


EMPOWERING SCHOOL LEADERS FOR DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURES

Curriculum Framework



Empowering School Principals
for Inclusive School Culture
HEAD

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Network of Education Policy Centers



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NOTE: In this document, the term school leader refers to everyone in key leadership roles in schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

If the purpose of leadership is social justice, then the question becomes not what is good for each child, but also what constitutes a good society, one in which rights to choose are not privileged over responsibilities to others and/or the community. (Blackmore, 2006.)

Concerns about social injustices have never been more widespread or gained more public energy than now. An inclusive approach to education should enable all students to access and fully participate in teaching and learning experiences and aims to ensure that all children and young people experience an education that enhances their learning and social relationships and prepares them for a quality adult life in the community.

School leadership is influenced by the wider social context in which the school operates. School principals in collaboration with others should act to make the school proactive and of good quality in the given context (Brejc & Čagran, 2019). Empowering school leaders for developing inclusive school culture is a promising policy approach for focusing the improvement of the school and community on social justice.

The Empowering School Leaders for Developing Inclusive School Cultures – Curriculum Framework (hereinafter Curriculum Framework) is built on the evidence that social exclusion and educational inequalities are a consequence of inappropriate responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender, and children's ability. Inclusion promoted in this document is social inclusion which requires eliminating the causes of social exclusion and education inequality in the educational system, as well as in the communities, and strives for schools that support and welcome learners' diversity in which the participation of each child and family is welcomed regardless of their origin or other characteristics.

Over the past decades, many studies have revealed that school leadership has the potential to positively impact school change (Hallinger and Heck, 1996, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2008; according to Kovačević, J. and Hallinger, P. 2019).

International research has provided (according to Day, 2016) consistent evidence that demonstrates the potential impact (positive or negative) of school leaders on school organisation, culture and conditions, and consequently on the quality of teaching and learning and student achievements.

School leadership has an indirect, as well as significant influence, on all learners and their learning, achievement and well-being by fulfilling their diverse needs and abilities and legislating and establishing school systems and policies (Mac Ruairc, 2013; Donnelly, Ó Murchú and Thies, 2016; according to EASNIE 2018; Leithwood, 2021; Day, 2016). Moreover, that influence is also evident through its effects on school organisation and culture as well as on teacher behaviour and classroom practices (Witziers, Bosker, & Krüger, 2003; according to Day 2016). In that sense, school principals have a significant impact on the quality and efficiency

of their institutions and more inclusive education systems. Cohen (2015; EASNIE 2018) claimed that school principals are key agents of change in a school because they are the central actor who contributes to the creation and promotion of a successful inclusion programme. School leadership is crucial in leading school staff to adopt attitudes and practices consistent with an inclusive school vision. Moreover, school leaders have a social responsibility to react to social justice issues that marginalized groups and minorities face as a result of internalized discrimination - oppression (Bates, 2006; Furman, 2004; Greenfield, 2004; Marshall, 2004; Sergiovanni, 1992; Selsky, 1991; according to Izhak Berkovich, 2014).

Despite significant potential for initiating changes in schools, educational systems, and consequently whole societies toward social inclusion approaches, the role of school leaders in the development of inclusive school culture can be underestimated. School leaders across the OECD countries widely reported that they lacked the training needed to assume their posts (Schleicher, 2012; according to EASNIE 2018). Social inclusion is increasingly seen as a key challenge for educational leaders. For example, Leithwood et al. (1999) suggest that with increasing diversity, schools will need to thrive on uncertainty, have a greater capacity for collective problem solving, and be able to respond to a wider range of students. Therefore, newly employed school leaders as well as the more experienced ones need access to ongoing, practice-oriented, reflective professional development programmes (Schatz, 2013). The availability of professional development programmes and resources specifically targeted at school leaders, support for the development of inclusive school cultures, as well as support for the school leaders' meaningful engagement with school stakeholders and school communities are important pre-conditions for successful schools. Empowering school leaders for inclusive school culture strengthens them for today's world and their schools' response to the (greater) diversity of learners and learning in their schools. Due to the increased demands for the empowerment of principals in encouraging and developing an inclusive school culture, countries are catering to this need through initial and in-service school leaders' professional development.

This publication's purpose is to support providers of professional development of school leadership in order to guide school leaders to reimagine their role in driving whole-school change towards inclusive education. It provides the description of goals and potential users of the Curriculum Framework, the description of the theoretical constructs on the basis of which the competence areas in the curriculum were chosen, as well as the explanations of their importance and recommendations for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

1.1. THE AIM AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The overall aim of this Curriculum Framework is to provide institutions and organisations that provide and are responsible for the continuous professional development (CPD) of school leadership with the tool that supports them in creating CPD programmes/modules/trainings for strengthening an inclusive school culture. An inclusive school culture ensures academic and socio-emotional growth of all students, first and foremost of marginalised students: those with different cultural backgrounds, experiences and ways of working, age, sexual orientation or gender, physical abilities, etc. An inclusive school culture is expected to eliminate barriers for full and equal participation of all in order to empower disadvantaged individuals and groups of students and adults and increase their participation as equals in school and society as a whole.

The Curriculum Framework was designed to **respond to well-known obstacles** (Izhak Berkovich, 2014; EASNIE, 2018) **school leaders face while trying to create an inclusive culture in their schools** see, p. 40. Any professional development programmes created according to the Curriculum Framework will empower school leaders to actively do so.

There is a common misconception that good (school) leaders (principals) are born with the necessary characteristics and skills. Perhaps this misconception has brought about the situation where the professional development of school leaders in many countries has often been neglected or is non-existent altogether. This Curriculum Framework is on the other hand based on the premise that school leadership skills can be developed and that school leaders should be supported through various means throughout their careers.

A professional development programme based on this Curriculum Framework can enable school leaders to become a part of the professional learning communities in which they can rethink and share their own and school values and vision of education with others, participate in professional inquiry and group reflection and take collective responsibilities for all children within the environment of mutual trust, respect, and support Bolam et al. 2005 in Bubb & Early, 2007.

'Empowering School Leaders for Developing Inclusive School Cultures – Curriculum Framework' has been developed within the *HEAD: Empowering School Principals for Inclusive School Culture* project¹. The overall objective of the project was to support schools in creating an inclusive school culture by empowering school principals in primary and secondary schools.

The development of the Curriculum Framework was based on the:

- extensive review of related research and literature;
- best professional development practices existing in Slovenia and The Netherlands;
- needs assessment that included 273 principals from the Republic of North Macedonia and Croatia;²
- critical analysis of educational policies and documents relating to the role of school principals;
- expert reflections after piloting programmes based on the Curriculum Framework in Croatia and North Macedonia implemented among 81 school principals.

The Curriculum Framework was piloted in Croatia and North Macedonia from November 2020 to May 2021. Especially relevant for the piloting was the fact that the already limited professional development provisions available to principals in both countries did not include topics such as inclusive school culture, diversity or social justice. Additionally, in these two countries, there is still no comprehensive programme for continuous professional development for school principals related to inclusive education.

In both countries, Croatia and the Republic of North Macedonia, the Curriculum Framework was piloted as five 2-day modules of training, both with primary and secondary school principals. Implementing partners in Croatia were the Open Academy *Step by Step*³ (primary school principals) and *Forum for Freedom in Education*⁴ (secondary school principals). Implementing partners in the Republic of North Macedonia were the *Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives Step by Step*⁵ (primary school principals) and the *Macedonian Civic Education Centre*⁶ (secondary school principals).

1 More information about project is available on: 'HEAD: Empowering School Principals for Inclusive School Culture' <https://head.edupolicy.net/about-the-project.html>

2 You can find more about needs assessment here: <http://edupolicy.net/portfolio-posts/principals-needs-for-professional-development-in-the-field-of-creating-an-inclusive-school-culture-report-for-croatia-and-republic-of-north-macedonia/>

3 www.korakpokorak.hr

4 www.fso.hr

5 www.stepbystep.org.mk

6 www.mcgo.org.mk

Although differences in the way schools are run and managed in each country involved in the project exist, there is still a hierarchical system with one appointed school principal responsible for all school decisions. In this sense, it was decided that only school principals would participate in the pilot training. In both countries, a total of 81 principals from primary and secondary schools participated in the training.

