

3.3. BACKGROUND VARIABLES AND DROPOUT

In the following sections, it is examined what characterises students who drop out in relation to three demographic variables: ethnicity, gender, and age.

ETHNICITY AND DROPOUT

The available data provide information in the following three categories: 'Native born', 'Foreign born in the EU' and 'Foreign born outside of EU'.

Table 2. Dropouts by ethnicity

	GEM16+	Tradium ^a	IAL FVG
Native born	81% (17)	100% (22)	50% (4)
Foreign born in EU	4.8% (1)	0% (0)	37.5% (3)
Foreign born outside of EU	14.3% (3)	0% (0)	12.5% (1)
Total	100% (21)	100% (22)	100% (8)

Note. $N = 53$. Both percentages and counts (in brackets) are shown for each VET/SCL school.

^a Two registrations from Tradium did not contain any information on ethnicity.

Table 2 shows that most discharged students from each school were 'Native born'. The two other categories, 'Foreign born in EU' and 'Foreign born outside of EU', contained an equal number of students (4 in each category).

At GEM16+, the majority of the discharged students were native born (81%) while the remaining were either foreign born in EU (4.8%) or outside of EU (14.3%). At Tradium, all discharged students were native born (100%), which was similarly the case in 2021. At IAL FVG most students who dropped out were native born (50%) while the rest were either foreign born in EU (37.5%) or outside of EU (12.5%).

Hence, the data suggest that dropouts are commonly native born. However, this most likely reflects that the majority of students are native born. Therefore, to accurately determine whether ethnicity is significantly associated with dropout, the dropout rate in each ethnic group must be compared to the number of students in each ethnic group on each school, which is not possible based on these data alone.

GENDER AND DROPOUT

According to existing research, males are generally considered more at risk of dropout and early school leaving (Borgna & Struffolino, 2017; Eurostat, 2021).

In 2021 slightly more females (59.3%) than males (40.7%) were discharged from the three schools in total, but the 2022 data shows a different pattern.

Table 3. Dropouts by gender

	GEM16+	Tradium	IAL FVG
Male	76.2% (16)	79.2% (19)	37.5% (3)
Female	23.8% (5)	20.8% (5)	62.5% (5)
Total	100% (21)	100% (24)	100% (8)

Note. $N = 53$. Both percentages and counts (in brackets) are shown for each VET/SCL school.

Table 3 shows that more males (71.7%) than females (28.3%) were discharged during the registration period from all schools.

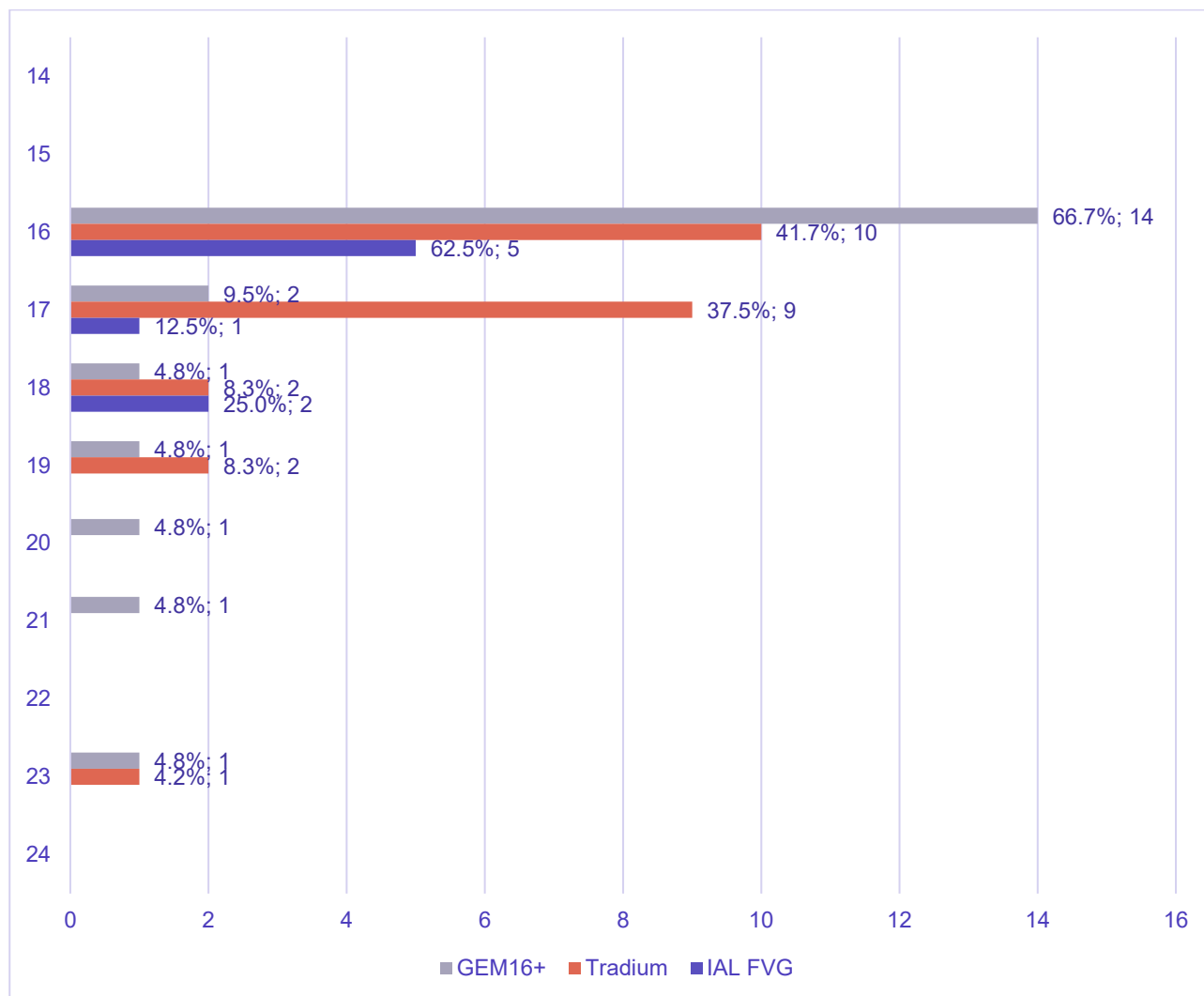
At GEM16+, more than three quarters of the students who dropped out were male (76.2%) and less than a quarter were female (23.8%). At Tradium, almost 8 out of every 10 were male (79.2%) while about 4 out of 10 were female (20.8%). At IAL FVG the gender difference was less pronounced since only slightly more than half were female (62.5%) and close to 4 out of every 10 were male (37.5%).

