



diversity revolution

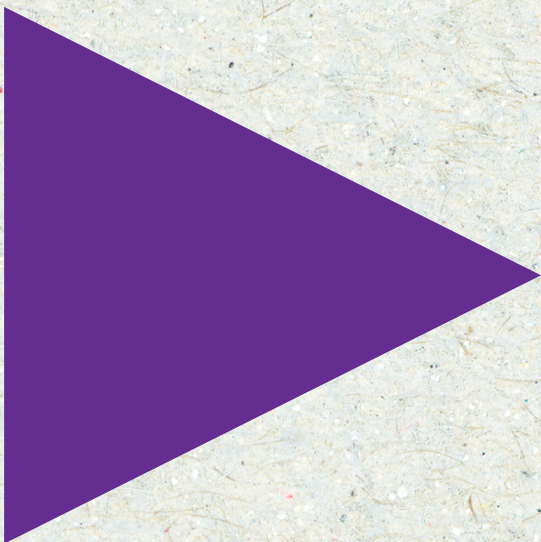
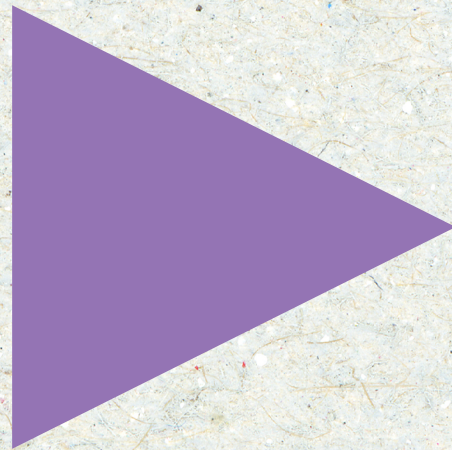
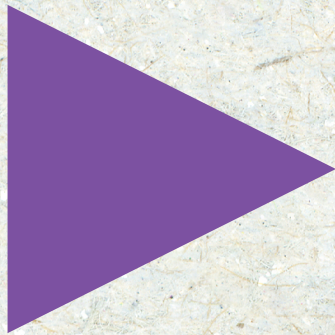
the good practice
collection





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**DIVERSITY REVOLUTION
THE GOOD PRACTICE COLLECTION**

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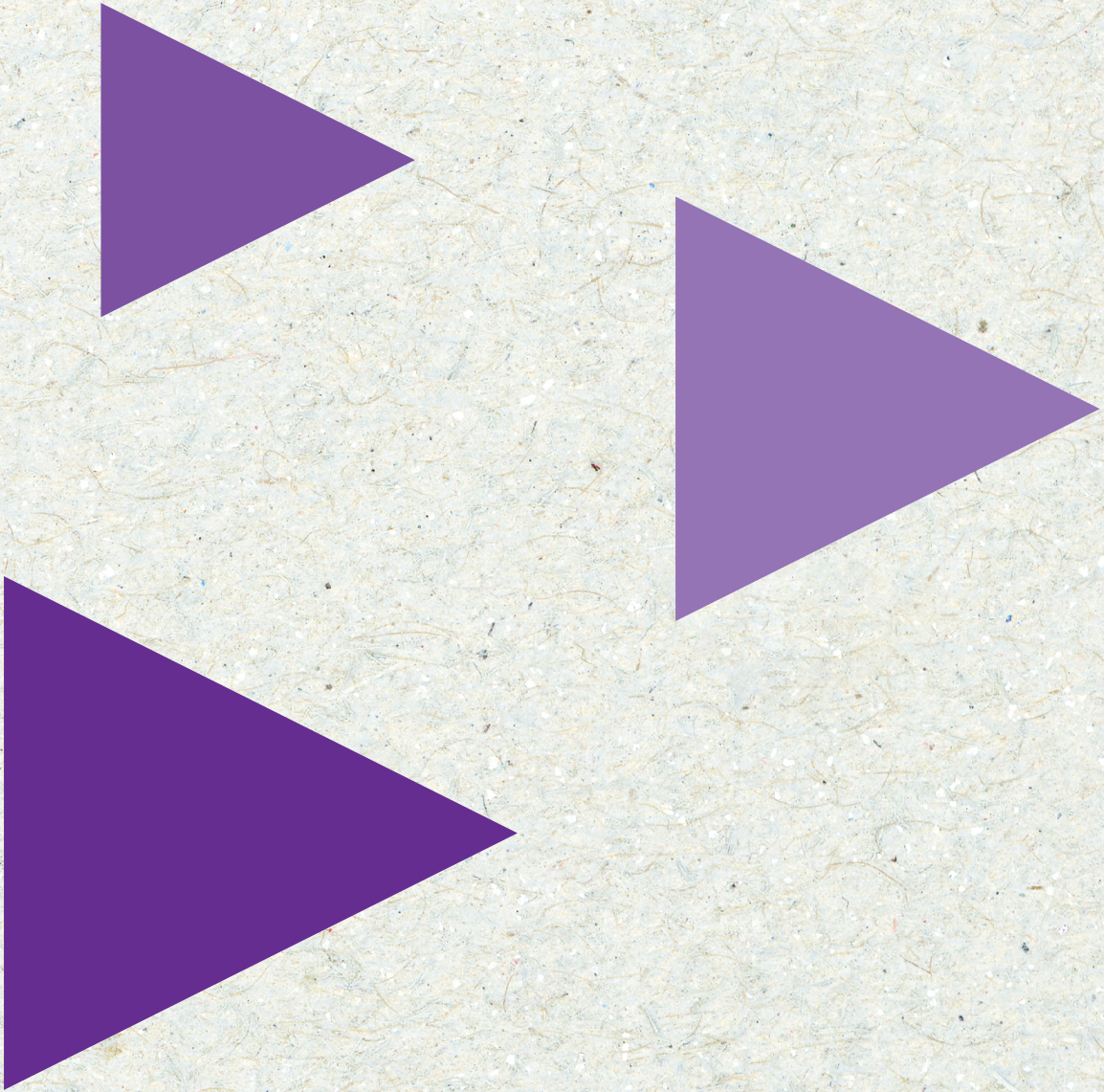
**DIVERSITY REVOLUTION:
From value to practice**

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Editors note

Diversity is recognized as a highly important **value** in the youth field (and much wider) which is supposed to be respected and incorporated in the work of all institutions and organisations that interact with young people. High importance of addressing diversity as an opportunity for learning and not for exclusion and conflict is recognized all throughout EU (starting from the EU motto “United in diversity” and covered in a wide range of EU Strategies). As a result of years of efforts, a wide variety of available instruments, toolkits, guidebooks, articles tackling this topic is available to whomever is interested in diversity (usually alongside inclusion and/or cultural sensitivity), and legislative frameworks of most countries have diversity incorporated in some form as an important value in their strategies regarding youth and systems young people interfere with the most (such as education and social protection). But still, in practice, diversity is respected and „implemented“ partially.

There are three elements that are relevant and intertwined when it comes to **fostering diversity on an organisational level** (by an CSO organisation, school, social protection institution, or any other organisational unit). These are the context (organisational culture), relationship (climate) and individual (competences) level. Some institutions (such as schools) have the organisational culture (regulations, procedures, practices) that is in place in a way that supports diversity fostering. But when the staff doesn't have their competences strengthened enough, the overall climate is not supportive and young people in that facility do not feel the benefits of the positive culture. On the other hand, when youth organisations have highly competence individuals as their staff, that supports the positive climate in their activities, but if the organisational culture is missing, the moment there is a staff change, the quality of activities decreases automatically. We do have good practice examples where all three elements are developed and fostered continually, but these examples are more exceptions than the rule. All participating countries in the consortium (Serbia, Italy, Slovenia), as well as most of others in the region and even in the EU, even with all their current efforts, are facing prevalent issues of social exclusion, discrimination and violence towards those who are marked as different in the dominant culture, and are motivated to empower their young people to learn how to see diversity as an opportunity and not as an obstacle. There is a joint need for free, complete and effective instruments that can support those organisations/institutions interested in fostering diversity on all levels, but that is also needed for those organizations who state they are not interested in diversity at all, in order to spread the importance and the opportunities of it, showing how it is not a waste of time and resources but it provides a lot of benefit from the point of view of organisational and program success.

Throughout the **project “DIVERSITY REVOLUTION: From value to practice”** (ref.no. 2021-1-RS01-KA220-YOU-000029459), implemented by 4 organisations – CEPORA – Center for Positive Youth Development (Serbia), Institute for Educational Research (Serbia), Associazione Uniamoci (Italy) and Scuola elementare – Osnovna sola Dante Alighieri Isola (Slovenia), we want to support organisations and institutions enhance their fostering of diversity in practice, by helping them view this issue holistically, „find their way“ through possibilities offered to them, so they

can navigate towards those enhancement resources that are relevant for their specific cultural/climate/competences needs.

The **publication Diversity Revolution: The good practice collection** summarizes the guidelines, principles, recommendations for fostering diversity in practice in different forms of organisations/institutions. We collected current trends, lessons learned and practical examples of organisations and institutions that work with youth in the youth work, education and social welfare field, and summarized the good practice resources and examples in 3 parts. In Part 1 you will find the current scientific recommendations regarding diversity fostering in practice, that cover the approaches for transformations of organisations' culture, climate and staffs' competences regarding diversity. In Part 2 you will find descriptions of concrete practice examples for diverse organisations and institutions. In Part 3 you will find a wide range of useful resources, initiatives and projects from the efforts of 3 countries involved in the project – Serbia, Slovenia and Italy.

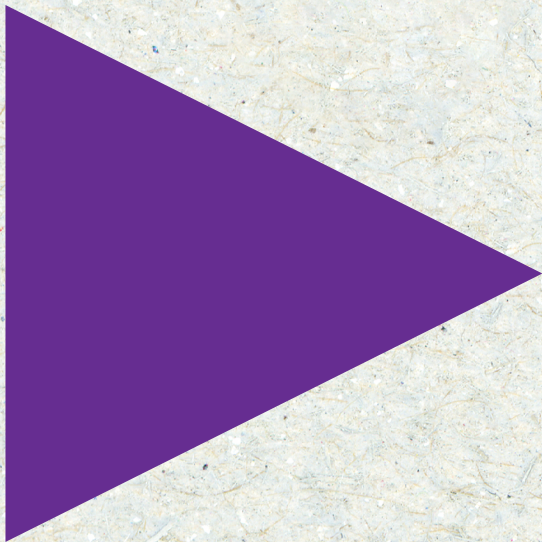
Understanding new views on diversity and understanding the complementary effects of improving organisations culture, climate and competences of its staff regarding fostering diversity is of curtail importance of transferring our efforts of viewing diversity as a strength from an idea to practice. We hope that here you will find great inspiration for your diversity revolution!

The editors



diversity practice in contemporary science

Marija Trajković
Marina Kovačević-Lepojević





Introduction

Contemporary scientific discourse on diversity practice connects the role of this phenomena closely with inclusion and equity, forming a **DEI model (diversity-equity-inclusion)** that should be respected and implemented when approaching fostering individual and group thriving in a society and creating a society that is good for all of its citizens. This model finds its place especially in the school context, but is also relevant for all other fields in which the development of young people is in focus. In the DEI paradigm, **diversity** is viewed not only through cultural differences, by focusing on racial and ethical prism, but through an endless list of individual and group differences that exist between humans in one geographical area and presents a “starting point” for understanding and approaching the concept of “school for all”. New views on diversity state that student communities are always diverse, and that diversity should be viewed as a resource and strength, and not as an obstacle that the school needs to overcome. **Equity** is a shift from equality – acknowledging that we have different starting positions and thus, we cannot all reach our full potentials with equal treatment (which goes under equality), but need multiple opportunities that will provide us with paths for individual thriving. It focuses on equal opportunities, i.e., providing each person with opportunities that will lead to same positive outcomes, no matter what the starting position is. **Inclusion** also has a shift to its perspective in the DEI model, acknowledging the development of the views on inclusion in the last decade. Understanding inclusion in the education context shifted a long way from the process of including vulnerable and marginalized individuals (primarily those with disabilities) into the regular education system, and is now viewed as an overall attribute of a just and supportive society, described as a principle, or a value that reflects all people feeling respected, valued and connected (sometimes referred to as “inclusion excellence”). Those schools and other organisations and institutions that support youth that understand and acknowledge diversity through this new prism, and manage to “use” diversity as a resource and not as something they need to overcome, are the organisations/institutions that have greater positive outcomes in their youth (such as high academic achievement, school engagement, attendance at school, self-confidence, negative attitudes towards discrimination, low experience of discrimination, high empathy, sense of belonging to the school, low behavioral problems, high social welfare, low social anxiety and loneliness). What all organisations and institutions working with youth should do, on a practical level, to foster DEI and activate diversity as a strength – is the field of diversity management. **Diversity management** reflects in the overall organizational climate and aims at empowering all school members (staff and youth) of approaching diversity as a resource. But this is still a new field, with a raising interest of scientific community in exploring which elements of the organisational functioning are directly connected with effective diversity management and which interventions are evidence-based for improvement of diversity management in organisations. Through quality diversity management, diversity is acknowledged and promoted through different organizational elements and human interactions. Those institutions and organisations that manage to do this effectively are those who are successfully implementing the equity principle and achieving the inclusion goals, with viewing diversity as a

resource and a means for individual and group development with more quality connections. This is why diversity management is an approach that has high potentials to be of great support for all organisations/institutions that work with youth in their transformation to understanding and implementing new views on DEI in practice and being one step closer to reaching their dream of actually becoming “organisations/institutions for all”.

Diversity practice frameworks

Following are examples of contemporary practical frameworks that are aligned with the holistic view of fostering the DEI model in practice. As in all other elements of our literature exploration, the education has been the most fruitful field in deriving models, and their principles and elements can be integrated for diverse organisations/institutions the youth work and social welfare fields as well.