The impact study of the training based on the Curriculum Framework has been conducted, including the experimental group of the principals included in five 2-days modules and a control group of principals who were not included in the training. This study, which has been conducted by the *Educational Research Institute*⁷ from Slovenia, shows the training based on this Curriculum Framework has had effectiveness on the professional development of principals for both, principals of primary and secondary schools in Croatia and the Republic of North Macedonia. Only several months after the end of the implementation of the five 2-day training for principals, the effect on the well-being of students and teachers has been statistically significant in some aspects. Both students and teachers, as well as principals to a greater extent, recognise elements of the inclusive school culture in their schools.

1.2. WHO AND HOW CAN IMPLEMENT THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK?

The Curriculum Framework is intended for the experts on and providers of professional development to primary and secondary school leaders; with the aim to support them in designing CPD programmes. Such programmes will empower school leaders for the development of an inclusive school culture regardless of the role they may currently hold (eg. principals, principal assistants, informal leaders). The term school leadership is no longer understood solely as a principal's position, responsibility, actions, etc. In theory and practice, the involvement/engagement of all school staff in leadership is increasingly at the forefront (Brejc & Čagran 2019; EASNIE, 2018). The Curriculum Framework has been developed with the awareness that leadership, even as a function, can be performed by one leader or, by a collaborative leadership team or distributed among several key actors within or linked to

7 www.pei.si

a school. Individual leaders may also, in different national contexts, be referred to as head teachers, school directors, or principals.

In this publication, when the term 'leader' or 'leadership' is used it refers to all those in key leadership functions in schools, not only the individual school principal. Therefore, the Curriculum Framework can also be used as the basis for the professional development programmes of those who are not hierarchically in leading positions but are considered leaders of the processes of improvement in their school communities such as pedagogues, deputy directors, parent-council members, leaders of professional learning communities, members of teams for school improvement, etc. The Curriculum Framework may therefore be used for the professional development of school leaders with different 'professional profiles' in different national educational contexts.

The Curriculum Framework can be used by any professional development provider who aims to develop a programme of professional development for primary and/or secondary school leaders for strengthening inclusive school cultures. Since this Curriculum Framework is strongly value-based, it is required that individuals and organisations who use it are dedicated to equity and social justice in education (see more about expected educator competencies on p. 34). It is an open-source tool that any professional development provider in any country is free to adapt to county respective context. The Curriculum Framework can be used by official state agencies who are responsible for the professional development of school leaders, at universities, in non-governmental organisations, etc., as a form of formal or non-formal professional development for school leaders. The Curriculum Framework should be adjusted and adapted to the individual/specific implementation styles of the school leaders and to the current needs of the school as well as to the changes within the education system and, more specifically, to the needs of all of learners.

The Curriculum Framework has been developed to be a tool for various kinds of professional development support for leaders. It can be used for strengthening inclusive school cultures in different ways: internship programmes, mentoring and coaching programmes, the base for individual and group leader's reflection framework programmes for professional learning communities of teachers, discussion groups, etc.

Depending on the country's context, the Curriculum Framework can also be used to contribute to the development of new policies aimed at leadership practice, and support the revision and further development of existing policies and policy frameworks.





2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Social justice leaders should be committed first and foremost to the academic and emotional success of marginalized students (Theoharis, 2007).

This chapter presents the main relevant concepts and approaches linked to the aims and outcomes of the Curriculum Framework. To reach the aims the awareness of the concepts' relevance and common understanding of them among the experts and professional development providers are crucial. It has to be stressed that all three concepts, school culture, social justice approach and leadership, are strongly interconnected within the competence areas.

2.1. SCHOOL CULTURE

School culture and school climate are one of the most complex and at the same time most important concepts in education. In theory and research, they overlap and are very often used as synonyms. In the following paragraphs, we will provide definitions of both concepts, not with the purpose of making a clear distinction between them but with the goal of clarifying what is expected from school leaders when initiating the development of inclusive school culture and climate.

Schein (1992) defines an organisation's culture as "the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organisation's view of itself and its environment". Stoll (1998) defines school culture as a "school mindset" and describes it with the simple phrase "the way we do things around here".

Hargreaves (1994) developed a model of school culture based on two dimensions: the instrumental domain, which represents social control and an orientation to the task; and the expressive domain, reflecting social cohesion through maintaining positive relationships. The ideal school has to have optimal social cohesion and optimal social control – fairly high expectations and support for achieving standards. Hargreaves emphasises that these "ideal cultures" are not possible since real schools "float" between different school cultures.

Viewed more practically, MacGilchrist and colleagues (1995; according to Stoll, 1998) argue that school culture is expressed through "three inter-related generic dimensions": professional relationships, organisational arrangements, and opportunities for learning.

Organisational culture can be understood as a three-level model (Schein, 1992):

1. Basic underlying assumptions (the unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings, ultimate source of values and action),
2. Espoused values (strategies, goals, philosophies as espoused justifications),

3. Artefacts (visual organisational structures and processes): customs, rituals, symbols, stories, and language. School culture is manifested through artefacts.

Since deeper levels of school culture are mainly hard to grasp (assumptions and values), school climate refers to the quality and types of interactions that take place between and among young people and adults in a school. School culture, therefore, is most clearly “seen” in the school climate: ways people relate to and work together, the management of the school’s structures, systems, and physical environment; and the extent to which there is a learning focus for both students and adults, including the nature of that focus. These interactions are framed by the culture and structure of the school, its composition, and its relationship to families, communities and the state and have been found to affect student and school outcomes.

Some definitions of school climate are rather overlapping with the definition of school culture. Thus, according to Wang, M. T., and Degol, J. L., (2016) many researchers conceptualise the school climate as the shared beliefs, values and attitudes that shape interactions between students and adults and set the parameters of acceptable behaviour and norms for the school (Brookover et al. 1978; Emmons et al. 1996; Esposito 1999; Kuperminc et al. 1997). Wang, M. T., and Degol, J. L., (2016) upon a review of the research literature offered a multidimensional model of school climate. They recognise four environments in which school climate is expressed: academic, community, safety and institutional environment (see Figure 1). The academic climate focuses on the overall quality of the academic atmosphere, including curricula, instruction, teacher training and professional development. The community stresses the quality of interpersonal relationships within the school. Safety represents the degree of physical and emotional security provided by the school, as well as the presence of effective, consistent and fair disciplinary practices. The institutional environment reflects the organisational or structural features of the school environment.

Research shows that school culture and school climate can have an effect on children’s and teachers’ well-being in many aspects. According to Wang, M. T. and Degol, J. L., (2015, p. 13):

“The most consistent findings demonstrate the importance of academic and community dimensions in promoting academic achievement. Schools that set high academic standards, stress commitment to students, exhibit effective leadership and emphasise mastery goal orientations have students that demonstrate higher academic achievement. Likewise, community features such as warm teacher-student relationships, frequent communication between