However, these percentages should not be regarded as nationally representative, nor should they be regarded as representative or predictive for each school. Based on the available data, it was therefore not possible to determine whether males or females have different dropout rates in general at the partnering schools.

AGE AND DROPOUT

In relation to age and dropout, the patterns were slightly different when comparing the partnering schools. This, among other things, reflects differences in the educational programmes, including the average age of students, which is why both total counts and percentages are displayed for the three partnering schools.

Figure 2. Dropouts by age



Note. $N = 53$. GEM16+, $n = 21$; Tradium, $n = 24$; IAL FVG, $n = 8$. Both percentages and counts are shown for each VET/SCL school. One case (age ≥ 30) was excluded from GEM16+.

Figure 2 shows that most dropouts occurred at age 16 at all the partnering schools: GEM16+ (66.7%), Tradium (41.7%), and IAL FVG (62.5%), respectively, 14, 10, and 5 dropouts. In 2021, most students at IAL FVG (55.6%) dropped out at age 17 (10 dropouts in total). This resulted in a lower median age for dropouts at IAL FVG in 2022 ($M_{ed} = 16$) compared to 2021 ($M_{ed} = 17$).

The second highest percentage of dropouts was registered for students aged 17, which was similarly the case in 2021. At Tradium 9 students (37.5%) dropped out in total in 2022, and the same applied to 2 students at GEM16+ (9.5%) and 1 student (12.5%) at IAL FVG.

In comparison, more dropouts were registered at age 15 in 2021, and it is surprising that no students were registered as dropouts at GEM16+ in this age group in

2022, since this was the case for 8 students in 2021 (cf. Krogstrup et al., 2021a).