A strengths-based approach is based on the following principles: (a) all children have strengths; (b) focusing on strengths instead of weaknesses leads to better motivation and higher achievement; (c) failure to perform a specific skill should be seen primarily as an opportunity, rather than a problem; and (d) focusing on strengths in the design of treatment plans in the areas of mental health, social care, and education influences greater acceptance by key stakeholders. The authors highlight several strengths-based perspectives that are considered important for understanding processes of importance to marginalized populations, for example, the framework of cultural community wealth, social capital and knowledge fund, validation theory, and others. A multicultural worker in social humanities must give attention to the cultural strengths and resilience that a diverse client exhibits in her or his efforts to overcome life challenges. Such a strengths-based focus can shift the attention of the multicultural worker in social humanities away from the negative and debilitating narratives and stereotypes that may be associated with a client's cultural, ethnic, and/or racial background, heritage, or traditions. The strengths perspective can also inform intervention strategies to help the client challenge those negative stereotypes that may be embedded in certain cultural narratives.

Socio-emotional learning by definition is an integral part of education and of human development. Socio-emotional learning is perceived as developmentally and culturally appropriate learning and application of what has been learned in everyday situations, with the aim of developing skills to recognize and manage emotions, respect the perspective of others, set positive goals, make responsible decisions and manage interpersonal relationships. Different terms are used to describe socioemotional processes in education, for example: socioemotional learning (Ireland), personal and social education (Czech Republic), character education (Denmark), social learning (Austria and Germany), personal development and health education (Finland), socioemotional education (Greece and Spain). In Serbia (one of the countries in focus of these publications), the term "socio-emotional learning" is in use. Socio-emotional learning helps to highlight different forms of inequality and encourages young people and adults

to actively participate in improving the school context and contribute to safe and healthy communities (school, family and community partnership). The following are recognized as key socio-emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation (intrapersonal), social awareness and social skills (interpersonal) and responsible decision-making. The basic interpretation of self-awareness as the ability to recognize one's own emotions, thoughts and their influence on behavior in accordance with the updated framework a positive mindset is added. Self-regulation is the ability to regulate one's own emotions, thoughts and behavior, successfully and in different situations. These include stress management skills, impulse control, motivation and work towards personal and academic goals with the ability to delay gratification with persistence regardless of challenges. Social awareness is the ability to adopt the perspective of others, empathize and sympathize with it, including recognizing the specifics with the background of the relationship as well as potential resources in the environment. In accordance with the modern understanding of social awareness, the difference between empathy and compassion is recognized. The skills of establishing and maintaining healthy and fulfilling relationships with different individuals and groups include clear communication, active listening, cooperation, resisting social pressure, constructive conflict resolution, asking for and offering help when needed. According to the theory, these skills should also include behavior that is in accordance with valid social norms. Socio-emotional learning is closely related to the socio-emotional competences of teachers and students and relevant dimensions of the school climate. Research results indicate that the development of socio-emotional competencies positively affects the school climate. It has also been established that socio-emotional competencies mediate the relationship between positive school climate and adolescent adjustment.

The prosocial classroom model explains the extent to which teachers' socio-emotional competencies and well-being influence prosocial classroom climates and student outcomes. First, teachers' socio-emotional competencies are considered very important for the development of teacher-student relationships. A teacher who recognizes the emotions of an individual student, understands the cognitive processes that may be associated with those emotions and how these emotions motivate the student's behavior can effectively respond to the individual needs of the student. For example, if a teacher understands that a student's rebellious behavior and self-regulation problems stem from problems they face at home, they may show more concern and empathy and be able to help the student improve self-regulation instead of resorting to punishment. Prosocial classroom model explains the link between teachers' socio-emotional competences and students' outcomes. Socio-emotional competences of teachers affect the quality of teacher-student relationships; the teacher serves as a model for acquiring socioemotional competences of students; and socioemotional competences of teachers affect classroom management. Teachers with developed socio-emotional skills can more easily cope with daily challenges and carry out classes smoothly and vice versa. The evaluation of the CARE program (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education model) aimed at the professional development of teachers (improving well-being, classroom management, prevention of burnout, etc.) confirmed the prosocial classroom model. Participants reported high levels of program satisfaction, better relationships with students, more effective classroom

management, and a better classroom climate, teacher well-being was higher, all of which positively impacted student developmental and academic outcomes. It has been shown that CARE brings the best results in challenging settings where the teacher is exposed to continuous occupational stress, diversity management certainly requires a high degree of emotional engagement of the teacher.

A whole-school approach aims to integrate skill development into everyday interactions and practices with the joint effort of teachers, families and children. According to the World Health Organization's definition of schools as health promoters, a whole-school approach treats the school community as a unit of change and involves coordinated action between three interrelated components: (a) curriculum, teaching and learning; (b) school ethos and environment; and (c) family-society partnerships. Implies that all aspects of the school, not only the content of the curriculum but also the methods of teaching and learning, leadership, management, decision-making structures and policies in the school, codes of conduct, interpersonal relations (staff, staff-students, student-student relationships), extracurricular activities and connections with the community should be based on valuing the diversity, dignity and human rights of each individual in the school community and outside it (including members of the majority and minority groups). These shared commitments and values must be reflected in every aspect of the school and include changes in culture, policy and pedagogical practice. The system of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (CRPBIS) which is applied at the level of the whole school is defined as a system that is oriented towards respecting culturally and linguistically diverse students and the need to be "linked" to behavioral and academic goals in school. The system foresees: minimizing cultural overlaps in behavioral expectations, creating "cultural glasses" for establishing behavioral norms, affirming diversity in the school environment, district and school leaders should emphasize the issue of equality in the educational context, representation of student and family cultural practices in application positive behavioral interventions and the establishment of school norms, increasing the fund of knowledge about different cultures (both among teachers and other school personnel) and others.

In **The Whole System Model** schools are at the center of the analysis. It is argued that moves towards inclusion are about school development, rather than simply involving attempts to integrate vulnerable groups of students into existing frameworks. At the same time, the model draws attention to a number of contextual factors that influence the way schools perform their work. However, the same factors can act as obstacles to development. These influences relate to: the principles that guide policy priorities within the education system, the attitudes and actions of others in the local context, including members of the wider community that schools serve and staff responsible for managing schools. The model points out that inclusive school practice should be viewed at three key levels:

- ▶ Inside the school. In this connection, it is understood that the issues arising from the practice of the school and teacher. They include: the ways in which students are taught and engaged in learning; the ways in which teaching groups are organized and the different types of opportunities that arise from this organization; types of social relationships and support that are characteristic

of the school; the ways in which the school responds to diversity in terms of achievement, gender, ethnicity and social background; the kind of relationship that the school builds with the family and the local community.

► **Between schools.** These are questions arising from the characteristics of local school systems. They include: the ways in which different types of schools emerge locally; the ways in which these schools acquire different statuses, so that hierarchies in terms of performance and preferences emerge; the ways in which schools compete or cooperate; processes of integration and segregation that bring together students of similar origins in different schools; distribution of educational opportunities by school; and to what extent students of each school can access similar opportunities.

► **Outside of schools.** This wider area includes: the wider policy context within the school they function; family processes and resources that shape how children learn and develop; interests and understanding of professionals working in schools; demography, economy, culture and history of the areas in which the schools operate. In addition, it includes basic social and economic processes at the national and - in many aspects - at the global level.

Contact-based practice. A few programs aimed at fostering respect for diversity are based on encouraging contact and improving the mutual relations of group members. The aim is to reduce the prejudices of the majority ethnic population towards the minority, to reduce discrimination and other things. Contact-based programs are based on the approach of equity and inclusion, with the aim of reducing prejudice and discrimination. Good relations between different ethnic groups within a group can be promoted for example by encouraging diversity seating or forming study groups. For example, educators can encourage contact and collaboration among diverse youth (e.g. through encouraging diverse work groups, cooperative learning, and mixed seating arrangements). The authors recommend that certain rules should be followed in a contact situation, that contact in itself is not enough:

- First, stimulation of contact should take place between young people who have the same status in the contact situation (for example, they have the same right to express their opinion, influence group decisions, etc.).
- The contact should be long enough and intense enough to have the potential to enable a meaningful connection between the participants.
- Contact should involve cooperation on activities aimed at achieving common goals (rather than competition between groups).
- Finally, contact should be supported by an explicit framework of support from institutions, for example schools, social institutions, etc.

Culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM). This model consists of five parts: recognition of one's own view of the world from the perspective of one's cultural group (cultural lens) and prejudices; knowledge of the students' cultural background, awareness of the wider social, economic and political context; ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies; and a commitment to building caring classroom communities.

Recognizing one's own view of the world from the perspective of one's cultural group and prejudices. A useful step for all teachers is to explore and reflect on where their assumptions, attitudes, and biases come from and to realize that the

way they view the world can lead them to misinterpret the behavior and unfair treatment of culturally diverse students. For example, teachers can write a personal "identity story", to explore how identities are socially constructed and how they fit into a multicultural/intercultural world.

Knowledge of the cultural background of the students. There are various activities that teachers can organize in order to learn about the cultural background of students. For example, they can divide students into groups and assign them to read literature that matches the cultural identity of the students in their class. Additionally, they can work with students to write a family history, during which students will research their cultural origins and share that knowledge with the class. Also, teachers can organize home visits and consult with parents or community members to gain insight into the cultural characteristics of students. Some areas that teachers can explore include: family background and structure, education, interpersonal styles, discipline, time and space, religion, food, health and hygiene, history, traditions and holidays.

Awareness of the wider social, economic and political context. Teachers can talk to students about how they see society's structures and policies and whether they feel they are fair to everyone. They can create the so-called a critical/social justice classroom based on children's lived experiences (background), which includes dialogue, questioning/problem posing, criticizing biases, and encouraging activism for social justice. For example, teachers can engage students in a discussion about school or classroom rules.

Ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies. This step involves creating a physical environment that reflects diverse cultural groups.

Some tools and strategies within the CRCM model may include:

- ▶ World maps highlighting the students' countries of origin.
- ▶ Signs or banners can welcome students in the different languages they speak.
- ▶ Posters can depict people from different cultural groups (although care must be taken to avoid stereotypical representations).
- ▶ Photos that represent the specifics of different cultures can be used to make a puzzle, reinforcing the idea that they all come together and make a whole.
- ▶ Presentation of books that promote the themes of diversity, tolerance and togetherness. Tables arranged in groups allow students to work together on activities, share materials, have small group discussions and help each other with assignments.
- ▶ Set up a "kindness box" where students can enter short notes about acts of kindness they do or have experienced and occasionally read an example/story. Communication and collaboration with families is an important but challenging part of classroom management. When teachers and families come from different cultural backgrounds, the challenges are even greater. Things teachers should keep in mind:
 - ▶ Some families do not see direct participation in schooling as part of their responsibility, although they are committed to the education of their children.
 - ▶ Teachers and parents may have different expectations of what is appropriate school behavior. Let's assume that all parents care about their children and

have something to offer. Encourage families to provide insight to help teachers teach them.

► Be sensitive to cultural differences in communication styles with parents and students.

Diversity practice – important elements of programs

Preparation for the process of practice improvement

When planning to improve the organisations' practice of respecting diversity, it is first necessary to form research groups, which will deal with examining young peoples' attitudes regarding how much they feel accepted at the organisation/institution and what are the practices or characteristics that contribute to that feeling of acceptance and inclusion. This should be followed by discussions on diversity (analyzing cultural diversity in the organisation/institution), planning educational or other interventions in accordance with the cultural structure of the organisation/institution and identifying implications for future practice (using reflective practice). You can always use some research instruments to help you assess your starting point and priorities. One such instrument is created within this project and is available for free – The **Diversity Revolution Check list**.

Diversity culture: from culture fit to culture add

Changing diversity culture means taking on the ingrained norms that exist in organizations. It is difficult to attract and retain people when they don't feel welcomed and included, or when they perceive opportunities to be unfairly weighted against them. In the following are some important aspects of organisational culture without which diversity practice improvement is not possible.

1 Leadership. The greatest diversity effort in the business sector has been made in leadership and management. Based on the research at the sample of diversity initiative experts it's found that senior management commitment was a **leadership and management diversity initiative** identified by all study participants. All of them indicated that **senior management** plays a crucial role in establishing workforce diversity in their corporations (communicating the importance of diversity throughout the organization through policy statements, memos, letters, speeches, company newsletters and newspapers, and reports). The study participants indicated that the best way to maintain ongoing commitment for diversity initiatives was to link them effectively with the organization's business objectives.

2 **Nondiscrimination practices**
Merit-based decision making

Ensuring that decision making is based on qualifications and abilities, not demographics. Examples include use of tests or other objective tools in hiring, use of performance evaluations to determine pay and promotions, and name-blinding applications to conceal demographic information.

Diversity training

Educating employees about bias and disadvantages faced by targets and providing strategies for preventing bias from resulting in discrimination. Diversity training is often focused on preventing discrimination and, thus, is best categorized as a nondiscrimination practice. Training that educates managers on how to provide additional resources to targets is better categorized as a resource practice.

3 **Accountability practices**
Diversity plans

Setting diversity goals (e.g., increasing representation, reducing career gaps, improving survey-based inclusion scores) and monitoring progress toward those goals. Examples include setting aspirational numbers (e.g., for target representation) an organization hopes to meet or establishing quotas that are strictly enforced.

Diversity performance evaluations

Evaluating managers' performance in terms of helping the organization meet diversity goals.

Diversity positions

Appointing a person or persons within the organization who is responsible for overseeing the organization's diversity efforts, either temporarily or permanently.

Grievance systems

Establishing a system through which individuals can report instances of discrimination and other events that inhibit progress toward diversity goals.

Diversity climate: from “work first” to feel valued

The last thing we need involved with diversity initiatives is that they reproduce inequalities. The presence of organizational diversity initiatives may lead to a presumption of fairness for underrepresented groups, but at the other side making discrimination harder to identify and litigate. Unintended consequences might be happening through the communication of fairness, inclusion (see included, but feel excluded), and questionable competence. The initiative increases the likelihood that traditionally-advantaged groups will perceive themselves as victims of discrimination. They can additionally imply that underrepresented groups need help to succeed and are thus less competent than their advantaged counterparts. The authors from different fields suggest that organization must find way for balancing homogeneity and diversity. The organizations have to be responsive to environment. Employees' diversity, fairness, harassment are issues that every healthy organization have to take in consideration. Employees have to feel valued.

