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The index for inclusive schools: A tool for developing inclusive schools and needed competences of stakeholders involved

Regional seminar on teacher training for inclusive education in countries with diverse social and cultural contexts

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Overview

1. Background of the Index and objectives
2. The contents of the Index
 - Key concepts
 - Three dimensions of the inclusive education process
 - Material (indicators and questions)
 - Suggested process
3. Example of a teacher training offer
4. Summary and discussion

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Background of the index and objectives

Developed by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow, first published in the UK in 2000 by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education

The index for inclusion is a set of material

- to help schools reduce barriers to learning and participation for all children and young people
- to help schools develop themselves in a way that values all students equally

The index is a resource to support the inclusive development of schools (school development)
2004: version for early years and childcare

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Requirements to overcoming barriers to learning and participation

The Index requires on-going efforts to

- challenge exclusionary pressures
- resist segregation
- support and develop inclusion
- end discrimination
- reduce competition and privilege

Developing inclusive schools requires

- policy commitments to reduce segregation and exclusion
- restructuring mainstream schools to respond to pupil diversity
- reforming the curriculum, teaching, support work, funding mechanisms and the built environment
- greater pupil representation in decision making

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How the Index for Inclusion was developed

- Developed with the help of a team of experienced people (teachers, parents, governors, researchers, ...)
- Development took a period of three years
- An initial version was piloted in six primary and secondary schools
- The first version was modified based on the experiences from the pilot phase
- The modified version was evaluated in a detailed programme of action research in seventeen schools
- Up-dated version in 2002 based on feed-backs

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Getting the Index for Inclusion

Available on internet:

- http://www.eenet.org.uk/index_inclusion/index_inclusion.shtml

In more than 20 languages, e.g. in

- English
- Bosnian
- Bulgarian
- Czech
- Romanian
- Serbian

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2. The contents of the Index

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The contents of the Index

Four elements to the Index:

- **Key concepts** to support thinking about inclusive school development.
- **Review framework:** dimensions and sections to structure the approach to the evaluation and development of the school.
- **Review material:** indicators and questions to enable a detailed review of all aspects of a school and help identify and implement priorities for change.
- An **inclusive process** to ensure the process of review, planning and implementation is inclusive.

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Four elements: an overview

Key concepts:
developing a common language


Review framework:
dimensions and sections to structure the approach

Review material:
indicators and questions to enable review

Inclusive Process:
review, planning and implementation

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Key concepts of the Index (1st element)

The key concepts aim at providing a language for thinking and discussing about inclusive educational development.

- Inclusion
- Barriers to learning and participation
- Resources to support learning and participation
- Support for diversity

The idea of inclusion is an unending process of increasing learning and participation for all students, an ideal to which schools can aspire.

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figure 1 Inclusion in education

Inclusion in education involves:

- Valuing all students and staff equally.
- Increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools.
- Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality.
- Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as 'having special educational needs'.
- Learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely.
- Viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than problems to be overcome.
- Acknowledging the right of students to an education in their locality.
- Improving schools for staff as well as for students.
- Emphasising the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement.
- Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities.
- Recognising that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.

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Review framework: dimensions and sections (2nd element)


Three interconnected dimensions of school improvement to direct thinking about school change

- Creating inclusive cultures
- Producing inclusive policies
- Evolving inclusive practices



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The three dimensions in the Index and its sections

Dimension A Culture: Creating a secure, accepting, collaborating, stimulating community

- Building community
- Establishing inclusive values

Dimension B Policies: Making sure that inclusion permeates all school plans.


- Developing the school for all
- Organising support for diversity

Dimension C Practice: Reflecting inclusive cultures and policies of the school.

- Orchestrating learning
- Mobilising resources

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The review material: indicators and questions (3rd element)

Each section contains between five and eleven indicators


- Indicators are statements of aspiration against which existing arrangements can be compared in order to set priorities for development.
- Each indicator represents an important aspect of the school.
- The meaning of each indicator is clarified by a series of questions that should invite schools to explore the indicator in detail.
- Each school may make their own version of the Index by adapting and adding questions.

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Dimensions, sections, indicators, questions



Each section contains five to eleven indicators:

- A1.1 Everyone is made to feel welcome.
- A1.2 Students help each other.
- A1.3 Staff collaborate with each other.
- A1.4 Staff and students treat one another with respect.
- A1.5 There is a partnership between staff and parents/carers.
- A1.6 Staff and governors work well together.
- A1.7 All local communities are involved in the school.


Each indicator is clarified by a series of questions

Every dimension has two sections:

- A1 Building community
- A2 Establishing inclusive values

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Indicators and questions: an example


Dimension A “Creating inclusive cultures”
→ Section A1 “Building community”
→ Indicator A1.1 “**Everyone is made to feel welcome**”

Questions

- Is the first contact that people have with the school friendly and welcoming?
- Is the school welcoming to all students, including students with impairments, travellers, refugees and asylum seekers?
- Is the school welcoming to all parents/carers and other members of its local communities?