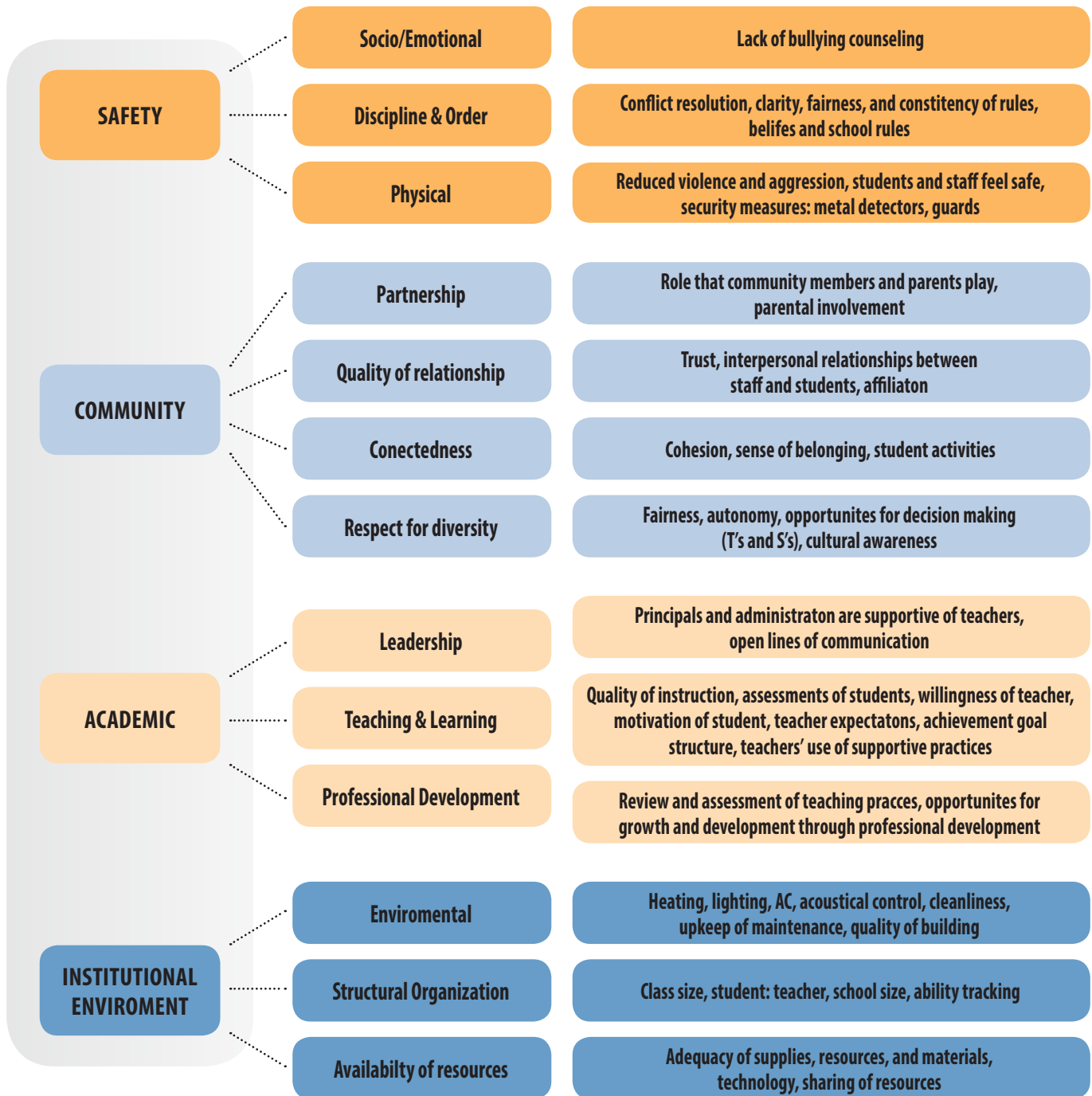


Figure 1. School climate according to Wang, M. T., & Degol, J. L. (2016)

parents and schools, and appreciation for diversity cultivate an academic environment that is conducive to learning and promotes optimal achievement and motivation among students. Institutional and safety factors, on the other hand, seem to be less consistently associated with academic outcomes, with effects often disappearing when other school climate factors are controlled for.”

A positive school climate (Goodenow, 1993; Osher et al., 2008; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Becker & Luthar, 2002; Christenson & Thurlow, 2004; Pinkus, 2009; Christenson & Thurlow, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995; Weiss, Lopez & Rosenberg, 2010; Suldo, McMahan, Chappel & Loker, 2012; Denny et al., 2011; LaRusso, Romer & Selman, 2008; McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002; Battistich & Horn, 2007; according to www.youth.gov):

- improves student motivation, achievement, helps close achievement gaps, increases high school completion, college readiness rates and prevents school dropout;
- decreases rates of teacher turnover and improves teacher satisfaction;
- facilitates the turnaround of low-performing schools;
- has a positive impact on the mental and behavioural health of students, including contributing to a decrease in risky behaviours and depressive symptoms and an increase in feelings of belonging; and
- results in decreased rates of student substance use.

A negative school climate (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004; Ripsy & Gregory, 2009; Jiang, Perry & Hesser, 2010; Fleming, Merry, Robinson, Denny & Watson, 2007; Way, Reddy & Rhodes, 2007; Mayer, 2001; Birkett, Espelage & Koenig, 2009; Milsom, 2006; www.youth.go):

- is linked to decreased graduation rates and poor student achievement;
- facilitates opportunities for bullying, violence and even suicide;
- is associated with a decline in psychosocial and behavioural adjustment, as reflected in measures of self-esteem, depressive symptoms and problem behaviour

School culture is influenced by a school’s external context. According to Stool (1998), it is shaped by its history, context, and the people in it; by the school’s students and their social class background and changes in society. At the same time, institutionalised discrimination is embedded in all dimensions of culture. The norms of what constitutes deep culture (the unspoken and unconscious rules) are gendered and manifest in government processes and policies and those policies are reflected in a school’s culture climate (Sensoy, Ozlem, and Robin DiAngelo, 2017). In this sense, in order to develop a school culture that is inclusive for all children, regardless of their

cultural heritage, ability, personal preferences or/and life experiences, it is crucial to take care of the school climate as well as rethink deeper levels of school culture: values and assumptions. Very often, it is the school's collective assumptions and values that are the unconscious, implicit promoters of inequality in educational institutions.

The common obstacles that school leaders face while they are trying to create an inclusive culture in their schools are already described in the literature (according to Izhak Berkovich, 2014; EASNIE, 2018):

- segregation and exclusion of disadvantaged and disempowered social groups, which is frequently replicated in schools and lacking in the acknowledgement of inequality practices in education (Anderson, 1990; Ryan, 2003; Shields, 2003),
- increased enthusiasm for exclusive measures of accountability (McNeil, 2000),
- manage approaches to leadership that reinforce already entrenched hierarchies (Blackmore, 1999; Gewirtz, 2002),
- empower a culture that has a belief in heroes (Loeb, 1994),
- tendency to view leadership as a behaviour rather than action, as having to do with persons rather than ideas (Sergiovanni, 1992),
- encourage policies that consider responsibility for what happens in organizations in the hands of single individuals like school administrators (Ryan, 2006),
- encourage cynicism towards efforts to empower people (Anderson, 1990),
- empower an educational environment that enables accepting and respecting differences (Giroux, 1992),
- emphasis on bureaucratic, psychological, and technical-rational authority that has led to the neglect of professional authority (Sergiovanni, 1992).

2.2. SOCIAL JUSTICE APPROACH

Inequality within the educational system has negative consequences on all students because it damages social solidarity in schools, lowers motivation, increases the rate of discipline problems, and thereby reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of schools (Chiu, 2010; Wilkinson, 2004; according to Izhak Berkovich, 2014). For example, research shows (according to OECD, 2021) that students with low socio-economic backgrounds are likely to have far fewer opportunities to learn formal mathematical content (Schmidt, Zoido and Cogan, 2014), students with special education needs (SEN) and students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds have disparities in learning and access to education. Results from the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that gender and, to a greater degree, socio-economic status, as defined by factors such as parental education and educational resources at home, are associated with wide variation in reading and mathematics proficiency among 15-year-olds. According to OECD (2021) social and/or individual differences in students' backgrounds may be associated with unfair limitations to their learning achievement, educational attainment and broader development outcomes.

A conservative view of the implementation of inclusive practices in education (Ryan 2006, p. 7) “believes that the educational system is perfect and does not need significant changes”. Those who have to be changed are students who do not perform at the expected level and their families who do not behave or give support to their children in an expected way. The task of the educational system is to integrate those who are marginalized and ‘problematic’ into an already existing educational system. In that sense, the **equality** approach tries to ensure an equal distribution of opportunities, such as everyone being provided with the same thing to ensure they achieve their best. The equality approach in the development of school curricula means that policymakers provide the same minimum/common, such as a standard or core/essential learning in the curriculum design context to all students (OECD, 2021). Diversity is trying to be minimised.

Various studies have shown that inequality in society and the educational system is closely associated with the different layers of children’s and their families’ identities: race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical ability, language, and so on (Ryan 2006). Harassment of students because of their identity and disapproval of their identity often has negative effects on their attendance and achievements and harms their ability to integrate into society (Capper et al., 2006; according to Izhak Berkovich, 2014).

Due to the abovementioned reasons, the equity approach is important as it encourages policy makers, administrators and teachers to appreciate children's individual and group identity. Moreover, it ensures that everyone is being provided with what they need to do their best. While the concept of equality suggests that all students should have access to the same educational resources and opportunities, the term equitable acknowledges that some students need more of the school's resources and opportunities than others in order to achieve the same level.