Policies, practices, and procedures have to be consistent, and the connection with environment is found to be very important (empowering/updating employees' competences is very important). Healthy organization have climate of diversity, climate of fairness and climate of continual learning. Researchers and practitioners should note the potential unintended signaling consequences of diversity initiatives, and build-in accountability and social psychological knowledge when designing policies aimed at creating inclusive, diverse, and fair workplaces. The author developed a typology of diversity initiative unintended consequences (Table 1). The four unintended consequences are defined and differentiated by crossing two dimensions: the direction of the effect (i.e., desirable versus undesirable) and the outcome affected (i.e., intended versus unintended). As an illustration may serve a rigorous evaluation of a diversity training program that focused on tolerance and did not increase participants' personal comfort with members of other groups. What does the expert say about diversity initiatives at the workplace? Baized at in-depth, open-ended interviews barriers that have inhibited the employment, development, retention, and promotion of diverse groups in the workplace have identified. It's revealed that the primary reasons for managing diversity are to improve productivity and remain competitive, to form better work relationships among employees, to enhance social responsibility, and to address legal concerns.

Table 1. A Typology of the unintended consequences of diversity initiatives

	The intended outcome is affected	An unintended outcome is affected
Direction of the effect is undesirable	<p>Backfire</p> <p>A diversity initiative affects the intended outcome (i.e., diversity goal progress) but does so in an undesirable direction instead of in the intended desirable direction (e.g., decreased target representation)</p>	<p>Negative spillover</p> <p>A diversity initiative affects an outcome other than the intended outcome (i.e., any outcome other than diversity goal progress) in an undesirable direction (e.g., decreased nontarget engagement)</p>
Direction of the effect is desirable	<p>False progress</p> <p>A diversity initiative affects the metrics used to assess the intended outcome (i.e., diversity goal progress) in the intended desirable direction, without creating true change (e.g., improved target representation in management achieved by reclassifying existing employees)</p>	<p>Positive spillover</p> <p>A diversity initiative affects an outcome other than the intended outcome (i.e., any outcome other than diversity goal progress) in a desirable direction (e.g., increased non target engagement, increased ethical behavior not tied to diversity issues)</p>

Note: Leslie, 2019: 544

Author introduced the notion of **benevolent discrimination** as a subtle and structural form of discrimination that is difficult to see for those performing it, because it frames their action as positive, in solidarity with the (inferior) other who is helped, and within a hierarchical order that is taken for granted. Main three dimensions of benevolent discrimination are: (1) a well-intended effort to address discrimination within (2) a social relationship that constructs the others as inferior and in need of help, which is granted with (3) the expectation that they will accommodate into the existing hierarchical order. The concept of benevolent discrimination is proved on an in-depth qualitative case study of a Swedish organisation that is believed to be exemplary in its engagement in diversity management initiatives. Authors argue that human resources professionals frame their actions as acts of benevolence that they cannot see how they take part in organizational discrimination, offering colonial narrative.

Fostering positive contact instead of benevolent discrimination

In the social psychological literature, one of the most well-established strategies for reducing prejudice and fostering positive intergroup relations involves **no training and no discussion of prejudice**. Organizations might encourage activities in which diverse employees can work together on projects and in an equal-status (same power) context where cooperativity, as well as friendships might develop. Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey uncovered many practices for increasing diversity, equity and inclusion:

- 1) Provide a hotline for reporting DEI incidents.
Leaders have to provide mechanisms for employees to report DEI incidents without fear of reprisal.
- 2) Add a warmline for advice and coaching.
Warmlines provide early intervention and support for non-crisis situations. The warmline helps the company spot problems that might need to be addressed on a larger scale.
- 3) Make full use of employee resource groups (ERGs) or networks.
ERGs have evolved into powerful groups that provide a voice for employees and help leaders understand the challenges people face. Most successful ERGs have executive sponsors who participate in meetings, help with resources, and advocate on employees' behalf.
- 4) Change up recruiting.
DEI leaders go beyond the usual sources as LinkedIn, which is not especially diverse.
- 5) Employ diverse hiring panels.
- 6) Provide just-in-time nudges about bias.
In addition to training about unconscious bias, a reminder should be sent to hiring managers before interviews about biases that can creep in, and the company provides leaders with a bias primer as they are calibration ranking their talent and doing promotions.
- 7) Encourage advancement and provide clear development pathways.
- 8) Offer DEI-inclusive mentorship and sponsorship programs.
Leaders are for example encouraged to "mentor someone who doesn't look like you.". Mentorship helps with things like getting to know hiring managers, knowing how to jump to another position, having someone who can coach

them, and connecting with people who might be on their career path.

9) Create a DEI steering committee.

10) Share practices with DEI peers.

Diversity competences: from changing attitude to behavioral change

As it's noticed the literature best practices in diversity training is amorphous and complex. Scholars when testing the efficacy of their approaches of diversity training, too often use proxy measures for success that are far removed from the types of consequential outcomes that reflect the purported goals of such trainings.

Recommendation for diversity training in **organizational setting** are:

- ▶ Rather than making DT voluntary or mandatory, consider targeting socially connected individuals within an organization.
- ▶ Utilize behavioral and systems-level outcomes to ensure the goals of training are being met.
- ▶ Monitor the hiring, retention, and perceived belonging of employees from historically marginalized groups over time.
- ▶ Embed training in larger workplace diversity initiatives with support from the upper management.

Diversity training in **human service setting** have the goals as familiarizing human service providers with culturally based beliefs to improve quality of care for historically marginalized clients and eliminate extant disparities in treatment outcomes. The trainees engage in role playing, participatory learning, cultural immersion, and/or community-based practicums. The training emphasizes both knowledge and skills relevant to culturally competent services. Most studies found that DT in human services was associated with increases in provider-reported cultural competence. There is conflicting and limited evidence regarding whether provider cultural competence is related to better care and services for members of historically marginalized groups.

Recommendation for diversity training in **human service setting** are:

- ▶ Evaluate client-centered and systems-level outcomes, such as client satisfaction, quality of care, adherence to treatment recommendations, disparities in outcomes, and differences in morbidity and mortality.
- ▶ Establish a relationship between provider-reported cultural competence and outcomes for clients from historically marginalized groups.
- ▶ Pair cultural competence training with training on how to guard against the influence of stereotypes (e.g., seeking out individuating information).

In order for people who work with young people in the youth work, education and social work sector to really work on respecting diversity, it is necessary that they have a developed awareness of their own culture, personal prejudices and values. It is a prerequisite for understanding others and their cultural characteristics. The following guidelines enable employees in all three sectors to become aware

of their own perceptions of other cultures, to better understand their cultural position and to accept the cultural characteristics and differences of the young people they work with, as well as to adequately respond to them:

▶ Youth workers/teachers/social workers should first understand themselves and the characteristics of their culture to eliminate the hidden prejudices they have towards members of other cultural groups. Practicing reflective thinking and writing, as well as researching the impact of personal and family history on experiencing oneself and one's culture, and acknowledging membership in a certain cultural group, which has specific advantages and disadvantages, helps them in this. After that, youth workers/teachers/social workers should devote themselves to thinking about their own perceptions of cultural diversity and reactions when encountering diversity, to be aware of them and to work on their elaboration and improvement.

▶ After understanding themselves and their own cultural group, youth workers/teachers/social workers should understand members of other cultural groups. In this sense, youth workers/teachers/social workers should acquire knowledge about the lifestyle and experiences of individuals belonging to other cultural groups. With this approach, youth workers/teachers/social workers gain insight into the understanding of the values of members of other cultural groups, as well as insight into the differences between their own values and the values of other cultural groups.

Youth workers/teachers/social workers should encourage young people to share their life experiences and cultural identity with other, in order to build relationships and trust.

It is very important that youth workers/teachers/social workers assess what attitudes young people have towards other cultural groups. Such assessments can be carried out using various tests, sociograms, quizzes, questionnaires, interviews, discussion groups, etc. It is necessary to regularly provide young people with accurate and precise information about other cultures in order to fill gaps in knowledge and correct existing distortions.

Acquaintance of young people with other cultures can be done in different ways, and some of them are:

1. Actions based on contact

Encouraging Intercultural Friendships – An intervention using imagined contact developed by Stathi, Cameron, Hartley, and Bradford (2014) required 7- to 9-year-old children to create three stories using pictures in which they had to imagine interacting positively in multiple context with a peer of the same age who belongs to a different cultural group. Imaginary contact has been found to be successful in improving attitudes towards members of other cultural groups among 16-17 year olds.

Schooling abroad – Schooling abroad provides the opportunity for young people to fully familiarize themselves with the way of life of members of other cultural

groups, to become aware of the cultural differences that are present, as well as to accept and develop a positive attitude towards members of other cultural groups and towards cultural differences, in general.

Organizing intercultural contact of young people on the Internet – For example, online video conferencing and social networks can be used for collaborative projects between young people from different countries, where young people introduce themselves, interview each other, discuss issues and carry out tasks designed by their facilitators. If communication problems arise, there is an opportunity to discuss with the facilitator what went wrong, what unwanted messages may have harmed the communication, and how future communication can be conducted in a more interculturally sensitive manner. Collaborative e-projects do not necessarily involve youth from different countries. They can also include young people living in different regions of the same country. For example, McKenna, Ipgrave, and Jackson (2008) undertook a project in which primary school-aged children living in a large multicultural city in England used e-mail to communicate with children of the same age living in a monocultural rural area.

Establishing links between the institution/organization and the community and developing partnerships – For example, individuals from other cultural groups may be invited to the institution/organization to work or talk with young people; young people can also 'interview' visitors using pre-prepared questions (in consultation with the youth worker/teacher/social worker) to get to know them better. In addition, young people can visit social organizations in their local community, and they can also interview community members in their surroundings. Finally, young people may be required to make observations and critically reflect on their reactions when meeting people belonging to other cultural groups.

2. Actions based on pedagogical approaches

Encouraging students' critical reflection on their own cultural group and intercultural experiences – It has been established that when children and young people aged 11 to 18 actively explore their own cultural identities and heritage, it contributes to the development of their cultural competence and to improving contact with members of other cultural groups. Two educational tools specifically developed to support and encourage young peoples' critical reflections on their intercultural encounters and their own cultural identities are the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters and Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media. These tools provide youth with structured sets of questions designed to progressively channel and deepen their thinking about intercultural encounters, about their reactions to those encounters and about their own cultural positioning. Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters encourages critical thinking about face-to-face encounters that involve communication with members of other cultural groups, while Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media encourages reflection on images of other cultural groups in visual media such as television, cinema, newspapers and magazines.

Using pedagogical approaches such as cooperative learning and project

learning – An alternative form of cooperative learning is the jigsaw classroom. This involves dividing the class into groups of five or six students (or youth in outside of school setting). Each member of the group is assigned some unique learning information that must later be shared with other members of that group in order for the group to achieve its common goal. The characteristics of this approach are:

- ▶ All individual tasks of the students in the group are interconnected in such a way that each student receives some, but not all, parts of the overall group task.
- ▶ Each student must master his task on his own and then teach the other members of the group - thus each individual assumes the role of an expert and exercises his communication skills.
- ▶ Each student must listen to all students from his group, ask appropriate questions and master all the material - therefore, the task requires both individual and team work.
- ▶ The overall group task is to synthesize all the individual contributions in order to construct a complete picture - the task, therefore, culminates in solving the problem of the whole group.

The nature of the jigsaw activity means that each member of the group is equally important. Since students have to rely on each other to successfully solve the task, their cooperation becomes better, while competitive behavior is reduced to a minimum - the group can only succeed if each student succeeds. It was found that puzzle activities lead to increased empathy and positive attitudes of students towards their peers and reduce their level of prejudice when groups are composed of students from different cultural backgrounds.

Activities that emphasize multiple perspectives – take the form of a verbal description or visual record of an event or phenomenon that is then supplemented or compared with other descriptions or recordings of the same event or phenomenon provided by other people who see it from different perspectives. Such activities can help young people develop perspective-taking skills, tolerance of diversity, openness, and listening and observation skills.

Role-playing games and simulations – these help young people experience first-hand what it's like to be different, to be criticized, marginalized or excluded. They can enable students to understand that although people may display superficial differences in appearance or differences in beliefs and values, they still have dignity and deserve respect.

Analyzing texts, films and plays – depending on the choice of text, film or play, young people are asked to express and explain their opinion or take the perspective of the characters portrayed. This type of activity can be used to build knowledge and understanding of people from different cultural backgrounds, to encourage critical reflection on cultural issues and to strengthen openness, empathy, respect, critical thinking skills and appreciation of human dignity, human rights and cultural diversity. By carefully selecting and sharing multicultural reading material (eg, folktales, myths, legends), young people are helped to learn to identify with the people who are the creators and/or actors of the stories, as well as to become familiar with their values and beliefs.

Ethnographic tasks – these tasks involve young people observing or talking to people in the community and bringing their observations or notes back which they can then compare, analyze and reflect on. Reflection can help them think critically about what they have observed or heard and how they themselves have reacted when encountering diversity. Through this activity, young people can also develop active listening skills, perspective-taking skills, tolerance and respect.

3. Actions based on the organisations'/institutions' institutional policy

Implementation a culturally inclusive curriculum – Culturally inclusive curricula involve showing the history, cultural practices, beliefs and contributions made by minority cultural groups as well as those of the majority national group, and can provide a much more accurate representation of the diversity that is often present in within the classroom.

Adopting a comprehensive approach to valuing diversity and human rights – A wide range of actions can be taken to implement a comprehensive school approach to valuing diversity. In addition to using a culturally inclusive curriculum, actions can include holding inclusive celebrations, cultural and religious festivals, respecting traditions and all holidays, ensuring that all cultural or religious needs of young people are met, and constituting a staff of diverse cultural backgrounds.