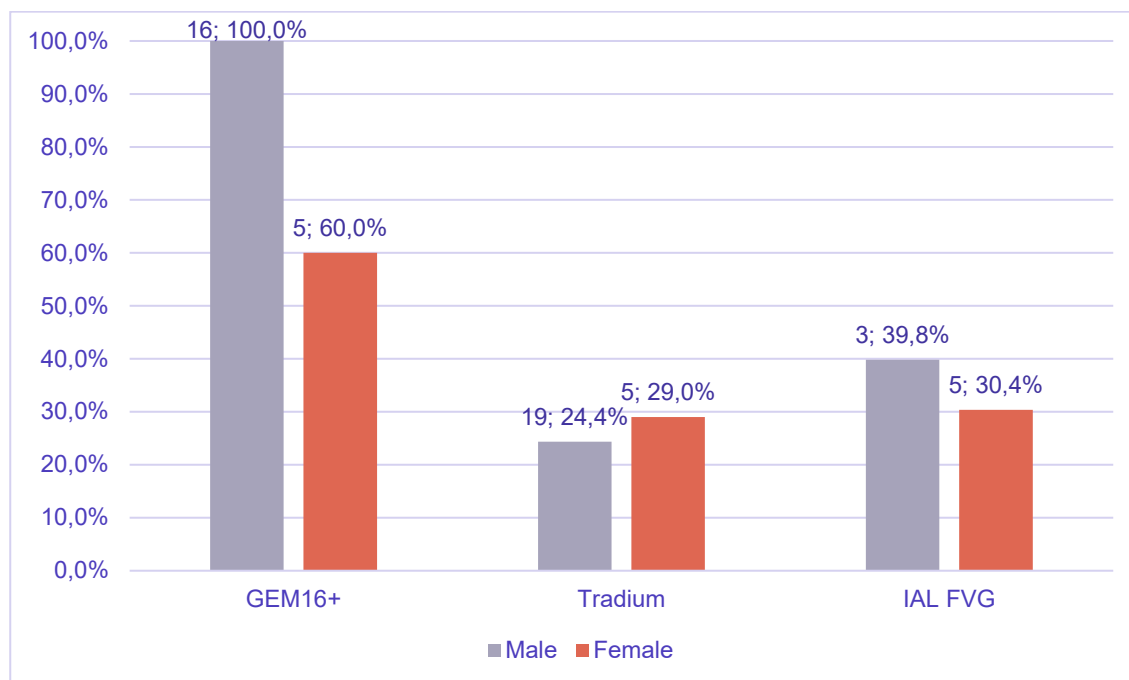
Although it is difficult to discern any clear pattern, the distribution of dropouts is clearly skewed toward the youngest age groups. The median age for dropout occurred at age 17 at Tradium and age 16 for both Tradium and IAL FVG, indicating that most dropouts occur in the beginning of the educational programme.

As stated in the baseline report, if minors are defined as “all children below the age of 18”, which is commonly the case in civil codes according to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EUAFR, 2022), it is apparent that most students who have been registered as dropouts at the partnering schools can be considered minors, which indicates that more should be done to reduce the retention rate among minors specifically.

3.4. GENDER AND ABSENCE

In the following, it is examined whether any measurable difference in school absenteeism is present between males and females who dropped out from the partnering schools.

Figure 3. Absence by gender



Note. N = 53. Both percentages and counts are shown for each VET/SCL school.

Figure 3 shows that male students who dropped out had a higher level of absence at both GEM16+ and IAL FVG in 2022 than females. In 2021 the average level of

absenteeism was higher for males at all partnering schools. Assessing the two measurement rounds together therefore indicates a common pattern.

At GEM16+, the average rate of absence was higher for males (100%) compared to females (60%). At Tradium, the opposite difference was present since males had a lower average level of absence (24.4%) than females (29%). At IAL FVG, the difference in the average rate of absence between the two groups was 39.8% for males and 30.4% for females. For IAL FVG, the average level of absenteeism among dropouts was much lower in 2022 compared to 2021, which could indicate some shift in educational practice, for instance, that a lower level of absenteeism is tolerated before disciplinary action is taken.

Inferential statistical tests (three ANOVAs and one independent samples *t*-test) did not reveal any statistically significant relationship between gender and the average rate of absence, with the exception of GEM16+. However, many of the dropouts at GEM16+ decided to withdraw their application before study start and had thus been registered with 100% absence, which can be regarded as misleading. For this reason, these specific results were dismissed to avoid bias.

In summary, no solid statistical evidence was found that gender plays a significant role in absenteeism at the partnering schools. However, the average rate of absence was highest for males across all partnering schools in both samples, which indicates that males have a higher tendency to dropout at the partnering schools. However, there is no clear evidence that enables us to draw any final conclusion.⁴

Although no final conclusion was reached, existing research indicates that males in general are more at risk of dropping out and becoming early school leavers (Eurostat, 2021), which is why it is likely that males have a higher level of absence at the partnering schools in general.

4. LIMITATIONS

In this section, the limitations are clarified in regard to comparing the results between the first and second measurement round.

⁴ Conducting significance tests on small samples will usually not reveal small or even medium differences because of lack of statistical power (Field, 2018). Thus, the risk of overlooking a statistically significant effect (i.e., a Type II error) is considerably larger when analysing small datasets.

First, the statistical tool was standardised to enable valid baseline comparisons between the partnering schools. However, there are other variables, which could have influenced the results. For instance, there could be unknown or unanticipated differences in the registration practices among the schools.

As mentioned in the introduction, the second data collection took place between 1 September and 31 December 2022. However, at GEM16+ the academic year commenced on 4 October 2021 (UnivMeta, 2022), more than one month after the initiation of the registration period. This may partly explain why GEM16+ registered more dropouts on students who withdrew their applications before starting.

At IAL FVG the classes started ultimo September and terminated in mid-December before the Christmas holidays. As such, even though the statistical tool has been standardised there are apparent differences in how the academic year is planned at the three partnering schools, which may affect the results.