Both equality and equity approaches deny that social injustice, as an integrated part of the communities and an integrated part of society, is replicated and perpetuated in the educational system through oppression. Oppression is institutionalised biases, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination. In educational institutions, as well as in the educational system, there is a set of policies, practices, traditions, norms, definitions, and explanations (discourses), that function to systematically exploit one social group to the benefit of another social group (Sensoy, Ozlem and Robin DiAngelo. 2017). The group that benefits from this exploitation is termed the dominant (or agent) group, and the group that is exploited is termed the vulnerable (or minoritized) group. Sexism, racism, classism, ableism, and heterosexism are specific forms of oppression that equally exist in society as well as in the educational system. All types of oppression negatively affect the development of both children from dominant groups and from minority groups (York, 2003). Children born into the dominant culture learn, implicitly and explicitly, at an early and impressionable age, that the members of the minority group are considered "different", "inferior" or "abnormal".

The social justice approach in education understands, takes into account and reacts to the ways different communities' children belong to have been shaped by social and political contexts. At the same time, the **social justice approach** is looking for a transformation of the educational system in a way that policies, norms and practices in education that create and perpetuate inequities should be eliminated. It should be noted that those policies, practices, traditions, norms, definitions and explanations (discourses) are actually part of the school culture and what is needed are changes in school culture primarily and then the school climate as well. Since the school culture is stable and consistent over time it is unconsciously embedded in a school's functioning. Due to this, changing school culture in order to be inclusive is rather difficult and demands deep reflection of all included in a school's functioning (Eller, J. F. and Eller, S. 2009).

The changes should be made in a way that all resources, spaces, programmes and services are used by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, without special adaptation to a certain student. The principle of making changes that overcome many obstacles that humanity has created illogically, both in attitudes and in the environment, is called universal design.

The social justice approach in leadership involves and starts with the recognition that besides getting to know students in terms of their unique personalities – their likes and dislikes, temperaments and moods, whether they have siblings, play an instrument or sport, they belong to marginalised or/and dominant groups (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Wang, 2018). It is necessary to understand that an oppressive system leads toward a hierarchical way of understanding social groups who hold specific identities where some groups of people are taken more valuable (like people without disabilities or people who at home speak the official language) while others are concerned less valuable (like people with disability or those who at home do not speak the official language). That relationality position between social groups which are ranked in the hierarchy is called social stratification (Sensoy, Ozlem and Robin DiAngelo, 2017).

Being a vulnerable child means belonging to groups of children whose rights are likely to be threatened, living below the average well-being of the society in which they live, or experiencing negative life outcomes in a higher percentage than their peers who belong to other groups. An equity and social justice approach to education starts by acknowledging the risk factors which are certain individual and contextual differences among learners, related to disparities in student performance. According to OECD (2013[6]; OECD, 2014[7]) risk factors in the field of education are: the students' socio-economic status; family structures (Santín and Sicilia, 2016; Dronkers, Veerman and Pong, 2017); migrant, ethnic or racial, minority background, such as indigenous background (Chetty et al., 2018; Sørensen et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2018; Nusche, 2009; OECD, 2017; Rutigliano, 2020); language(s) (Bredtmann, Otten and Vonnahme, 2018); geographic location (Cresswell and Underwood, 2004; Pegg and Panizzon, 2007); special education needs (SEN), i.e. learning disabilities, physical impairments and mental health conditions (WHO, 2011; Brussino, 2020); low performance or under-preparation in prior learning (OECD, 2017); gifted and talented students with exceptional abilities in learning (Jarvis, 2018); gender and sexual orientation (UNESCO, 2019); Kosciw, Palmer and Kull, 2014; Vecellio, 2012; Reygan, 2009; Kosciw et al., 2020; Martino, Kassen and Omercajic, 2020; Case, Stewart and Tittsworth, 2009; Rubén, 2018; Barrientos and Lovera, 2020; Kosciw and Zongrone, 2019). Certainly, defining who the vulnerable students are may depend on national and local contexts.

In addition, it should be considered equally important that studies show that educator identities influence the knowledge they advance and validate, as well as their assessments of students' skills, knowledge and abilities. As a school leader, becoming aware of one's own positionality, the fact that they as professionals have identities that are also (in most cases, highly) ranked in the relation to others, and motivating other educators to do the same, is a very important task of a school leader in the processes of developing an inclusive school culture.

Leithwood (2021) in his review of the results of 63 empirical studies identified five domains of leadership practices that include 22 specific practices which are likely to help improve equitable school conditions and outcomes for diverse and traditionally underserved students. Specific practices included in the five domains combine both instructional and transformative leadership practices. These are practices associated with "equity-oriented" or "culturally-responsive" leadership:

1. Setting Directions:

Building a shared vision; Identifying specific, shared, short-term goals; Creating high-performance expectations; Communicating the vision and goals;

2. Building Relationships and Developing People:

Stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff; Providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members; Modelling the school's values and practices; Building trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents, and establishing productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives;

3. Designing the Organisation to Support Desired Practices:

Building collaborative cultures and distributing leadership; Structuring the organisation to facilitate collaboration; Building productive relationships with families and communities; Connecting the school to its wider environment; Maintaining a safe and healthy school environment; Allocating resources in support of the school's vision and goals;

4. Improving the Instructional Programme:

Staffing the instructional programme; Providing instructional support; Monitoring student learning and school improvement progress; Buffering staff from distractions to their work; and Participating with teachers in their professional learning activities;

5. Securing Accountability:

Building staff members' sense of internal accountability; Meeting the demands for external accountability.

2.3. FACES OF LEADERSHIP THAT SUPPORT EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Leadership that promotes social justice and equity as preferable approaches that lead towards social inclusion in education is a kind of leadership that addresses inequality in education and in society as a whole, builds community and enables the full participation of children, educators, parents, community and teachers as well as the valued outcomes for all learners, including those most vulnerable to social exclusion.

There are various leadership styles that are well described and researched in the educational field. Each person, as a leader, at different times uses at least several styles. From the perspective of inclusive education and inclusive school culture, some leadership styles are more suitable than others.

According to EASNIE (2019) international research has identified that instructional, distributive and transformative leadership is linked to successful inclusive practices (Kershner and McQuillan, 2016; Urlick, 2016) since those leadership styles are focused on participation.

In this Curriculum Framework except for the instructional, distributed and transformative leadership, the social justice style of leadership is promoted.

Additionally, the framework promotes system leadership. System leadership takes place between schools and in relation to the local environment and the school system and can be described as professional and socially responsible leadership that goes beyond the “walls” of each school. The leader is thus aware of the importance of opening up to the environment while also knowing and understanding the importance of social and personal factors in the environment that affect student performance.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

According to this model, the principal is focused on the students’ learning, mainly by influencing teachers. The main task of the principal is to monitor and guide teachers in the teaching process and their professional development, as well as to monitor student achievement in educational outcomes.

In this approach, the emphasis is on the principal who should be a pedagogical expert and who makes sure that all the educational processes that contribute to

student development and academic success are carried out in the school (Bush and Glover, 2014, Sheppard, 1996, Leithwood, 2021, Hallinger, 2005). Leaders are primarily responsible for promoting better measurable outcomes for learners by enhancing the quality of classroom teaching and learning (Day et al., 2016). This approach implies that the principal is in a role of power based on his formal position, which in a way is a hierarchical leadership model that does not encourage the dispersion of responsibilities in decision-making processes.

Hattie (2012, p. 83.) suggests that principals are engaged in instructional leadership when they “have their major focus on creating a learning climate free of disruption, a system of clear teaching objectives and high teacher expectations for all teachers and students”.

Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2013) (OECD) in 23 countries found that school leaders with a stronger instructional leadership focus are associated with: greater collaboration between teachers; more positive teacher-learner interactions; increased recognition of teacher innovation (Day and Sammons, 2014). Further analysis of the TALIS 2013 found that in schools where instructional leadership is favoured, teachers in primary and secondary education are also more engaged in reflective dialogue (OECD, 2016).

This approach is criticised as “too class-oriented”, which reduces the principal’s ability to devote him/herself to the process and the development of the school climate. The system of rewarding those teachers, who succeed best in achieving the goals and mission of the school, which is often in this kind of leadership, can influence the development of a culture of competition and, therefore, neglect the development of a culture of dialogue between all stakeholders of a school community. Some authors state that there is a “narrower” and a “broader” concept of instructional leadership. The narrower concept refers to actions directly related to teaching, such as teaching supervision. However, the challenge is to identify how leaders can facilitate teacher learning and what it is that teachers need to be able to do to implement the kind of instruction that will support learners in achieving educational goals. The broader concept includes the development of a school culture that has significant consequences for teacher behaviour (Neumerski, 2013; according to EASNIE 2018). The Curriculum Framework encourages leaders to use instructional style of leadership in a broader sense.