An example of research and familiarization with cultural diversity

Divide the youth into small groups and let each group choose a cultural group to research. When studying a selected cultural group, the following questions can serve as guidelines:

1. Where does the specific cultural group (racial, religious, ethnic, etc.) you are studying come from?
2. Why did members of a particular cultural group leave their homeland?
3. Where did they originally settle?
4. What kind of work did they do when they moved from their hometown?
5. What was their mother tongue?
6. What was their dominant religion?
7. What is a popular myth or legend from their culture?

Implementation of culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching is teaching that helps students or other young people appreciate and respect cultural diversity. Educators could use pictures and materials in their classrooms to show different cultures and gender roles. Provide textbooks and other teaching materials that reflect multiculturalism, without stereotypes and cultural generalizations (equal representation of all cultures in textbooks and other teaching materials). Second, teachers should expect the same from students of different cultural backgrounds as they would from other students. Although educators should recognize the plight of minorities, they must encourage students from minority groups to excel in all areas of the curriculum. Third, educators should examine teaching materials for evidence of stereotyping. Specifically, do the materials portray any cultural group in a realistic, non-stereotypical way? Does the material accurately reflect a holistic view of the past in terms of the

contributions of people of different cultural backgrounds? Heterogeneous classes and cooperative learning activities are also very important.

Examples of culturally responsive teaching activities connected to **getting to know each other**:

- ▶ Self portrait. Ask students to create a self-portrait or a picture of what home means to them. Use these pictures to support students in getting to know each other. Invite students to find commonalities and discuss them in front of the class.
- ▶ Riddles. Engage students in the Cultures and Riddles activity. By solving puzzles, students will understand how they are different from others and how those differences strengthen our community.
- ▶ All about me. Make cards with different characteristics written on them (eg I have two brothers and one sister, I lived abroad, I can make cheesecake, etc.). Ask students to find one peer in the classroom who meets one of the characteristics, so that each characteristic is assigned to one of the students. This activity will help students get to know their peers better.
- ▶ Personal artifact. Ask students to bring a memory, symbol, image or object that represents something close to them or their culture. You can divide students into groups so that they get to know the culture of their peers in greater detail.

Examples of different activities based on **culturally responsive teaching**:

1. Check district and school policies, procedures, practices, curriculum guides, lesson plans, and instructional materials to ensure they do not discriminate against a particular race, gender, religion, culture, and/or disability.
2. Be sure that the tasks you assign to students are not offensive or frustrating to students from minority groups. For example, asking students to talk or write about their Christmas experiences is inappropriate for non-Christian students. Have students discuss their similar holidays.
3. Together with the students, do a cultural inventory of the class or school to find out which cultures are represented (let the students be ethnographers).
4. Form a multicultural club.
5. Choose a topic to connect different multicultural activities; organize school programs with art, music and drama performances; prepare a multicultural fair or festival that includes music, art, dance, clothing, etc.
6. Organize a festival of food from different cultures.
7. Decorate classrooms, hallways, and the library with murals, bulletin boards, posters, artifacts, and other materials that represent students from other cultural groups. Posters and other information are available at foreign government tourist bureaus and agencies, private travel agencies, consulates, the United Nations, and ethnic and cultural organizations.
8. Create a permanent bulletin board for multicultural news and views.
9. Have students write to foreign consulates, tourist bureaus, minority organizations, and others in search of information and decorative materials.

10. Supplement textbooks with authentic materials about different cultures from newspapers, magazines and other media.
11. Use community resources. Have representatives of different cultures talk to the students; have actors portray characters or events related to different cultural groups; let musicians and dance groups that are characteristic of different cultural groups perform, such as salsa bands or bagpipe players.
12. Organize speech, debate, essay, art or other competitions with a focus on multiculturalism and interculturality.

Multicultural curriculum development. There are few guidelines for multicultural curriculum development:

1. Reform the curriculum to represent diverse perspectives, experiences, and contributions. Consider individual students' socioeconomic status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, culture, and language and, whenever possible, use these differences (or at least show respect) when creating curricula.
2. Include materials and visuals that do not contain stereotypes about race, gender, and disability and that portray members of all cultural groups in a positive way.
3. Use an interdisciplinary approach, so that topics are covered in more than one subject (lesson). Connect the topic to as many other topics in the curriculum as possible.
4. Make the most of community resources, cultural support groups, and social services.

How to deal with the topic of unfair treatment of people of different cultural origins with young people? – Examples of concrete activities

1. Let the young people define the terms racism, social justice, discrimination and injustice and give examples of each phenomenon with individuals of different cultural origins.
2. Let the young people identify three books or poems that describe injustices experienced by groups from different cultural backgrounds.
3. Let the young people identify three examples of contemporary racism, discrimination or injustice and list possible solutions for each of them.
4. Let the young people prepare short stories, songs, skits and plays about the unfair treatment of members of different cultural groups.
5. Ask the young people to write and prepare a speech on behalf of e.g. Native American in relation to land dispossession (choose examples according to the cultural context of the country).
6. Help the young people write a letter to the editor of the newspaper in which they propose a solution to the injustice that people from different cultural groups suffer today.
7. Ask the young people to gather information about immigration over a decade or other time frame.
8. Discuss with the young people the resistance of the local population towards immigrants or members of ethnic minorities.
9. Ask the young people to write their position for or against resistance or

unfair treatment of immigrants or members of ethnic minorities.

10. Ask the young people to create a chart showing the injustices and offering possible solutions.

11. Create a calendar highlighting important dates or events for different cultural groups.

These activities can be done individually, in groups or in pairs or triads based on interests.

Work on getting to know other cultures can also include processing the following topics:

- ▶ Social contribution of people from different cultural groups (or specific cultural groups).
- ▶ Cultural traditions: family and society in different cultural groups (or in a specific cultural group).
- ▶ Books, poems and short stories (music or art in general) by writers from different cultural groups.
- ▶ Well-known activists from different cultural groups: civil rights activists.
- ▶ Influential women and their contribution (women in general or women from certain cultural groups).

Example of an exercise to define the required characteristics and behavior of a youth worker/teacher/social worker who work with young people belonging to culturally different groups

In a group of three or four try to identify the characteristics or behaviors that should be present in a youth worker/teacher/social worker working in multicultural settings.

Consider this task from several perspectives by asking the following questions:

- ▶ What type of youth worker/teacher/social worker do you want to be?
- ▶ What can parents of culturally different origins want for their child?
- ▶ How would the child or adolescent want his or her youth worker/teacher/social worker to be?

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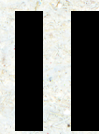
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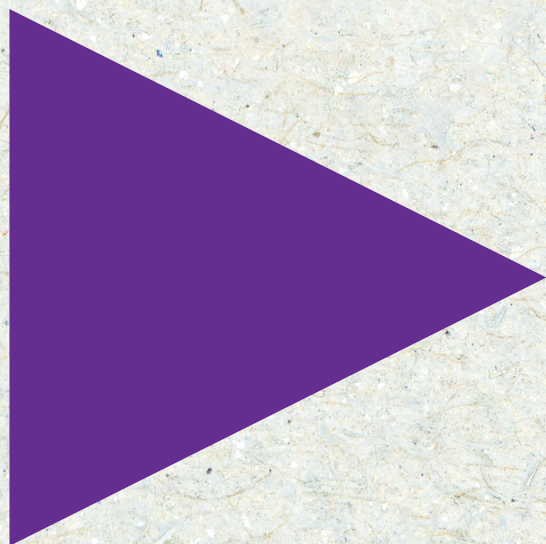
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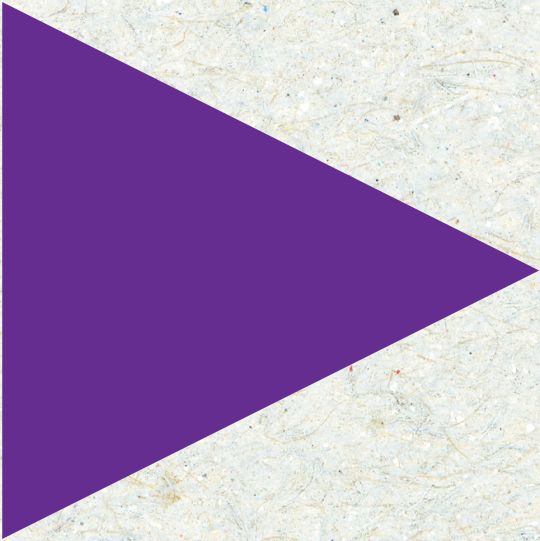




good practice examples

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Introduction

In order to provide with various examples of positive diversity practices, in this section of the publication you will find diverse practices of diverse organisations/institutions from the fields of youth work, social welfare and education, collected from organisations and institutions from Serbia, Italy and Slovenia. Data which will be shown has been collected through interviews and focus groups with the organisations/institutions. The examples are systematized from the field they are derived, but the main idea is that these elements can serve organisations/institutions from different fields. So feel free to find inspiration in all the segments of this collection, no matter of the primary field where you operate with young people.

Examples from youth work



CEPORA – Center for Positive Youth Development (Serbia)
authentic commitment and support, importance of joy and fulfillment

CEPORA's **vision** is that every child has optimal conditions for positive development - where the importance of supporting each individual child, with all its specificities, is unequivocally indicated. CEPORA's **mission** is to improve the emotional and social development of children and youth through the application of modern knowledge of prevention science, and points to the focus of work on social and emotional development, while integrating the values of the vision that this unequivocally refers to encouraging the development of every child and every young person.

Our **internal policies** include the Anti-Corruption Code, the Organizational Management Policy and the Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy (versions for associates and versions for children and youth), as well as Procedures in case of violation of the organization's policies. In addition, as a member of the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners, we respect the Code of Ethics in Youth Work. All employees and associates are familiarized with the provisions of our Policies and undertake to comply with them as long as they work with us, and the policies and procedures themselves are revised on an annual basis. All policies unambiguously contain anti-discrimination provisions and provisions that indicate the necessity of nurturing the diversity of employees and users. For example, as part of our Organizational Management Policy, it is emphasized that one of its starting points is Respect for Human Rights, where we emphasize that "We believe that all people have the same rights. Society should strive to provide equal opportunities for exercising rights regardless of gender, racial, ethnic and religious affiliation, social origin and social status, education, age, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristic. In our work, we respect the rights of everyone and try to contribute to the realization of equality in society." Further, in the principles of organizational management, and in close

connection with nurturing diversity, it is emphasized: We respect the people who work (We respect the rights of our associates and internal documents, rules and procedures form so that they are in accordance with the relevant international and national documents on respect for human rights; We treat associates and volunteers with respect and dignity, we take care of health and social security, we invest in their development and enable them to use their potential, we try to adequately reward their effort); We value users (The interest of our users is our first priority. We establish internal mechanisms that ensure the safety of users and a high level of quality of direct work; We treat the people we work with professionally, politely, politely and honestly, with respect and dignity; We have clear communication and we are open about what we can and cannot do We include them in the decisions we make that affect them We do not differentiate between them regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social background and social status, education, age, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristic; We establish mechanisms that allow users to express a critical opinion about our work). In our Policy for the Protection and Safety of Children and Youth, one of the items directly refers to the prevention of discrimination and reads "CEPORA promises not to show preferences or discriminate against any child or group of children based on gender, religion, ethnicity, or any other categories - every child has the right to lead a productive and safe life." The Code of ethics in youth work prescribes that (and in connection with nurturing diversity) youth workers have the obligation to: 1) Treat young people with respect (respect for every young person, avoiding any form of discrimination based on their race, religion, gender /gender, sexual orientation, nationality, age, education, socioeconomic status, etc.; clearly explaining the nature and limits of confidentiality, as well as that information entrusted for one purpose must not be used for other purposes without the consent of the young person - unless is a visible and clear danger for a young person, youth worker or another individual). Respect and promote the rights of young people to make their own choices and decisions (informing and conducting discussions with young people about different possibilities and outcomes of certain decisions and choices before making final decisions; providing opportunities for learning, in order to develop the capacity and confidence to actively participate in the decision-making process; respecting the choices of young people, pointing out to them the fact that the consequences of their choices must not endanger any segment of human rights).

Our **Procedure in the event of a violation of the Organization's Policies** clearly indicates the procedure to be followed, which implies the reaction of the internal commission for the violation of ethics or the reaction of an external body that is contacted for the purpose of ensuring objectivity in the action. In our case, the external body is the Ethics Council of the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners, to which anyone can submit a report if they suspect that our policies are being violated, and that our organization will not, for any reason, successfully independently respond to the suspected violation of the Policy. We have a safety officer and her contact is known to all children and young people we work with, as well as to all associates and is highlighted in the policies themselves.

We have an extremely **flexible attitude towards the organization of work duties**, and while respecting the needs of employees, those employees independently

organize their schedules in accordance with all their individual specificities and needs. We have flexible working hours, work from home and in the community, and the employees themselves have a high degree of freedom and initiative in communicating their needs. We are there for each other and coordinate our schedules so that both employee needs and business obligations are met.

In the **distribution of jobs and positions**, all the specifics of each individual hired person are taken into account. Moreover, the positions themselves are shaped according to the specifics, strengths and preferences of the employees themselves, and everyone in the association has a unique position and job description. When delegating tasks, the workload of the employees is taken into account, as well as all the above items. Furthermore, there is a high degree of flexibility in the implementation of the administrative aspects of the program activities, in order to leave room for each of the collaborators to organize their work according to their preferences and style (while following the general guidelines for the data that are monitored within each program).

Each of the employees knows who is available for **support** in different domains of our functioning, but it is crucial that the organization itself fosters **teamwork and mutual trust** to a high degree. Which means that, when one of the employees encounters a challenge or recognizes that he has made a mistake, he communicates openly about it with the rest of the team and together we find the best solution for an adequate response and support. All employees are supported by the Managing Board and the Executive Director, and the members of the Managing Board and the Executive Director provide mutual horizontal support. If we need mentoring support for some segment of work for which we do not have resources among the management, we turn to external collaborators and competent institutions (for example in the field of financial operations).