In addition, it is possible that interpretational variations may arise as some dropout cases are ambiguous and therefore difficult to place in a single category, which introduces subjective elements of interpretation into the registration process.

Finally, with 13 available categories to identify causes of discharge and a relatively low number of registered cases, it is challenging to discern any meaningful patterns and interpret the percentages alone. Still, continuous use of the statistical tool should provide meaningful patterns for each school and thereby more knowledge on the reasons (and indirectly on the causes) of dropout, which may help the schools in building capacity to identify crucial organisational needs.

5. CONCLUSION

In this summative evaluation report on student dropout, the following is concluded:

First, it was not possible to identify any common cause of discharge among the partnering schools, although some minor similarities were identified. Measured in total counts, the top three causes across the partnering schools were: 1) 'Education to be completed elsewhere' (21 registrations), 2) 'Application was withdrawn/never started' (13 registrations), and 3) 'Personal issues' (9 registrations).

At GEM16+, the main causes of discharge were 'Application was withdrawn/never started' (61.9%), and 'Education to be completed elsewhere' (33.3%). This means that about one third (33.3%) of these students are most likely not early school leavers. In 2022, the total dropout rate at GEM16+ was 19.3%, which represents a relative reduction of 37% since 2021, which clearly fulfils the aim of the project.

At Tradium, the most common causes of discharge were 'Education to be completed elsewhere' (65.4%) and 'Personal issues' (25%). The dropout rate at Tradium

increased from 2.1% to 2.7%, representing a relative increase of 22%. Although this result does not fulfil the project's aim, it must be emphasised that the dropout rate was very small to begin with, which is why this result was not surprising.

We concluded in the baseline report on dropout (Krogstrup et al., 2021a) that Tradium could improve their registration practice since about two thirds of the registrations were placed in the category 'Unable to establish contact/reason unknown'. In 2022, Tradium have been able to register the causes of discharge more clearly. However, it is still a challenge that many students decide to opt out because of personal issues.

At IAL FVG, the most common causes of discharge were 'Regretted educational choice' (50%) and 'Personal issues' (37.5%). It is likely that many students in the first category have subsequently started on a new educational programme. The total dropout rate at IAL FVG was 1.1% in 2021 and it fell to 0.5% in 2022. This represents a relative reduction of 55%, which also fulfils the project's initial aim.

In relation to ethnicity and dropout, most students who dropped out were native born. As explained in the baseline report, this likely reflects that most students enrolled at the partnering schools are in fact native born.

In relation to gender and dropout, most registered dropouts occurred for males (72%) compared to females (28%), but it is not possible with the limited data to determine whether males are at higher risk of dropping out than females.

In relation to gender and absenteeism, the degree of absence was largest at GEM16+ at 90.48%. At Tradium, it was 25.33%, and at IAL FVG it was 33.92%. As explained in IO1 delivered on 1 September 2021 by CaBE (Krogstrup et al., 2021b), this difference reflects variations in school policies in how absenteeism is handled, for instance, how much school absence is tolerated. At two partnering schools, males who dropped out had higher levels of absence than females who dropped out. In total, more males (71.7%) than females (21.3%) dropped out. Existing research also indicates that males are more at risk of early school leaving and also have a higher propensity to dropout compared to females in EU countries (Borgna & Struffolino, 2017; Eurostat, 2021).

Most dropouts occurred at age 16 or 17, at an age where they can be considered minors (EUAFR, 2022), which is problematic if it leads to early school leaving.

Due to the relatively low number of registered dropouts, generalisations based on the identified patterns should be made with caution.

REFERENCES

Bhaskar, Roy (1975). *A realist theory of science*. Routledge.

Borgna, Camilla & Struffolino, Emanuela (2017). Pushed or pulled? Girls and boys facing early school leaving. *Social Science Research*, 61(298–313)
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.06.021>

Brinkmann, Svend (2021). *Mit år med Gud [my year with God]*. Gyldendal.

European Commission (2019): *Education and Training Monitor 2019*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2022). A variety of terms. Accessed 4 February 2022. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/mapping-minimum-age-requirements/age-majority>

Eurostat (2021). Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status. Eurostat. Accessed 8 February 2022
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/edat_ifse_14/

Field, Andy (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*: North American edition (5th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Krogstrup, Hanne Kathrine, Andersen, Martin Brygger, Hedegaard, Leonora (2021a). Delivery of Intellectual Output 1: *A comparative baseline report of dropouts*. CaBE, Aalborg University.

Krogstrup, Hanne Kathrine, Mortensen, Nanna Møller & Bendixen, Kathrine (2021b). Development of a statistical tool to measure and monitor students' dropout. CaBE, Aalborg University.

UnivMeta (2022). GEM16+, Gzira. Accessed 4 February 2022.
<https://www.univmeta.com/MT/Gzira/1658390331097701/GEM16%2B%2C-Gzira>.