Additionally, instructional leadership has also been criticised because it is too focused on the principal who is the centre of expertise, power and authority. This can result in ignoring or underestimating the roles of other school employees (e.g. teachers, professional associates) as well as the experiences of students and

families from minority communities. This is why some other leadership models, such as distributive, emphasise that there is no single instructional leader and that one person cannot be the only pedagogical leader of the entire school.

DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Current school leadership trends increasingly emphasise leadership that encourages and facilitates the professional collaboration and involvement of all school staff in discussions and decision-making on important issues: e.g. on developmental orientations, learning and learners, evaluating the performance and effectiveness of school work, etc. Distributed school leadership (which is sometimes identified as shared, participative or collective leadership) is understood as spreading influence through authority, responsibility and participation to different stakeholders in the process of school leadership by dividing and assuming roles in the completion/implementation of leadership activities (Kovač et al., 2014).

Distributive leadership contributes to the process of school democratisation since the distributed type of school management implies the breaking of hierarchical power relations, that is, the relations between individual structures in the organisation are no longer vertical or linear but are unstructured and spontaneous. At the same time in an increasingly diverse environment, the school is becoming an increasingly complex organisation, which is accompanied by the expansion of the roles and responsibilities that need to be divided among different stakeholders. It should be stressed that distributed leadership does not represent the involvement of other stakeholders in leadership activities by a mere delegation of tasks. Distributive leaders see educators, children and parents as competent and responsible human beings who must have a voice in making decisions for themselves and as citizens of the world. They make opportunities for others to lead and empower them to speak for themselves. Such stakeholders then become ‘drivers of the change process in the school’ (EASNIE, 2018).

Distributive leadership goes beyond formal leadership that sometimes resides in one individual, the principal (Spillane et al., 2004). Distributed leadership implies the potential of each stakeholder to lead, which stems from expertise and experience, and not exclusively from formal positions within the strict hierarchy of a particular organisation. With this in mind, distributed leadership is determined through the daily practice of leadership, which is equally characterised by the formal and informal interaction of stakeholders related to the work of the school - principals, professional associates, teachers, students and parents, as well as external stakeholders.

The realisation of the distributive style of leadership is closely connected with the school climate and school culture since it can only be realised in a climate of trust and mutual support, which should become an integral part of the organisational context. A school climate of trust and mutual support, in which critical reflection, openness, honesty, trust and the continuous search for answers are nurtured, is a climate in which the development of a culture of dialogue is encouraged. A successfully distributed management implies that organisational culture, as well as the wider context of school functioning such as education policy, enables and promotes dialogue, interaction and the division of responsibilities.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

Transformative leadership is based on the assumption that schools are not only responsible for implementing changes envisioned by others but also for initiating change at the school level. At the same time, this model emphasises the importance of values. Shields (2010, p. 2) argues that transformative leadership “begins with questions of justice and democracy; it critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise not only of greater individual achievement but of a better life lived in common with others. Transformative leadership links education and educational leadership with the wider social context within which it is embedded”. So, transformative leadership should promote the values of equity, justice, participation and democracy. It is a socially responsible way of school leadership. Therefore this style of leadership overlaps and is sometimes even identified as “social justice leadership”. In this Curriculum Framework “social justice leadership” will be described separately.

Transformative leadership is traditionally associated with the ability to facilitate change and innovation by impacting people and cultures within schools (Navickaitė, 2013; according to EASNIE 2018). Innovative school changes begin by challenging the inappropriate uses of power and privilege that create or perpetuate inequity and injustice.

The key to transformative leadership lies in the leader’s ability to motivate. The transformative leader is a “fan, enthusiast, dramatist, trainer, facilitator and builder” (Peters and Austin, 1985) because everything a leader does encourages the people around them, the employees in a team and the students of the school, to work better, to do more, and they strive to directly raise the level of their own efficiency, and then indirectly the level of organisational efficiency as well.

Transformative leadership results in the unification of leaders and other educational workers in the search for common higher goals. The transformative leader requires the support of teachers and other stakeholders in the process of identifying school priorities. Thus, with transformative leadership, as well as distributive, decision-making is not only in the hands of the principal but also of other employees who participate in the process of determining and resolving school priorities (Harris, 2003).

Research results confirm that transformative leadership results in mutual cooperation between teachers and raises the level of teacher self-efficacy (Harris, 2003). Also, transformative leadership contributes to the development of school culture, which directly affects the improvement of school outcomes (Leitwood et al., 1999). Additionally, a higher level of personal commitment to organisational goals and greater capacity to achieve these goals will result in additional efforts and higher efficacy of educators (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach 1999).

The critics of this style of leadership raise the critical question of “whose values?” Critics of this approach argue that these are often the values of educational authorities or school principals who act on behalf of the authorities. Thus, through transformative leadership, externally imposed values are often imposed on teachers (Chirichello 1999, Kirkbride, 2006). Transformative leadership can potentially turn into arbitrary “despotic” leadership as it presupposes the “strong”, heroic and charismatic characteristics of the principal. In order for this not to happen, there should be serious moral questioning of the appropriateness of the power that the principal has in a school that is declared to be democratic (Allix, 2000).

Since transformative leadership has been articulated as a style of leadership grounded in an activist agenda, it is sometimes believed to be too demanding and places “too much responsibility on the shoulders of educators and educational leaders” (Weiner, 2003: according to Shields, 2010).

Earlier research claimed that “when transformative and shared instructional leadership coexist in an integrated style of leadership, there is influence on school performance, measured by the quality of its pedagogy” (Marks and Printy, 2003, according to Day, C., Gu, Q. and Sammons, P. 2016). Thus, instructional and transformative leadership together have been most commonly identified as resulting in the success of students’ outcomes. Instructional leadership alone had a rather limited value and impact if leaders were to effectively respond only to the undeniably strong, policy-driven external demands (Day, C., Gu, Q. and Sammons, P. 2016).

SOCIAL JUSTICE/INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

The social justice style of leadership (also called and/or overlaps with inclusive leadership) focuses on developing an inclusive culture where all stakeholders are supported to work together, respect diversity and ensure that all learners, including those most vulnerable to exclusion, receive a high-quality education (EASNIE, 2018) by breaking the barriers of the risk of social exclusion for children. A social justice leader is committed to social justice and is strongly equity-oriented. These leaders challenge bias and oppression among all of the schools' stakeholders and are passionate about improving the life chances of all students (Leithwood, K, 2021). Izhak Berkovich (2014) argues that activism is the way that social inclusive leaders operate. Moreover, since in the transformative style of leadership intra-institutional activism is mentioned, in this style of leadership extra-institutional activism is also expected. Thus, to ensure the well-being and learning of every child, it is necessary for the leaders to critically reflect on the educational system as well as on other systems in which the school cooperates with the aim of advocating for breaking down of the barriers that are grounded in society for children.

As with a transformative leader, a social justice leader has the power to mobilise others in order to reduce social inequality (Oliva, 2006; according to Izhak Berkovich, 2014). In this sense, it is characteristic that a social justice leader enables the professional development of teachers, which ensures the understanding of social power, position and barriers which minoritized children face and those at risk, as well as the position of their families. Since people's actions are generally aligned with their beliefs, social justice teachers create opportunities to establish a common understanding among everyone about the meaning of equity. They motivate teachers and other professionals to raise awareness and knowledge about the ethnicities, languages, cultures, religions and living circumstances of students' families and how they are marginalised within society and the educational system. It is expected that professionals will apply that knowledge to align the school's curriculum with the best interests of their students' families and the wider community (Leithwood, 2021; Chism 2022.).

Therefore, social justice leadership actions are aimed at changing the school's practices and culture. Within this style of leadership, the appreciation of diversity is strongly implemented in school policy.

Inclusive/social justice leadership enables appropriate support to each student regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or family income (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2020).