We try to regularly monitor and **celebrate the successes** of each of our employees, foster a supportive climate, and point out the successes of our colleagues to each other. We do this through direct exchange about progress through our internal communication channels, monitoring of employees' progress by superiors and communication about their successes to the rest of the team in live and online team meetings, through the exchange that takes place at quarterly gatherings of all employees in an informal environment (at a joint breakfast). In addition to the quarterly gatherings of employees where we summarize the results, in relation to the specificity of the occasion, we occasionally organize celebrations caused by the specific successes of individual employees.

We foster a **highly individualized approach** to working with employees and highly value the well-being of employees. It is extremely important to us that everyone at CEPORA does what motivates them, that they develop their work segment in accordance with their professional competences and aspirations, and that they are happy in their work. Our basis is that in CEPORA we foster an atmosphere that puts the satisfaction and happiness of employees first, because we believe that in our organization people should do what fulfills them and we want to gather people who share our inner motivation to work in this field, and it is important to us that they do not perceive CEPORA as a place where they

work for someone else, but that they see CEPORA as a living organism that grows thanks to them. If we recognize that one of the employees is overloaded or that his well-being is threatened in any other way, we try to react quickly and reorganize the work in such a way that the specific person is given a place to rest, that he/she is provided with additional support in the necessary segment, to be relieved or even transferred to some other aspect of CEPORA's work. We have close mutual relations, and the personal well-being of employees and associates is highly valued, and close relations enable us to react quickly and appreciate the impact of personal processes on business performance.

The work of the organization relies to an extremely high extent on the **active participation of all employees**, given that employees have a high level of independence in their work and that, on their initiative (along with continuous monitoring of the needs of users), it directly depends on the direction in which the organization itself develops and which we start business ventures. We continuously create new programs precisely in accordance with the various interests of our employees. For example, we actively have a sports section in which the methodology of sport for development is nurtured - led by a colleague who has high experience in various sports disciplines; we founded a reading club led by colleagues who enjoy reading; we launched a youth exchange program at the initiative of a colleague who enjoys traveling and fully recognizes the clear connection of mobility with youth development. We have an applied theater program because of colleagues who have made a name for themselves in this segment, and in accordance with the interests of younger colleagues, we have started an account on TikTok and are launching a series of podcasts. When an idea arises from one of the employees, the Managing Board and the Executive Director organize the available resources in order to successfully implement the idea and to secure funding for new program activities. All employees, as well as all volunteers, know that they can present their ideas at any moment and that they will be supported, as long as they are in line with CEPORA's vision and mission. This is how we organized the most diverse activities in the community initiated by our volunteers, they often connect us with donors from the community and on their initiative, and in accordance with their interests and skills we also organize new projects (such as workshops and photo exhibitions, for example). **The diversity of CEPORA's activities lies precisely in the diversity of the people who make up CEPORA.**

In the **materials** we create, we most often use photos from our activities (which do not show the faces of the participants, but which depict the atmosphere or content of the activity). Therefore, the materials themselves directly depict our users and us. Then when we download or create photos or illustrations for the needs of the publications themselves/ brochure, we try to make them correspond to the reality of the youth communities we work with.

The organization is made up of individuals who are gathered around the idea of science-based practice aimed at strengthening positive development through highly interactive methodologies and a highly supportive and nurturing relationship with users. **The values we stand for** (attachment, commitment, expertise, innovation, effectiveness) are **also nurtured in our mutual relationships.**

Among the employees, there is a high level of mutual appreciation and respect, with all the individuality and diversity of our employees. We really see them as strengths and celebrate them. The team members reveal as much about their private life as they want, and we greatly appreciate, celebrate and support the information they share with us. Everyone has the space to practice their **lifestyle** without fear of judgment or rejection from other team members. We sincerely believe that everyone has the right to their own choices, their own diversity and their own happiness. We respect all information shared with us and do not share it outside the team without the initiative of the person to whom the information relates.

We **celebrate all significant events** in the lives of employees. Our team jointly celebrated the births of team members' children, weddings, even divorces. We are there for each other both in good times and in difficult times, so we support each other even in situations of loss. All these events are respected and employees get the time they need to devote to their life events.

We strive to foster extremely **open communication** among team members. We are known for talking a lot and being good at discussions. We strive for a constructive solution to any problem and our members are open to share their opinion, argue their position, but also share their challenges and seek support in solving them in communication with colleagues. When we have a challenge in the relations between colleagues, we do not run away from the conflict, but engage in the exploration of the conflict and strive for mutual understanding. We talk a lot and hug a lot. For this segment, we emphasize that it is crucial that there is an **authentic desire to understand the other party's position**, because otherwise we fall into the trap of striving to understand only to solve a specific challenge - and that does not prevent future similar situations. Therefore, we communicate all up until we clear up what is stuck, why and how we can overcome the challenge together. And in that we always wish each other well.

Employees in the organization have a high level of independence in their work, but we value and nurture a **climate of cooperation and joint work** extremely highly. We are there for each other and develop key activities and programs together. For example, in the majority of cases, trainings will be given by two trainers, who then jointly prepare, develop and implement the materials. Also, when it comes to the authorship of publications, we never have only one person, but at least two. In addition, the other team members are there to check the final products, give comments, point out dilemmas - we serve each other and as test groups for whatever we do. When we work to develop the skills of employees, we connect those with more developed skills and more experience with colleagues who are strengthening themselves in that domain. For example, we are currently preparing a new curriculum for one of our well-known programs ("School of Personal Development") and our most experienced trainers are working on it. However, we included younger colleagues in monitoring the process of creating the curriculum, including their ideas, so that they would get to know first-hand how we create new materials from existing knowledge. Those colleagues will be involved in the implementation of the training, so they will be given independent tasks and in the next cycle of training, they will take over leadership, with the

support of more experienced colleagues. When we discuss ideas, we practice the brainstorming method, so that no idea is rejected in advance as bad and all are welcome, and then together we think about them and choose the best solution for the given situation. If one person is in charge of a certain task, he will always have other team members at his disposal for checking, consultation, and exchange. Team members clearly know the skills and competencies of others, and will openly and freely reach out for help. Also, the employees themselves are always free to initiate changes in relation to the planned activities, in accordance with the ideas they receive independently or that come from the users. They are free to think and present ideas, and other team members are there to hear them and help them realize those ideas.

We foster **mutual support**. Since everyone in our organization does their job, i.e. we are not all in one place and we are rarely physically together, we share all information in a common Viber group and let each other know what we find out. We praise each other, and we also praise ourselves, that is, we are free to share our successes, which are then extremely supported by other colleagues. We celebrate all small and large achievements not only for the sake of recognizing the achievements of a specific employee and a successfully completed job, but because the success of our colleagues really brings us great happiness and satisfaction - because our goal is that people at CEPORA are happy and that CEPORA makes others happy. In this way, we also share the impressions of our users, colleagues, partners, donors, so that they can **nurture each other and feed each other with the positive changes that are happening in us and around us**.

We have extremely **close friendly relations**. We go out together, we celebrate birthdays and all important events, holidays, we joke, we know what's going on in each other's lives, we cook for each other, we go on joint trips. We follow common interests, so not all team members will go to all informal get-togethers. Therefore, there are no subgroups of employees, but we join together outside of work according to preferences, and there is no bitterness and envy in this sense among colleagues. Everyone is always welcome, and we cherish the fact that we encourage each other to new experiences and expand our horizons by joining one of the teams that is doing something outside of our comfort zone - we are happy to try new things with each other. On the other hand, we highly respect the **freedom of personal choice**, so there is no pressure on team members to participate in any informal activity.

We **complement each other**. When we create teams for certain tasks, we look to combine team members who will best respond to the task, and whose competencies and sensibilities complement and fit. We know each other well and we know very well for which task which combination of employees is perfect. Then, when we have a new task, we create teams according to the interests of the members themselves, but also taking into account all other factors (such as workload). If we jointly assess that a certain person is key to that task, and is simultaneously burdened with other tasks, we will reorganize the teams so that the employee is directed to where he is needed as a priority or where he wants to be as a priority - if it is important to him/her from the most diverse reasons.

Our employees are continuously **improving professionally** in three directions. One is the one that we recognize is needed, and in accordance with their position and the needs of the programs/jobs they are engaged in. The second direction is related to individual interests of employees and, consequently, potential future developments of our activities and programs. The third direction involves monitoring trends and new knowledge in all areas of importance for the work of our organization - both in the professional domain and in the organizational one. As we nurture science-based practice, we like to be up to date with both science and practice in different segments of our organization's functioning. When there is an invitation for a training, we evaluate whether it is useful for any of the team members and prioritize who will go if places are limited.

All employees are thoroughly familiar with **all internal policies and procedures**, and once a year we hold an employee briefing (after revising the policies), to ensure that the policies are living acts in the behavior of our employees.

We **communicate transparently** about the policies and their content and, most often, preventively, we resolve all the dilemmas that arise, which are at risk of conflicting with the policies themselves. It is of great importance to us that we have a designated safety officer, so everyone knows who the contact point is if any dilemmas arise. The procedure for responding in the event of a violation of the Policy is clear, and in order to ensure fair application to all employees, it is foreseen to activate **external bodies** to support the response in case there is a suspicion that one of the managers is involved in a violation of the policy, and internal response will not lead to an objective investigation.

At CEPORA, we are all **extremely divergent**, with many specificities, and we see them all as strengths. In relation to our differences, we organize jobs, merge teams, complement each other and look forward to a much greater range of things than would be the case if we had a uniform team. We **celebrate the authenticity** of each of us and strive for everyone to be free to express themselves and their individuality.

As prejudices and stereotypes are often found among the topics we discuss with young people, and as we strongly believe in the fact that we should practice what we teach others, we strive to continuously **raise awareness of our stereotypes**, to question them, to give ourselves the opportunity to break the prejudices we come across with. A good tool for this is to, whenever we catch ourselves pointing out to a group of people (in whatever way they are similar) that we think they ALL act/think or something the same way, that this is stereotyping. We try not to assume, but to, through open communication, with authentic interest, directly ask/find out what is in our focus in contact with a specific colleague.

Through our daily activities with young people and other experts, we practice **seeing the world from someone else's perspective**. Therefore, we apply the same principle in observing the perspective of our colleagues. When we are faced with dilemmas, we try to see them from the position of the person in question, regardless of the cultural characteristics.

For us, the key determinant of the collective is that we are **gathered around an idea that we really all believe in**, and our work extremely fulfills us and makes us happy. Therefore, all members of the collective are here because they believe that every person should be able to find his place and feel good in his own skin. There are, of course, various individual differences among our members, and in that sense, there are different sensibilities and people who spend more or less time together (both at work and outside the workplace), but we really nurture an open and impartial approach to all employees and in business communication we are extremely direct, cordial, but also professional. We try to be caring towards each other, and to support each other on a personal and collegial level even when we may not "love" each other privately.

When we encounter a characteristic, belief, or value of one of our colleagues who is not close to us, we **create opportunities for that person to show us his/her world** and bring closer what is unknown to us, what we do not have in our experience and our value system. We try to be open-minded and to respect all the characteristics, customs and behaviors that stem from the cultural features of our colleagues, regardless of whether they coincide with ours or not. We believe that in this world there is not only a place for everyone, but that everything and everyone can find a place where they are free and accepted. We also accept what is foreign to us, create opportunities to "get to know" and continue to celebrate, regardless of whether we have identified with that knowledge or not - we celebrate the values/customs of our colleagues.

We believe that **each person should live their authentic life, filled with the multitude of their individualities**. We strive for everyone to be who they are at CEPORA. We don't want anyone to feel that they have to change for the sake of the collective or that they will be judged or rejected because of some of their characteristics. We believe that every person has the right to positive development, and we then transfer that belief to our relationships with colleagues.

We are there for each other, we support each other and monitor the processes that take place among employees. When we notice that there is any intentional or unintentional **discriminatory behavior**, we react immediately, ensuring that the behavior stops, that the person who exhibited the discriminatory behavior is confronted and supported to overcome such approach, and that jobs are organized or reorganized in a way which will make it impossible to repeat the incident. Transparent and open communication as well as high trust between team members enables timely response in this sense. During onboarding and all team meetings, we openly communicate about a transparent attitude towards conflicts within the team, thereby empowering younger colleagues to communicate the difficulties they face at work.

Our team members have **highly developed communication skills**, and they communicate effectively with each other while respecting each other. This can sometimes be a challenge in the sense that there is individual variability in communication style, and as we cultivate supportive, open and direct communication, when someone new comes from the side, they need some time to relax next to us and allow themselves to be open and direct, with respect for

assertive principles, i.e. fostering open communication with full respect for the interlocutor's feelings and thoughts. This allows us to, among other things, prevent **conflicts** between employees from simmering, because they arise more easily and are resolved more easily. Here we are not talking about big conflicts, but about all possible ones - which then, precisely because of our open communication, become a space for strengthening mutual understanding of the collective.

As we continuously deal with various topics related to diversity, we train ourselves to **recognize our triggers**, our assumptions, our insecurities and to allow ourselves to continuously, in contact with diversity, **reexamine our view of the world**. We are adept at adjusting communication, and we know how to control our behavior so that it remains fully supportive even when we recognize that certain prejudices are occurring. We allow ourselves that, with our action, we do not act in relation to assumptions, but on the contrary, to give ourselves the opportunity through action to reconsider our point of view.

We **follow up-to-date scientific findings** (such as those provided as part of our Knowledge Collection), we transfer knowledge to our associates through internal **trainings**, we attend trainings that we estimate will help us strengthen our competencies, and we believe in lifelong learning, and we believe that it is always necessary to we follow trends, to learn something new, to question the world and to look at things from the position of our colleagues from different cultures. Participation in international projects also helps us in this, where we are in continuous contact with employees from different countries and with different cultural backgrounds.