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Indicators and questions: an example (continuation)

- Is information about the school made accessible to all, irrespective of home language or impairment?
- Are sign languages and other first languages interpreters available when necessary?
- Is it clear from the school brochure and information given to job applicants that responding to the full diversity of students and their backgrounds is part of school routine?
- Does the entrance hall reflect all members of the school's communities?
- Does the school celebrate local cultures and communities in signs and displays?

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Indicators and questions: an example (continuation)

- Are there positive rituals for welcoming new students and new staff and making their leaving?
- Do students feel ownership of their classrooms or tutor room?
- Do students, parents/carers, staff, governors and community members all feel ownership of the school?

Further questions:

- ...
- ...
- ...

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The Index process (4th element)

Suggestion of **how** to develop an inclusive school

- The process itself can contribute to the development of inclusion.
- Involves a detailed collaborative self-review, drawing on the experiences of everyone connected to the school.
- Is about finding ways to support school and professional development.
- Except of “getting started with the Index”, the process is represented as a school development planning cycle.

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Five phases of the Index process

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figure 6 The Index process

phase 1 Getting started with the Index (half a term)
 Setting up a co-ordinating group
 Reviewing the approach to school development
 Raising awareness about the Index
 Exploring existing knowledge using the concepts and review framework
 Deepening enquiry using the indicators and questions
 Preparing to work with other groups

phase 2 Finding out about the school (one term)
 Exploring the knowledge of staff and governors
 Exploring the knowledge of students
 Exploring the knowledge of parents/carers and members of local communities
 Deciding priorities for development

phase 3 Producing an inclusive school development plan
 Putting the Index framework into the school development plan
 Putting priorities into the school development plan

phase 4 Implementing priorities (on-going)
 Putting priorities into practice
 Sustaining development
 Recording progress

phase 5 Reviewing the Index process (on-going)
 Evaluating developments
 Reviewing work with the Index
 Continuing the Index process

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3. Example of a teacher training offer

MAS Diversity Education offered by the PHZ

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Background of the MAS Diversity Education

Several limits to inclusive education in the education systems of Central Switzerland

- Very segregate school structures
- Much specialised staff
- Rather narrow perception of “normality” in mainstream schools
- Slow political processes

Potentially supporting factors

- Existing political will (integration concept available)
- Schools acquainted with school development
- Many innovative schools and strong principles

→ Introduction of MAS provoked resistance

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Concept of the MAS Diversity Education

In-service teacher education

- Objectives: acquire competences to promote inclusive cultures, structures and practices
- Target group: teachers of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools
- Terms of admission:
 - at least two years working experience
 - interest in developing inclusive schools
 - support and participation of the school principal
 - preference to teachers that bring along a colleague from their school
- Duration: two years (60 ECTS)

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Content (modules) of the MAS Diversity Education

Total of 1800 working hours (60 ECTS)

- Diversity education (12.5 ECTS)
- Teaching and learning (13.5 ECTS)
- School development, project management, organisational development, coaching (4.5 ECTS)
- German as second language and intercultural education (7.5 ECTS)
- Reflections on learning and experiences with implementation, contents as to needs (7.5 ECTS)
- Master thesis: inclusive project (10 ECTS)
- Optional modules in gifted education, special education, German as second language and intercultural education (3.5 ECTS)

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4. Summary and discussion

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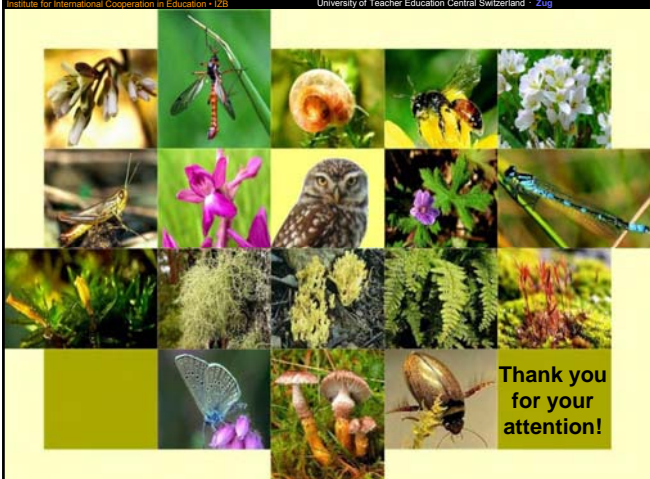


Index for Inclusion: summary

- Is a helpful tool for developing inclusive schools
- It needs the will for developing inclusive schools (culture, values)
- It is about developing teaching, teams and structures
- All have to be included into the process (students, teachers, governors, parents/carers, ...)
- It is a long (never ending) bottom-up process
- Teacher education is important: pre-service, in-service, school development, consulting, coaching, research


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Thank you for your attention!

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Index for Inclusion: discussion

- The approach: general comments and questions
- Is the Index used in your country?
Do you know schools that use the approach?
- What potentials and obstacles would you see for implementing the Index in your country?
- Could political support be expected in introducing the work with the Index?
- Does teacher education offer corresponding support to schools?
- ...

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