A growing body of initiatives calls for school leaders to promote practices that support social justice and equity (e.g., Bogotch & Shields, 2014; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012; Potter, Torres, & Briceno, 2014; Taysum & Gunter, 2008; according to Wang, 2018). This kind of practice should be focused on critical reflection in leadership practice, as well as the encouragement of (Wang, 2018; Izhak Berkovich, 2014; Sensoy, 2015, EASNIE, 2018):

- respecting diversity and creating a sense of belonging for all learners, including those most vulnerable to exclusion;
- diminishing the biases and prejudices within the education environment, curriculum included;
- the transformation of institutional rules, norms and practices that contribute to social inequality;
- meaningful learning that is grounded in the student's life;
- inclusive practices with respect to the universal design whenever it is possible;
- the culture of collaboration and distributed leadership;
- enabling democratic participation in the decision-making of all learners and their families regardless of their position in the school and society;
- reflective professional development events on the topic of equity and social justice.







3. COMPETENCE AREAS

Leadership is both a catalyst for action and a kind of “glue” that brings coherence to successful change (Kovačević, J. and Hallinger, P.,2019)

The Curriculum Framework is built around five competence areas (CA): (1) Building an inclusive learning environment; (2) Inclusive school culture; (3) School leadership – personal and professional role in the organisational context of the school; (4) School leadership planning for inclusive school culture, and (5) Monitoring.

Each competence area begins with the description of why each area is important.

Experts (educator, provider, trainer etc.) who will develop a programme for the professional development of leaders based on these competence areas can combine a face-to-face implementation with individual/group assignments for participants. Assignments that can be completed by leaders in the schools are proposed for each competence area. These assignments will give them the opportunity to exercise various skills and to reflect on them later within the learning group. The outputs of these tasks can become a part of the participant's portfolio as a method of monitoring the learning process.

In addition, the expected competencies (knowledge, skills and professional beliefs) of inclusive leaders are listed. Some areas are more focused on attitudes or knowledge, while others are more focused on skills. Knowledge, skills and professional beliefs are interconnected throughout all competence areas.

Even though an order of competence areas is proposed, providers of professional development for school leaders can adapt the order according to the national and local policies, practices, needs and experiences of leaders. Also, even though the competencies together form a whole, the expert can decide to include some competencies within the different competence areas. Once again, leadership, in different national contexts, can be performed by one leader (head teachers, school director or principal) or leadership as a team. In this sense, a programme of professional development based on these competence areas can be implemented with leaders or leadership teams. It is also possible to select some competence areas that will be implemented only with the principals while some with whole leadership teams. It should be kept in mind that the first competence area 'Building an inclusive learning environment' is a very important starting point for understanding sources of inequality and the purpose of the whole Curriculum Framework.

3.1. COMPETENCE AREA 1: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMPETENCE AREA

This competence area is focused on understanding main concepts, such as inequity, equity and equality. Moreover, this knowledge will have an effect on the essential attitudes of school leaders who are working towards building an inclusive school culture in their school. Understanding concepts such as equality and social justice is the basis for developing professional beliefs that are necessary for the development of inclusive education.

When planning and implementing a module/training based on this competence area it is suggested to use methods that enable participants to understand the concepts and to reflect on them according to their professional and personal experiences. Activities that enable participants to share and reflect on their own identities, professionally and personally, will enable the building of social cohesion in the group. Participants will notice that both, their professional and personal identities are important to reflect on while they are making the effort to improve their leadership.

ASSIGNMENT BEFORE COMPETENCE AREA 1

Leaders are invited to prepare in advance, before the start of the programme, a short (5-minute long) presentation including an introduction of themselves, their schools' contexts, and the "leadership challenges" in inclusion they now see in their schools.

OUTCOMES

A leader knows and understands the concepts of:

Inequity, equity, equality, social inclusion, universal design, minority, majority, children at risk and social justice.

A leader is able to:

Analyse student outcomes (academic and non-academic) in order to identify disadvantaged students.

Plan changes at the school level in a way that all resources, spaces, programmes and services are used by everyone to the greatest extent possible without special adaptation to a certain student (Universal design).

Recognise how oppressive policies, norms and practices in different forms of oppression (sexism, nationalism, linguisticism, etc.) are manifesting at the school level.

Recognise the children at risk and risk factors in their own school.

Reflect on how their own and other teacher's positionality influence the educational process.

A leader believes that:

Education should enable all students to access and fully participate in teaching and learning experiences.

Educational inequalities are a consequence of inappropriate responses to diversity.

School transformation of policies, norms and practices is a way towards ensuring equity in education.

ASSIGNMENT RELATED COMPETENCE AREA 1

Leaders are invited to analyse student outcomes (academic and non-academic) in order to identify disadvantaged students and to plan necessary changes in school practice, policy and norms.

POSSIBLE CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREA 1

CV; Brief description of the school and local community; Reflection on positionality; Data on children who belong to at-risk groups at the school level; Description of the process of changing the school atmosphere in order to develop a sense of belonging for all children and parents; Reflection on recognition of oppressive practices (in school/educational system and in wider community).

3.2. COMPETENCE AREA 2: INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMPETENCE AREA

This competence area is focused on the development of the vision of school culture that supports social inclusion. It is important to provide an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their own school culture and to connect their reflections with the knowledge obtained in the previous competence unit in order to ensure that school culture really supports the development and learning of every child and does not diminish but respects diversity. When planning and implementing a module/training based on this topic area, it is suggested to start with the planning of the first changes in school culture (e.g. values) and school climate (e.g. artefacts) in order to improve their inclusiveness.

OUTCOMES

A leader knows and understands the concepts of:

School culture, school climate and inclusive school culture.

A leader is able to:

Recognise different levels of school culture.

Recognise the implicit and/or explicit values on their own school level and they are connected with the promotion of equality for all students.

Reflect on their own pedagogical, relational and collaborative impact on building inclusive school culture.

Assess the inclusiveness of school artefacts (customs, rituals, symbols, websites, language, etc.) as part of school culture.

Plan a participative process (with different stakeholders) of rethinking school values that promote the values of equity, justice, participation and democracy.

A leader believes that:

Be able to identify the level of inclusive culture in their schools by using the approved theoretical model and by using arguments for his/her assessment.

Use one of the tools (e.g. Index of inclusion³) for participative assessment of school climate.

Plan the development/ change of school climate by the identification of different stakeholders who affect school culture and taking into consideration their perspectives (of needs and perceptions).

School culture and climate should support and welcome diversity among all learners.

Participation of each child and family is welcomed regardless of their origin or other characteristics.

School leaders have a moral responsibility to react to educational inequality.

ASSIGNMENT RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREA 2

Leaders assess the main elements and approaches in the Index for inclusion or⁴ some other tool for assessing school culture.

POSSIBLE CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREA 2

Assessment and reflection on the inclusiveness of school artefacts (customs, rituals, symbols, websites, language, etc.) as a part of school culture; Identification of different stakeholders who affect school culture; Results of the participative assessment of school climate tools (e.g. Index of inclusion). Plan the development of an inclusive school climate.

3 The index for inclusion is an instrument for developing learning and participation in schools: <http://www.csie.org.uk/resources/inclusion-index-explained.shtml>

3.3. COMPETENCE AREA 3: SCHOOL LEADERSHIP - PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ROLE IN THE ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMPETENCE AREA

This competence area is focused on understanding the differences between management and leadership and the recognition of different styles of leadership. During planning and implementing a module/training based on this topic area it is important to give the participants the opportunity to self-assess their own leadership style, as well as to notice what would be their professional development goals in the future. Also, within this competence area participants should have the opportunity to share their leadership experiences and talk about the difficulties they face.

It is important that the activities that will be developed within this competence area are aimed at strengthening group cohesion. Group cohesion, which is characterised by trust, a sense of belonging and mutual respect, is one of the ways that a professional learning community arises. In an environment of trust and respect, professionals are more willing to share their work-related thoughts and experiences. In this environment, they are more willing to reflect, think “out of the box” and accept new understanding and create new transformative practices.

OUTCOMES

A leader knows and understands the concepts of:

Management, leadership, the instructional, distributive, transformative and social justice style of leadership.

A leader is able to:

Explain the differences and similarities between an instructional, distributive and transformative model of leadership and how they support social justice leadership.

Recognise the model of leadership (or managerial) that is promoted on the national level at policy and practices.

Self-assess and critically analyse their own leadership style.