CENTER FOR YOUTH WORK (Serbia)

diverse working environment, individual competence developmental plans, multicultural practice

Center for Youth Work, as an organization that has existed for over 20 years, is proud of its practice of respecting diversity at all levels. In terms of the work of our organization, **employees and volunteers of the organization have different national, religious and gender identities, as well as sexual orientation.**

Our **policy** for employees recognizes equal employment opportunities in the first place: "Center For Youth Work hires according to fair and transparent principles of candidate selection and is an employer that provides equal opportunities to everyone. Center For Youth Work undertakes not to discriminate against any job applicant or co-worker because of origin, religion, sex, gender, marital and economic status, sexual orientation, age, race, color or physical disability and/or condition. This policy is implemented in all employment practices and procedures involving employees, including: advertising; candidate selection; transfer to a position of lower rank; work interruptions; salary amount; and all other forms of compensation". This policy also provides procedures in case of harassment of employees on any basis, and especially emphasizes that "no employee is allowed to use offensive language against any country or people under any circumstances.

Any offensive expression against any country or people may lead to immediate termination of employment."

All employees and volunteers are also **supported through the supervision process**, in which their capacities are assessed on an individual level, the challenges they face in their work (or, sometimes, in their private life as well, depending on the desire of the employees to discuss this) and provides they are supported to further improve or overcome the challenges they encounter in their work (which may be related to their personal characteristics or lives). At the end of each year, an **individual evaluation** is conducted, during which a review is made of the greatest successes in work, lessons learned and room for further development. During the supervision, employees are also discussed about the **relationship** within the team, cooperation, potential conflicts and ways to resolve them, and youth workers are especially reviewed on **prejudices and stereotypes** they may have towards some groups of young people (or young people individually), in order to become aware of these issues, address them and create strategies to overcome them, thus ensuring the quality of work, the best interests of young people, but also the further personal and professional development of youth workers. In the supervision of youth workers, a **competence development plan** is created once a year, which is based on the self-assessment of their competences according to the Council of Europe Portfolio (the self-assessment is done at the beginning of work in Center for Youth Work, which is then done again on an annual basis in order to monitor progress in the competencies of youth workers and define new development goals). In the context of diversity, and according to the Portfolio, the level of knowledge of intercultural theories, human rights, cultural awareness, the level of empathy, tolerance, solidarity, conflict transformation skills, facilitation, understanding of different identities and origins of young people, whether they possess the competences for involving young people from different cultures, etc. (for more details, see the brochure The Council of Europe youth work portfolio (2015); Functions of youth workers 4. Support young people in actively and constructively addressing intercultural relations).

The employee policy also provides for non-working organization **holidays**, which include New Year's Day, Labor Day, Christmas according to the Gregorian and Julian calendar, Easter according to the Gregorian and Julian calendar; Ramadan and Kurban Bayram, and employees are given two additional days according to their personal choice, to observe some additional national or religious holidays. Employees have the freedom to **mark their work space** (office or desk) in a more personal way, in any way, as long as prominent symbols or decorations do not offend or invite violation of human rights and democratic values.

Some of the **basic principles of our work are equality and equality**, which are integrated into all aspects of our work - both in terms of providing equal opportunities for engaging people in the organization, and in involving young people in decision-making processes. However, we invest extra efforts in precisely this in order to enable the equal participation of young people who live on the margins of society. We believe that all young people, regardless of different social, cultural, ethno-national affiliations, different religious, political and sexual orientations and gender identities, must have equal access to quality services and

support and protection of their rights. In this, we are guided by the various policies of the organization, and in the first place by the Code of Ethics for youth workers.

Working with diversity, in our practice, is best reflected in the **different approaches** we use precisely in order to provide support to all young people who need it - continuously and regularly our active we carry out activities not only in the youth center in Novi Sad or the premises of our organization, but also in the streets, in remote, marginalized communities of Novi Sad (so-called informal Roma settlements). This fieldwork is particularly specific because in the "Roma settlements" of Novi Sad, not only families of Roma nationality live, but also those who identify themselves as Albanians and Ashkali, who are at the same time members of the refugee and returnee population (families who escaped from Kosovo, families that were returned from Western European countries). All these circumstances influenced the formation of a small, distinctly multicultural community, in which the youth worker must be carefully **informed and educated about specific sub-cultures**, customs, values and relationships within the community. In addition, in order to ensure and respect good relations in the community, we **cooperate with local representatives** of the Islamic community (local hodja), with whose support we also work with girls from the community (this community is characterized by a very unequal relationship, based on traditional cultural values, according to girls who are usually not allowed to leave the house without the presence of male relatives, so we usually work on their empowerment right in the religious school building, after religious classes). It is also specific to such situations that we must apply a "do no harm" approach during our work, which means that we very carefully approach empowerment, the development of critical thinking and the questioning of values, taking care not to offend the culture and values of the entire community, but to we continue to raise awareness of human rights among young people and promote democratic values.



JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT ETS (Italy)

targeted diversity management practices, remote and smart working

Junior Achievement represents one of the largest global Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) dedicated to youth empowerment in our country. Each year, it offers 15 million learning experiences focused on employment and entrepreneurship in over 100 countries worldwide. The JA Italy ETS Association, celebrating its twentieth year as a non-profit organization, actively engages in economic and entrepreneurial education within schools. It fosters innovative skills and ideas that contribute to the growth of civil society and the development of prosperous communities. JA Italy ETS annually guides the educational journey of approximately 200,000 young students throughout Italy through experiential programs in economic and entrepreneurial education, financial literacy, and career guidance.

Mission and Vision: The goal of JA Italy ETS is to establish a new frontier in education that reflects modernity through innovative educational pathways consistent with the principles of economics and entrepreneurship. To achieve

this, JA Italy ETS relies on the invaluable support of exceptional strategic partners, including educators, entrepreneurs, managers, and policy-makers, who play an essential role as intermediaries between young people and contemporary society. The mission of JA Italy ETS is to encourage generations of young students to face the challenges of the future global economy. It aims to prepare them during their academic journey by developing the necessary skills to successfully enter the workforce with confidence and entrepreneurial spirit. The adjectives that best describe the team are "female" and "young" (with an average age of 36.5 years). JA Italy ETS has always been characterized as a forward-thinking organization, ready to set the pace for the times. In fact, their habit of **remote working**, or **smart working**, has been established for several years even before the health emergency. This approach allows them to live and work in different locations across Italy while ensuring close **proximity to beneficiaries**.

Staff organization: Non-dedicated staff comprises 8 individuals, representing only 36% of the workforce when compared to permanent employees. There is a strong predominance of female personnel, accounting for 68% of the staff. Notably, 90% of JA Italy ETS employees have indefinite-term contracts, and all employees work full-time. This demonstrates JA Italy ETS's **commitment to working for and with young people**.

Diversity management: In the 21/22 fiscal year, JA Italy ETS significantly focused on recruiting female professionals under 30, constituting 57% of the new hires. This reflects a strategic approach to investing in emerging talents and enhancing their professional and personal development.

Talent retention and specialization: JA Italy ETS is distinguished by its ability to retain its talents through a model of **widespread leadership** and the creation of functions capable of working towards objectives, moving in the direction of **functional specialization**. This is evident in areas such as fundraising.

Work-life balance: As a testament to JA Italy ETS's ongoing commitment to maintaining a work-life balance, 1 employee, or 5% of the staff eligible for parental leave during the 21-22 school year, took advantage of this benefit. Similarly, the same percentage of employees returned to work after their leave, indicating an organization that is attentive and capable of providing a **personalized reintegration plan** for those employees who require or request it.



YOUNG WOMEN NETWORK (Italy)

strong believe in the principles and values

YWN (Young Women Network) was founded as a network of young female Bocconi graduates on the idea of Teresa Budetta and Alessandra Bernini with the aim of "sharing inspiration, visions, and experiences through the constant organization of events." Alessandra Bernini explains, "The idea of founding this organization came to us when, during our study experiences abroad, we observed how prevalent such initiatives are in other countries, where they play a fundamental role in

networking and knowledge sharing." The group was formed in September 2012, and in May 2014, along with Alice Di Pietro, Maria Giulia Rebecca, and Martina Rogato, the Young Women Network Social Promotion Association was founded. Since 2016, the Association has also established a branch in Rome. Currently, the network consists of more than 700 members (as of 2022) who actively participate in events. There are more than 50 volunteer members who support the growth of the Association and assist in organizing events, and it is thanks to them that Young Women Network grows, improves, and supports female talent.

Over 150 mentors, successful female leaders in various sectors, have been involved in the first **mentoring program** launched by Young Women Network, which has now reached its seventh edition. They named it "INSPIRING MENTOR" because these mentors support the young community free of charge and serve as our source of inspiration. So far, more than 25 important companies, focused on diversity and the promotion of young talents, have supported us.

Core Values of the Association:

The Association is guided by **ethical principles**, refraining from any collusive or abusive behavior that harms others. Honesty, moral integrity, fairness, and good faith are fundamental values governing all the Association's activities and initiatives.

Key **values** of Young Women Network (YWN): Honesty and Integrity, Sisterhood, Promotion of young talent in all aspects, Transparency towards members and within the staff, Horizontal governance.

Promotion of a **healthy work environment**: Everyone has the right to a safe, harmonious environment that encourages equal and respectful interpersonal relationships. All YWN members commit to creating an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment that allows individuals to express their potential.

Principles of a correct behavior for a healthy environment:

- ▶ Fostering a context where everyone feels free to express their ideas and needs.
- ▶ Valuing and appreciating the uniqueness of each person.
- ▶ Welcoming newcomers warmly.
- ▶ Emphasizing collaboration, sharing, and sisterhood.
- ▶ Ensuring equitable relationships, regardless of roles.
- ▶ Preserving individuals' privacy and dignity.
- ▶ Promoting shared and participatory decision-making, with recourse to majority rule when necessary.
- ▶ Facilitating internal communication and information sharing.
- ▶ Adhering to established decision-making processes.
- ▶ Respecting the roles of each person and avoiding unilateral initiatives not previously shared.
- ▶ Managing and resolving potential conflicts in a constructive manner.



SLOVENSKA FILANTROPIJA (Slovenia)

integration of foreigners into the community

Slovenska filantropija, Association for the Promotion of Volunteering, is a humanitarian organization that has been operating in the public interest since 1992. Their programs are focused on improving the quality of life within the community and advocating for the socially disadvantaged. Our central activity is the promotion of volunteering, as we believe that through volunteering, everyone can contribute to a better and more tolerant society based on respect for all, regardless of personal and life circumstances. We offer training for volunteers, mentors, and volunteer organizers, as well as educational content for various stakeholders.

Their **vision** is an open, just, and solidary society that, through partnership and collaboration between the public sector, the business sector, civil society organizations, and the voluntary efforts of people, provides a supportive environment for everyone, including those who, due to any circumstances, are unable to ensure a high quality of life for themselves and their families.

The association is divided into various **regions**, and we have spoken with volunteers working in the Capodistria center. They now primarily work with war refugees residing in the Debeli rtic center. In the Debeli rtic center, there are approximately 80 people who are refugees from the Ukrainian war. Slovenska filantropija carries out various activities to **integrate foreigners into the community**. Volunteers contribute to their integration by providing Slovene language courses, academic support for children through both individual and group sessions, organizing various culinary workshops, and arranging excursions throughout Slovenia to acquaint them with Slovenian culture and traditions. The hosting municipality is also very supportive and helps them integrate, including Ukrainian-themed evenings. For these evenings, refugees prepare and present their traditions and culture to the local population.

The association **works with other associations**, and together, they organize clean-up initiatives. Together, they went to clean up the waste in the illegal immigration area to help refugees understand the dangers of illegal immigration. Another association is the "Center za nenasilno komunikacijo", where individuals who have experienced abuse come for support. With them, the primary activities involve playing board games or simply engaging in conversations to provide assistance.

Examples from education



DANTE ALIGHIERI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Slovenia)

diverse activities for a multicultural setting, following the realities of the students

At Dante Alighieri Elementary School, we employ various practices that involve students and staff in creating a **climate where everyone feels welcome** and comfortable. Our school places great emphasis on the inclusion of all students, including those who are foreign or come from different cultures, students with special needs, and students living in disadvantaged conditions. Throughout the school year, we carry out various activities, some proposed and conducted by teachers or the school counselor, while others are offered by external organizations with whom the school collaborates.

For foreign students who enroll in our school, we offer Italian **language courses**, and an individualized program is developed for them during the first two years of their stay. The first year of study is **not graded**, while the second year is assessed with adaptations determined by the subject teachers. **Individualized plans** are also written for students with special needs, outlining the accommodations they receive and how they will be evaluated.

A significant impact on promoting multiculturalism has been achieved through the JEST project - jeziki stejejo (languages count), which started in 2017 and concluded with the 2021/22 school year. The project aims to raise awareness among students about their classmates' mother tongues, fostering tolerance and respect for foreign languages and cultures. Another objective is to identify the factors that positively contribute to multilingualism in schools and create a list of activities that incorporate elements of multilingualism to enhance academic performance in classrooms. The project, co-financed by the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport, is carried out in collaboration with the University of Ljubljana, the University of Primorska, the Scientific Research Center of Koper, and other institutions. It involves various elementary schools, kindergartens, secondary schools, and the University of Ljubljana and the University of Primorska. Throughout the school year, we held two technical days, one for upper grades and another for fifth and sixth grades. Additionally, we conducted various activities in both higher and lower grades focused on **promoting tolerance** towards foreign languages and cultures. This year, the lower-grade students discovered **folk music**. They studied folk songs from different cultures and learned that the song "Fra' Martino Campanaro" is sung in 100 different languages. They created a video where they sing this famous song in seven languages.

The students also explored **lullabies and nursery rhymes** in their mother tongues. This led to the creation of a video, available on the school's website, showcasing these songs and rhymes in seven languages. The seventh-grade students discovered **traditional dishes** from their countries of origin and even compiled a recipe book, which is available on the school's website.

On the occasion of the Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27th, we organized multilingual workshops for upper-grade students. In the language workshops, students wrote **graphic poems about peace in their mother tongues**.

In April, the upper-grade students participated in a technical day aimed at exploring their classmates' cultures and other European cultures. The students engaged in various workshops, including dance, journalism, art, and geography. They learned **traditional dances, created road signs, murals, and posters**. Meanwhile, the fifth and sixth-grade students worked on developing **multilingual dictionaries** on the topic of winter sports. Their creations can be found on the school's website. Within the project, we also celebrated the European Day of Languages on September 26th. The upper-grade students discovered the languages of their classmates and tried to learn simple words (counting up to 10) in their languages.

Over the years, we have **participated in various projects** focused on non-violence and acceptance of all classmates. We joined the Martin Krpan project by the Noexcuse association. The main theme of the workshops was non-violence. In several workshops, students learned to listen to others, to put themselves in others' shoes, to understand the emotions others feel, and to manage their own emotions in critical situations. The association Logout offered several workshops to help students understand the importance of safe internet use. They talked about the violence that can be experienced online, cyberbullying, and online safety. Again, the students discussed the emotions they feel and might experience if they were victims of bullying. The Neon project is currently taking place in our school and involves kindergarten and lower grades. This year, several teachers and educators received training from experts, and in the following months, various activities related to non-violence among peers will be presented.

The events in Belgrade at the beginning of May (massive shooting in a school) did not leave us indifferent, so we decided to address the topic with our students, considering their age and their way of understanding reality. As a school, we regularly carry out various activities throughout the school year aimed at **promoting education, respect, empathy, and tolerance** towards others, regardless of any social or cultural differences. On May 12th, our school counselor, with the help of teachers, conducted workshops in different classes to emphasize how important these values are to us.

Students from Grades I to III, guided by their class leaders, addressed topics such as kindness, friendship, feeling good, and safe at school. Students from Grades IV to IX, after a brief introduction by the counselor about the events in Belgrade, were invited to engage in various activities. In particular, in Grade I, great importance was given to the theme of **kindness**. After watching a video that explained how to be kind to others, the students wrote down the magic words that should be part of our daily lives to make the world a happy and kind place. Students from Class II A discussed the importance of **expressing their emotions**, both positive and negative. They shared their opinions on violence in general and discussed various unpleasant behaviors that can occur in class and how to resolve them. During a practical activity, they drew the name of a classmate and, remaining anonymous, wrote positive comments about them. Another activity involved developing in

students an **awareness of "feeling good" in the school environment**. The teacher drew a cage on a board and then explained that they should never feel trapped and afflicted. The students were invited to write about how they feel when there is harmony in the class. Students in Class II B read a fairy tale about **friendship** and then created posters representing what friendship means to them. Students in Grade III watched animations on the importance of **helping each other and accepting differences**, and then they engaged in collaborative games in the gym. Grades IV and V, along with their class leaders and the school counselor, conducted a workshop focused on peer collaboration. After watching a short animation, they divided into two groups, each working in their own classroom to build half of a paper bridge, with the goal of later joining the two parts into a single bridge capable of supporting a marker. With the possibility of communicating only through two chosen group leaders, the two groups used only paper and tape to construct their half of the bridge. The students experienced a strong sense of collaboration. In Class VI A, students discussed positive emotions and good actions. They expressed the positive emotions they felt while watching the short film "The Kindness Boomerang" and discussed the kind actions they demonstrated towards others. They described situations in which they found themselves and how they helped family members, friends, and strangers. Students in Grade VIII were invited to analyze two articles that addressed the same topic but in different ways. The objective was to help students understand how to be objective in reading, verify sources, refrain from comments, question the accuracy of information, and be objective by asking themselves how they felt when reading each article. The two VII classes were invited to write **beautiful and positive expressions about their classmates** (without their knowledge), in complete silence. Each student had the task of finding a positive quality they appreciated in their classmate. The students who volunteered and were blindfolded were pleasantly surprised by the words expressed by their classmates about them. This was followed by a group discussion during which the students had the opportunity to share how they felt during the workshop. The IX A class conducted the same workshop with the school counselor. Students in Class VI B and IX B took on the roles of directors and actors to create a video about kindness and good actions at school. Overall, we can confidently say that the participation of all our students has been positive, indicating that the proposed topics were interesting and stimulating. This is encouraging and makes us optimistic about the prospect of strengthening collaboration, harmony, and serenity in the school environment where we work and live daily.

In the month of March, two two-hour workshops were held in the fourth-grade class on the topic of "NON-VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL." The students were divided into pairs and groups and engaged in numerous activities, tackling difficult themes but approached in a simple manner through the world of fairy tales. The students participated enthusiastically.

Class representatives also play an important role in fostering inclusion. Each class has its own representatives, and during designated hours, various topics are addressed, and inclusion activities are carried out. We engage in team-building activities, discuss positive and negative emotions, acceptance of diversity, mutual help, respect for others, and many other important topics for individuals and the group.

The **school counselor** plays a significant role in working with individuals as well as groups. They assist teachers with various workshops and conduct individual or group meetings. Together with the counselor, we strive to **resolve conflicts** promptly, **raise awareness** among students, and **encourage open communication** if they face any kind of difficulty.

The school often **participates in humanitarian and charity actions**, thus sensitizing students to the importance of helping others. In our school, we also have students who require financial assistance. For this reason, we collaborate with the Lions Club, which provides financial aid to disadvantaged students to cover the additional expenses of field trips and excursions organized by the school.

Almost every year, our students participate in **outdoor education programs**, where they live together and learn new things about their peers in a different environment. This activity has a significant impact on fostering acceptance of diversity and understanding others.

We strongly believe that inclusion in schools allows all students to fully participate in education and develop their abilities. The presence of an inclusive environment promotes friendship and collaboration among students, creating positive and lasting bonds. Inclusion helps students understand and respect differences, promoting tolerance and diversity. Through inclusion, students with disabilities or special needs can receive appropriate support and have access to the same educational opportunities. Inclusion in schools prepares students to live in an inclusive society and be conscious and empathetic citizens.



INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH (Serbia)

clear policies, mentoring and exchange, involvement of employees' families in the celebrations

Respect for diversity at the Institute for Educational Research is achieved through: defining documents that guarantee certain rights and protection for employees, practical implementation of defined principles in existing documents and through continuous review of the current situation and the need to include new practices and mechanisms for respect for diversity.

The importance of respect for diversity is clearly highlighted in the Institute's **internal documents**. Some of the documents that incorporate provisions on respect for diversity and prohibition of all forms of discrimination are the Work Regulations (article 7: All forms of discrimination are prohibited), the Code of Ethics of the Institute for Educational Research (article 3: The project manager is obliged to facilitate a creative atmosphere, collegial cooperation and solving possible conflicts; article 4: Within the framework of good scientific practice in research work, in working with young researchers, it is necessary to ensure constant and regular help of older researchers either through mentoring work or through collegial cooperation; article 9: All employees of the Institute - researchers and assistants staff, oppose any form of discrimination related to age, political

orientation, physical abilities, gender identity, both in employment and in mutual communication at the Institute), Rulebook on ethics in scientific research work of the Institute for Pedagogical Research (Employees at the Institute are obliged to respect personal and professional integrity of their colleagues and associates and to treat them in a civilized manner, i.e. to behave in accordance with the principles of equality and fairness, which implies the exclusion of any form of discrimination, exploitation or harassment, based on racial or ethnic affiliation, political or religious beliefs, academic status, age or gender; Employees of the Institute must not abuse their authority and allow personal interests, as well as inappropriate behavior and speech to lead to the creation of a hostile work environment and damage to interpersonal relations), Rulebook on the Protection of Personal Data, Plan for Achieving Gender Equality. The Law on Internal Whistleblower Procedure provides for the disclosure of information about the law, human rights, etc., and the proper procedure for initiating an internal whistleblower.

All employees can count on **mentoring or other support**. This is especially true for young researchers who have their own mentors - an older and more experienced colleague, who follow, guide and encourage young researchers to progress, develop their potential and assert themselves as independent researchers. This individualized approach respects the diversity and specificity of each young researcher. Therefore, within the Institute, a lot is invested in the development of young scientists. In partnership with universities in the country, the process of continuous improvement of human resources and the Institute as an organization is ensured, through programs of formal and informal mentoring, as well as internal performance management. The aim is to recruit new interns every year, at least two interns per year, who will be selected based on demonstrated knowledge, talent and motivation for scientific research work, in order to continuously develop organizational capacities and successfully achieve the set program goals. Colleagues in scientific titles are always available for consultation with other colleagues. Such **exchanges** are also possible at regular meetings of the Institute's collective. Cooperation with liaison associates from **other institutes and faculties** is highly encouraged. At regular collective meetings, in addition to the mutual exchange of current information, possible obstacles in the work and the possibilities of overcoming them together are often discussed. Also, team meetings are an adequate opportunity to publicly **praise employees** for a job well done.

An event called "Scientific Exchange of Institute Associates" is organized once a year, where employees communicate with each other the professional results achieved during the current year, consult and exchange professional ideas.

Attention is paid to **significant events of all employees**. For example, celebrating promotions, birthdays, or other significant employee events. There is a practice of awarding jubilee awards to employees (for 10 years of work, 20 years of work, 30 years of work, etc.). In addition, there is a tradition of celebrating the New Year together. In the premises of the Institute, various New Year's plays are held or other creative ideas are realized for the children of the employees. The institute strives to ensure maximum learning of children and parents in the organization of holiday celebrations. For example, on the occasion of the New Year 2022, a team of

researchers based on the drawings prepared by the children on the occasion of the New Year, created a story for each child that accompanied the drawing, gathered them into a collection, that is, a special New Year's edition of the Collection. On the occasion of New Year 2021, the children were actors in the New Year's show for children, which took place in the premises of the Institute.

Open and constructive communication between management and all employees is ensured and there is a climate of cooperation. Employees gather in teams according to their area of interest, and in this way approach a task (eg writing a project proposal, designing research, writing scientific papers, etc.). The **teams are generally very heterogeneous**, with members who differ in terms of expertise as well as the level of research or scientific profession. Annual **reports on the engagement** of researchers in the activities of the Institute are collected, which continuously monitors the efficiency/advancement of all employees during their careers. Continuous support for the professional development of all employees is provided through the forwarding of all external invitations for professional development. All employees have the opportunity to request the necessary **equipment** for professional work once a year. Also, within the framework of the annual activity plan of the institution, each employee has the opportunity to propose a projection of material costs for his activities, which the Institute will provide him, regardless of the degree of scientific and research title or years of experience. Tasks are delegated based on the experience and competencies of the employees. If more complex tasks are involved, a team of several people is hired to share the responsibilities. Each employee can plan a **vacation** in accordance with his own needs and the Labor Law. Different researchers are delegated to the events as representatives of the Institute, regardless of the degree of research or scientific title, in accordance with their **interest**.

The management is continuously thinking about the possibilities of **improving internal mechanisms** for ensuring respect for diversity (example, through the definition of the Human Resources Management Strategy and the Plan for achieving gender equality).



GYMNASIUM "SVETI SAVA", ARCHITECTURAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL (Serbia)

collaboration with the community, materials and decorations, using international opportunities for contact and growth

First of all, I would like to mention that the **motto** of the Gymnasium "Sveti Sava" is "school of good vibes", and the motto of the Architectural Technical School is "Building the future together". Both schools strive to support and encourage any initiative in the direction of fostering diversity and multiculturalism.

When it comes to employees and fostering diversity among them, I must first mention that relations in both schools are regulated by the **Rulebook on the Implementation of the Protocol for Action in the Case of Discrimination**,

Violence, Abuse and Neglect. Both schools have an active **Protection Team** that takes care of the implementation of this Rulebook, and every year a Discrimination Prevention Plan and a Protection Against Violence, Abuse and Neglect Plan are drawn up, independently of the Team's Work Plan. Also, in the School Program of both schools, a significant part is occupied by the Discrimination Prevention Program and the Violence Protection Program.

The **collectives** in both schools are quite homogeneous in the ethnic sense. The exception is made by colleagues who are of different religions and the school tries whenever there is a need to respect the specifics (celebration of religious **holidays**, a variety of catering options at celebrations, release of obligations that are not in accordance with beliefs...). In both schools, birthday celebrations are often practiced together, jubilees are celebrated. **Funds are being collected** in an organized manner to help with the loss of a close family member, for the birth of a child, and for retirement. Both schools organize **joint celebrations** once a year, usually around the New Year, where all employees are invited to join. In accordance with financial possibilities, one-day **trips** are sometimes organized for employees. This is more often the case with the Architectural Technical School. It is an opportunity for **informal gatherings** and getting to know each other better, as well as creating a better climate and interpersonal relations.

As for **rewarding and commending employees**, both schools are guided by an internal regulation that precisely defines it. With the fact that the financial possibilities of schools are limited, it is more common to praise for the effort and effort and **promote examples of good practice**, rather than material guesswork. Until now, it has not been recognized that there is a leadership bias in terms of rewards. The measure is always the merits for commitment, dedicated effort and time, as well as the achieved results.

When it comes to the education of employees, in addition to **seminars and training** aimed at improving pedagogical skills, occasional education is practiced in schools, which, among other things, aims to improve cultural competences, that is, respect for diversity. In this regard, the training conducted by the "Sveti Sava" Gymnasium for its teachers is particularly prominent. In previous years, we had trainings by NGO Athens on gender roles and gender-based violence, where teachers had the opportunity to learn about the concept of gender roles and gender identity, the differences that are recognized and defined in this regard, the types of support that young people need in the process of building personal identity, but also the forms of violence to which they may be exposed, and the consequences it carries. Special attention is paid to the mechanisms of prevention of any form of gender-based violence, exclusion, labeling, abuse. Also, every year Center E8 conducts training for teachers as implementers of Program Y workshops, so a large part of our teachers have undergone this training. For the first time this year, training was conducted for trainers who are qualified to train other teachers, plan and implement the entire program through teaching and extracurricular content in the school.