Make plans for the improvement of their own leadership approach.

Plan a process of participative decision-making on the school level, which includes all relevant stakeholders.

Be able to facilitate professional collaboration among teachers and other stakeholders in order to promote learning communities.

A leader believes that:

Leadership skills can be developed.

ASSIGNMENT RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREA 3

Leaders self-assess their tasks and duties in order to make a reflection log about their leadership style.

POSSIBLE CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREA 3

Self-assessment of own leadership style; Report about the facilitation process among teachers and other stakeholders in order to promote learning communities.

3.4. COMPETENCE AREA 4: SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PLANNING AND ACTING FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMPETENCE AREA

This competence area is focused on planning for the improvement of inclusiveness of school culture. The intention of activities based on this competence area is to give an opportunity to participants to explore different methods and activities that they can implement in their own school environment in order to ensure the participation of various stakeholders in the process of school improvement. It is necessary that the focus is on explicitly respecting diversity and ensuring that every child in the school prospers.

OUTCOMES

A leader knows and understands the concepts of:

School quality monitoring methods (e.g. Interview, questionnaires action research), school quality indicators, formative assessment, school development plan and a participative approach.

A leader is able to:

Detect all relevant stakeholders relevant for the development of inclusive school culture.

Understand how to collect relevant data and how to use that data in developing a school development plan and critically reflect on it (individually and in the group).

Analyse inequalities on school and community levels by using relevant methods and indicators for critical reflection.

Create the School Development Plan that promotes an inclusive culture that includes goals, actions, stakeholders, costs and improvement indicators.

Plan a participative process of the transformation of institutional rules, norms and practices that contribute to social inequality.

Communicate a rationale of goals and actions agreed in the School Development Plan to the school and local community.

A leader believes that:

School leadership has the potential to positively impact school change.

School policies impact school change.

ASSIGNMENT RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREA 4

Leaders prepare and start with the implementation of school development plans for building inclusive school culture.

POSSIBLE CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREA 4

Report on SWOT analysis with a focus on equity; Report about the participative process of defining school values, norms and rules; Report about the development of School Development Plan; School Development Plan.

3.5. COMPETENCE AREA 5: MONITORING

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMPETENCE AREA

This competence area is focused on the continuing process of inclusive school improvement. During the monitoring process, it is important to offer participants the opportunity to reflect on the implementation of the School Development Plan. There may be reasons for the resistance to school culture change that some professionals may have, this should be discussed while planning for overcoming obstacles in the implementation of the Plan.

OUTCOMES

A leader knows and understands the concepts of:

Peer-to-peer support; group reflection.

A leader is able to:

Identify strengths and weaknesses of the applied school action plan.

Recognise the usual obstacles that school leaders face while they are trying to create an inclusive culture in their schools.

Reflect (individually and in the group) on the process of professional development.

Engage in efficient peer-to-peer reflection.

Make a plan of reflecting on obstacles they faced during school plan implementation.

Present the process of the implementation of the school plan.

A leader believes that:

Peer-to-peer support enables the professional development of school leaders.

School improvement is an ongoing process.

POSSIBLE CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREA 5

Reflect on the obstacles in the school improvement process and plan how to overcome them.

POSSIBLE CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREA 5

Report on SWOT analysis with a focus on equity; Report about the participative process of defining school values, norms and rules; Report about the development of School Development Plan; School Development Plan.





4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. METHODS FOR PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

In this section the principles and methods that can be useful in planning and implementing the programmes (training, group reflection, workshops, etc.) based on the Curriculum Framework are proposed. Since the participants of the programme will be adults, the implementation of two theories dealing with adult learning is proposed: Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning that explains different styles of adult learning and Kegan's (1982, according to Adams et al., 2007) model of understanding the disequilibrium learners go through while discovering and resolving problems.

According to Kolb's experiential learning model (Chapman, 2003), adults differ in learning styles and the ways they approach and process information. He identifies four learning styles: diverging, assimilating, converging and accommodating.

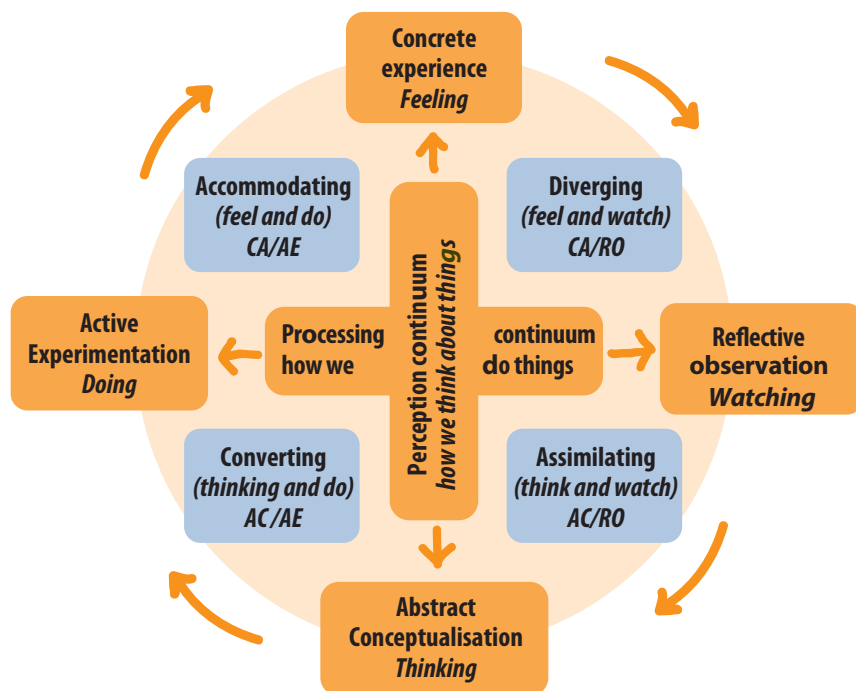


Figure 2: Kolb's experiential learning model

The implementation of Kolb's (1984) theory will enable professional development providers to apply different methods of teaching in order to enable leaders with different styles of learning to be included. Kegan's model is important since most professionals who are faced with the topic of social justice and inclusive school culture go through a state of disequilibrium. This model is also taken into account because the process of learning can be understood as a process in which the learner is standing outside their comfort zone.

Thus, there are three principles (Figure 3) of Curriculum Framework implementation that should be taken into account and implemented in each proposed competence area: getting the knowledge and understanding the key concepts, reflection, and planning action towards school transformation.

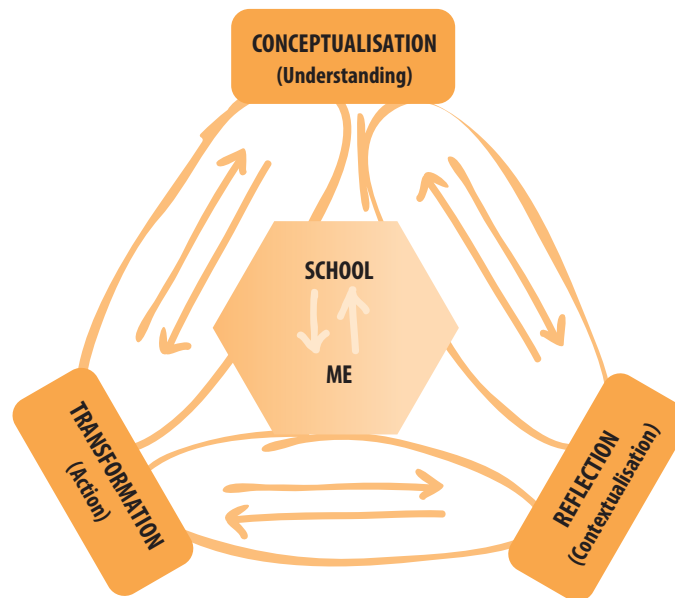


Figure 3: The three principles of Curriculum Framework implementation

Understanding key concepts. It is important that leaders act mainly from their expert knowledge and not so much from other sources of power (legitimate, reward, referent, coercive or informational) (French & Raven 1959 in Vliet 2010).

Reflection. The professional development of leaders with the commitment to the inclusive school culture and social justice should ensure self-reflection, individually or within the group, about their own social identities and their social positions, perspectives and beliefs and subjectivity in their relations with others, especially

those who are different. Additionally, it should enable the recognition of the structural inequalities in school. At the same time, in order to motivate other school educators for change, leaders should therefore be role models of learning, regularly reflecting on their experiences and evaluating their own impact in relation to their own personal life and professional leadership experiences and the context in which the school operates.

Planning Action towards School Transformation. The programme provides opportunities to practice and apply new ideas and knowledge in schools. In order to create an inclusive school environment, the changes in structural inequalities in the school environment, as well as outside the school, (in the zone of leader influence) should be planned. All actions should be planned according to the specific context of the school and local environment.

PRINCIPLES	Getting the knowledge and understanding the key concepts	Reflection	Planning Action towards School Transformation
METHODS	Lectures Readings Video-lectures Identifying key concepts and defining their own understanding Generating examples that illustrate the concepts Interviews	Making connections to other readings Asking each other clarifying questions Developing questions Questioning the relationships between concepts Discussing the implications for your own life and work Practising articulating the ideas introduced in the course Reviewing policy documents upon key concepts Identifying and discussing challenges Interpretation of data Reflecting on scenarios Reflecting on questioners and other assessment and self-assessment tools Interviews Peer-to-peer study visits	Action research on school level Making plans upon school data and their collective interpretations with other educators Identify possible action steps Assessing the level of risk for implementing action steps Practising self-chosen interventions Evaluating the outcomes of action plans

4.2. MONITORING THE PROCESS OF LEARNING

In regard to the monitoring of the learning process, it would be suitable to monitor the acceptance of the programme and participants' learning process. In terms of participants' reactions and reports on the acceptance we propose a "form-free" formative assessment after each competence area and an overall evaluation at the end of the programme. In terms of monitoring a participant's learning process, it is proposed that the process of learning is monitored according to the principles of formative and authentic assessment, which instead of evaluation is focused on the efficacy of learning in professional "real-life" situations.

Also, the monitoring should be an ongoing process that should be present during each CA as well as during the implementation of participants' knowledge and skills as well as the self and group reflection on their attitudes in school and wider. Leaders may demonstrate their learning and development throughout the programme according to the different assignments and work done individually or in groups, at home/school or during the programme sessions.

Leaders are stimulated continuously after each CA and between them they present a variety of outputs that show their new experiences, approaches, reflections and results in the form of a **professional portfolio**.

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

The professional portfolio is a structured collection of evidence of the leader's (or group of leaders on one school level) work that illustrates his/her skills, knowledge and interests. The professional portfolio contains evidence of the leader's practice, described solutions to some challenges and various professional reflections. The (best) professional portfolio is the way of showing "this is who I am, where I came from and what happened to me and my school along the (training) way". The professional portfolio of the principal contains their work in progress as well as finished assignments and products of the work done individually, with the training group and in schools.

When the documents for the portfolio are chosen (and this is done completely unrestricted by the owner(s) of the portfolio), a reflection should be written explaining: in which context it was created, what its purpose was, and how others reacted to it and how it will affect the further practice of the leader.

Through writing reflections, the leaders' awareness of the effectiveness of some of the strategies applied in their work is increased. This also enhances the leaders' understanding of the advantages of the strategy (e.g. group reflection) and what needs to be improved in its implementation.

For those who read the portfolio, it provides an insight into the process of improving the schools over a longer period of time, how the owner of the portfolio instigated changes, how one thinks about them and what leadership style they use in school. Within this syllabus, both participants and experts will have the information about achieving learning objectives in professional development and school development.

The professional portfolio should be organised to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that professionals possess, have developed, or are currently working on improving and which are expected of school leaders to develop an inclusive school culture. In that sense the content of the professional portfolio of leaders can be:

- The participants' self-assessment activities before, during and after learning;
- The principals' reports of their use of knowledge and skills (e.g. the process of planning a School Development Plan on the school level);
- Reports about the changes at a student, parents and teacher level (impact study);
- A description of the process that was undertaken in order to develop an inclusive school culture and the reflection on that process;
- etc.

From the professional portfolio, items may be selected towards the end of the programme for a showcase of working towards inclusive school culture. For participants it will be rewarding to display the work that makes them proud, experiencing the joy of exhibiting their best work and interpreting its meaning.

4.3. EXPECTED COMPETENCIES OF EXPERTS FOR THE PROGRAMMES BASED ON THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE KEY CONCEPTS THAT ARE THE CONTENT OF EDUCATION

It is expected that experts have a deep understanding of the key concepts (e.g. social justice, school culture; leadership) as well as the concepts that are associated with them (e.g. minoritized children, school artefacts). It is important that they have the knowledge that allows them to react to the misinterpretations of concepts in a respectful way. Also, they should be capable to bring up different examples and analogies from leadership and school practice that are related to the key concepts in the broader sense, in order to make those concepts more understandable for participants. They should enable participants to develop a common understanding of the implementation of those concepts in practice.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Educators should be committed to the idea of social inclusion and equity in education. It is related to the values of respecting diversity and justice which have to be part of an educator's functioning, professionally and privately. They should recognise and react, again in a respectful way, to comments from the side of the participants, which, implicit or explicit, promote or tolerate inequality. During group facilitation, they should use vocabulary that implies avoiding inequality.

HIGHLY DEVELOPED SKILLS IN GROUP FACILITATION

Educators should possess strong communication skills and group discussion facilitation skills that are suitable for working with adults, regardless of content. They should be able to use strategies, methods and techniques for the development of institutional culture in which participants can express their views freely and openly talk about their values, beliefs and doubts. Educators should have the ability to adjust programme expectations and learning activities to the participants' diverse needs, learning styles and responses to activities. They elicit different points of view from the group in order to develop a culture of respect for diversity and are competent at building and maintaining in-group trust. It is important that they use language thoughtfully, to be sure that they respect everyone.

SELF-REFLECTION SKILLS

This means they are aware of, and question, their own attitudes. Through the activities, they will ask themselves and others "What went well? What did not go well? What could one do differently next time?" They ask for feedback from participants in order to improve their facilitation skills.

ANNEXE KEY TERMS

IDENTITY	A person’s sense of who they are and the self-descriptions to which they attribute significance and value.
INEQUALITY	The unequal distribution of opportunities.
EQUITY	An approach that ensures that everyone is being provided with what they need to ensure they do their best.
EQUALITY	An approach that tries to ensure the equal distribution of opportunities, such as everyone being provided with the same thing to ensure they achieve their best.
LEADERSHIP	All those in key leadership functions in schools who can be many different individuals and not only the school principal.
POSITIONALITY	Being aware of the fact that we as professionals have identities that are also ranked in the relation to others.
PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO	A structured collection of evidence of the leader’s (or group of leaders on one school level) work that illustrates his/her skills, knowledge and interests.
SOCIAL EXCLUSION	Ways in which individuals may become cut off from full involvement in the wider society.
SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION	An approach that looks for a transformation of the educational system in a way that eliminates the barriers that create and perpetuate inequities.
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION	A relational position between social groups which are ranked in a hierarchy.
SYSTEM LEADERSHIP	Takes place between schools and in relation to the local environment and the school system and can be described as a professional and socially responsible leadership that goes beyond the “walls” of each school.
VULNERABILITY	Belonging to groups whose rights are likely to be threatened, to live below the average well-being of the society in which they live, or experience negative life outcomes in a higher percentage than their peers who belong to other groups.
UNIVERSAL DESIGN	The changes in the environment in a way that all resources, spaces, programmes and services are used by everyone to the greatest extent possible without special adaptation for a certain student.

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VIDEOS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p5286T_kn0, 3:12



The overall aim of *Empowering School Leaders for Developing Inclusive School Cultures – Curriculum Framework* is to provide institutions and organisations that provide and are responsible for the continuous professional development (CPD) of school leadership with the tool that supports them in creating CPD programmes / modules / trainings for strengthening an inclusive school culture.

Before using this *Curriculum Framework* and deciding on the type of professional development provision based on it consider the following:

- The national policy context in regard to:
 - focus on equity and social justice in national educational strategies;
 - standards of profession and qualifications; pre-service competencies expected from school leaders;
 - autonomy of schools and school leaders; school governance provisions;
 - selection and employment policies for school leaders;
 - continuous professional development requirements of school leaders.
- The professional development needs of school leaders in your country.
- The availability of pre-service and in-service CPD for school leaders in regard to school culture and social justice.
- The expected competencies of the experts who develop and implement the professional development support.