As for the **collaborative relationship between colleagues**, as in every collective and in schools, the situation is very different on the field. As an example of good

practice, we can cite the transition to online classes during the pandemic, when colleagues were most supportive, especially the younger ones towards the older ones, to help them acquire and improve digital competences. As for teaching skills, the help of older colleagues to newly arrived younger teachers is always invaluable. What should be improved is better cooperation in setting requirements and criteria within individual expert councils. This is where disagreements often occur, that is, inconsistencies in the work of individual teachers.

However, in the largest number of cases, teachers are ready to change and improve their mutual relations and way of working at the suggestion of a mentor or associates, aware that they have a significant educational influence on their students in the role of an adult role model. Like any other segment, the school is not exempt from the circumstances and atmosphere in society in general, but these both schools strive to be promoters of healthy lifestyles and a positive value system, to nurture an atmosphere of non-violence and tolerance for diversity of all kinds.

At the beginning of this school year, the ground floor of the high school was renovated and **adapted for people with disabilities** (entrance, toilet, classrooms), thanks to the initiative of the parents of a student in a wheelchair, who has been attending the IT department of our high school since this school year.

With its position in the city, St. Sava Gymnasium is a symbol of diversity, because it is **attended by children from different parts of the city and beyond**. On the other hand, the Architectural Technical School, as the only school in Serbia that exclusively trains architectural technicians, has a large number of students who come from other cities and towns in Serbia and live in student dormitories. From the first day they are well received and integrated into the school environment **without fear of being labeled**.

Regarding the various **examples of diversity fostering in direct activities with students**, both schools have been **cooperating with the non-governmental sector** for many years and participate in numerous projects of organizations such as HelpNet - Intergenerational solidarity through the project "Strengthening intergenerational ties", Intergenerational volunteer center - (exhibition of student works with a picture to help), Association Drug nije meta (project Share friendship), New Renaissance, Baby Center (All about partnerships), CEPORA (multiple projects - with children without parental care, Knowledge to tolerance, Hate Speech - workshop and research, as well as manuals for teachers). This year, the departure of students from both schools to Bossifest 2023 and the screening of the film "Atoms" were organized. After the screening of the film, the students had the opportunity to meet the director and the main actor of the film. Also, at the beginning of this year, the students of ATŠ attended the performance and workshop "Sama je trahila" in Pantear as part of the HelpNet project.

"Sveti Sava" Gymnasium was declared a school of excellence, because it has been collaborating and supporting the projects of an CSO Center E8 for more than 10 years. Generations of students have gone through the Program Y project and education about gender roles and gender equality, non-violence and tolerance.

Each generation gives birth to new members of the Be a Man's Club (BMC), which participates in the implementation of numerous actions that promote healthy lifestyles, tolerance and mutual respect. This year, representatives of the school, together with members of BMC, took part in the Final Conference Future for Youth in Sarajevo, a project that included young people from most countries in the region (Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia). Center E8 also produced great plays for high school students performed by the Reflektor Theater on Dorćol Square, such as the plays Men, Girls, Constitution... whose guests are often the students of our two schools.

The gymnasium organizes **study trips** every year and participates in student exchange with a friendly gymnasium from Slovenia. For a week in the first semester, our students visit Ljubljana and get to know the culture, customs and education in Slovenia, and then in the second semester they host students from Slovenia.

Two years ago, the Architectural Technical School was a participant in the project of the Organization of Creative Gathering - OKO **exchange of students** in a bar called "Diversity unites us". The first exchange, the departure of our students to Knjaževac, was realized in September 2021, and the second, the arrival of high school students from Knjaževac to Belgrade, was realized in October 2021. Operation lasted for 3 days. One exchange included the following activities: intercultural talks, educational tourist tours, intercultural European classes and free time to meet and socialize. The promotion of peace through a visit to the school of Japanese activist Yuichiro Morishita was also organized by OKO.

In cooperation with the student organization AISEK, volunteer **English language learning workshops** were organized for interested students of ATS, where the guest lecturer was a student from Morocco, who through workshop work introduced the students to the culture, customs, political and geographical specificities of his country.

Our schools are involved in **E-twinning and Erasmus projects**, and numerous **researches** such as Research of the Faculty of Philosophy on the topic "Intergroup Empathy"; Pirsolvers - solving problems through cooperation, Idiomatic and similar.

At the school level, actions to **collect aid and visits to social welfare institutions** are organized every year (Shelter for children - Family Days every year, Shelter in Krfska Street, old people's homes, University Children's Clinic Tiršova).

All these activities were carried out with the aim of **promoting tolerance and understanding** towards the elderly population, people with disabilities, cultural and other diversity and gender equality. In recent years, the fact that both schools enroll an increasing number of students from Ukraine and the Russian Federation further contributes to this. In these cases, efforts are made to help students fit into the new environment, but also to affirm the spirit of cultural diversity. Thus, at Sveti Sava performances (on January 27), a special place is allocated to the performances of students who would present music, poetry and culture of his/her

country in general. This year, special attention was paid to the Day of Tolerance and the Day of Foreign Languages by organizing an event called Wealth of Diversity, where students had the opportunity to present the richness of languages and cultures of other nations through their performances.

The Architectural Technical School is recognized as a school that nurtures and encourages every **artistic expression**. The hall of the school and the walls of the staircase are **decorated** with the most **diverse student works**, models of buildings of different construction styles, fine art and graphic works in all their diversity. In the "Sveti Sava" Gymnasium, the entrance to the school is decorated with the works of the Fractal section, with vivid colors and **motivational messages that carry messages of welcome to everyone**.



SAVREMENA GYMNASIUM (Serbia)

the Buddies system, online communication, aware of continuous modeling of students' behaviors

The **vision** of the Savremena Gymnasium is to be a place where new ideas will be born, talents will be nurtured and knowledge will be improved. In this way, the diversity of students in capacities and talents is taken into account, as well as the diversity of professors who, in accordance with their personal skills, can recognize diverse talents and capacities of students.

The **mission** of the school is for students to feel and be recognized as citizens of the world who will realize their specific potential and can be a model for new generations - by following their own vision and investing effort.

The value of discovering and nurturing diversity, as well as respecting mutual values and peculiarities, is emphasized and nurtured through the **curriculum, extracurricular activities, as well as through the daily communication of professors, students and other actors of school life**. The importance of respecting the diversity of employees and students is clearly highlighted in internal documents and procedures. The school's **website** contains the Statute and Rulebook on Behavior, which describe rules, values, as well as procedures and consequences if inappropriate behavior occurs. If students or professors show discriminatory behavior, they will react in accordance with established regulations and procedures. The entry of a new employee implies the initiation of informal and official **procedures to support the adaptation** of the new member. Professors and professional assistant trainees get theirs a mentor who guides them through learning tasks from a professional framework. On the other hand, the collective of employees gladly accepts new employees, facilitating everyday life and providing support in getting used to the new environment. When a new student comes to the class, the class teacher appoints several **"buddies"**, i.e. students who will make it easier for the new member to get used to functioning at school and on vacations.

There is a **climate of cooperation**, employees feel supported by the collective -

there is mutual help. The **achievements** of students and employees are listed on the school website, as well as on class and teacher councils.

Colleagues, other professional associates work in the pedagogical - psychological service to **spread the value** of respecting diversity and getting to know one's own characteristics and qualities. Every day, by talking with students and employees, we work to foster these values. We work continuously on raising awareness of functioning based on stereotypes, in our perspective and that of colleagues. We try to be a good model for the students we work with through various projects and practices, as well as daily communication to break prejudices that come from the unknown. Work in the school's professional service involves daily contact with students, class teachers, professors, and often also students' parents. And then we should **present a model** for open communication and impartial recognition of diversity among interlocutors and collaborators.

We work with employees through **educational workshops** to raise awareness of the importance of adolescent identity, where we all need to be supportive. The topic of identity is current in work with students through regular classes, projects and workshops.



AL DI LÀ DEI SOGNI (Italy)

focus on what is needed for the lives of people to be fulfilled, importance of job security

The "Al di là dei sogni" Social Cooperative Onlus was founded by a group of young professionals in December 2004. They felt a strong need to go beyond the traditional concept of a cooperative, solely focused on providing services to individuals (referred to as Type "A" cooperatives), and instead, venture into the realm of **vocational integration** for disadvantaged and/or vulnerable individuals as a methodological tool capable of restoring dignity to people and enabling them to embark on true paths of integration and inclusion (Type "B" cooperatives). Consequently, the cooperative was established as a mixed cooperative, aiming to promote, on one hand, psychophysical well-being from a socio-assistance and/or healthcare perspective, and on the other hand, to carry out activities and services primarily focused on the educational and vocational integration of disadvantaged groups. This **dual "soul"** converges into a common denominator: the belief that at the core of all interventions, whether they are of an assistance, rehabilitation, educational, or vocational nature, lies the human being. The human being within their local community, with their experiences, history, (dis)connections, skills, and their "home." Here, "care" transforms into "inhabiting everyday life," and the environment, in its existential dimensions of time, space, and relationships, becomes a "comprehensive therapeutic environment."

This mission was further solidified in 2009 when the cooperative took on the management of a property confiscated from organized crime, comprising approximately 17 hectares of land located in Maiano di Sessa A. (CE). This property was later dedicated to the memory of an innocent victim, "Alberto Varone."

Additionally, the cooperative positions itself as a "sense organ" of the territory, capable of identifying its needs and transforming them into activities and initiatives for local development and social microeconomics. This is achieved through a network approach, collaborating with other organizations and associations within the territory. Together, they create activities for leisure, sports, education, and social promotion, as well as projects aimed at promoting and enhancing our communities and our local "milieu." "Taking care of people can only be achieved by taking care of the territories, and at the same time, the individuals who animate a territory become an integral part of the rehabilitation project for vulnerable individuals."

- ▶ As of the reference year 2022, their workforce consists of 34 employees, with an even distribution of male (16) and female (18) workers. This composition represents a commitment to **gender diversity** within their organization.
- ▶ **Age Diversity:** The staff include both younger and more experienced individuals, with 4 employees under the age of 35 and 10 employees over the age of 50. This mix of age groups contributes to a rich and dynamic work environment, fostering knowledge exchange and mentorship.
- ▶ **Hiring and Stability:** In the reference year, they welcomed 3 new employees into our cooperative, reflecting continuous efforts to expand the team and create **employment opportunities**. This includes 1 male and 2 female employees, with 1 individual under the age of 35 and 1 over the age of 50. These hires underline the commitment to providing equal opportunities regardless of age or gender.
- ▶ **Employees with Disadvantages:** their commitment to social inclusion is reflected in our **employment of individuals facing various disadvantages**. Among their 34 employees, 3 individuals are recognized as workers with certified disadvantages (as per n. 381/1991), while 2 employees are in the rehabilitation/stage phase. 3 Individuals are dealing with physical and/or sensory disabilities (as per L 381/91) and 2 Individuals are under alternative measures (as per L 381/91). This diverse workforce underscores their dedication to providing employment opportunities to individuals facing different types of disadvantages and contributes to the inclusive nature of our organization.

A commitment to **democratic and inclusive governance** has been demonstrated through **active stakeholder engagement**. The goal is to enhance representation in decision-making positions, particularly for women, youth, and other underrepresented groups. There is a presence of women in decision-making positions. Emphasis has been placed on the active involvement of employees, their professional growth, and personal well-being. Additionally, steps have been taken to reduce the presence of overqualified employees and align educational qualifications with job roles. Efforts have been directed towards maintaining and creating employment opportunities, particularly among individuals aged 20-64. Measures have been implemented to transform unstable jobs into stable ones, **enhancing job security**.

The organization is dedicated to enhancing the lives of disadvantaged individuals, including those with disabilities or in vulnerable situations. Support has been provided to facilitate **independent living and economic self-sufficiency**.

Engagement with the community is prioritized, with a focus on fostering a sense of belonging and participation. Activities aimed at community-building and social involvement have been undertaken to strengthen relationships and drive local development. Efforts have been made to recover pre-pandemic economic levels and generate economic value within the local community. The objective is not only to restore previous economic conditions but also to contribute to an increase in available income and net wealth per capita. Efforts have been made to promote environmentally responsible behaviors and increase satisfaction with the local environmental situation. These initiatives aim to enhance overall well-being by ensuring a conducive living environment.

Examples from social welfare



ASSOCIAZIONE UNIAMOCI (Italy)

gender equality, youth opportunities and diversity promotion, actual full active participation of people from vulnerable backgrounds

Uniamoci is a social promotion association operating in Palermo since 2008 in the field of social inclusion of young/adult individuals with disabilities. It carries out its activities in the areas of integration/inclusion, education, protection, and social assistance for people with disabilities, as well as youth animation and education.

Key **objectives** of our activities include:

- ▶ Creating empowerment opportunities for our users with disabilities.
- ▶ International cooperation in the field of inclusion of people with disabilities.
- ▶ Promotion of European mobility, active citizenship, and volunteering.
- ▶ Social awareness to promote inclusive attitudes.

The aim of the Uniamoci Association is to foster dialogue, analyze, understand, and accept diversity in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Diversity is a human fact, and through education and knowledge, dialogue and interaction on a multigenerational level, the principles of inclusion and tolerance are developed, respecting each individual. This contributes to the creation of a fully European society.

Our Staff: gender equality, youth opportunities and diversity promotion

The Uniamoci staff has always been characterized by the presence of young individuals, especially women. The educational staff includes three operators under the age of 30, two of whom are women and one is a man. The vice president is a woman and also serves as the project manager of the association. Uniamoci has always offered the opportunity for university students, both Italian and foreign, to undertake internships. From 2021 to 2023, a Dutch volunteer had the opportunity to be hired on a fixed-term basis for one year. Starting from 2023, Uniamoci has employed a Spanish intern for one year as a social animator. This demonstrates the association's interest in **multiculturalism**. Additionally, there are often moments

of discussion and engagement with the entire organization, with assemblies and meetings promoted to discuss activities and projects.

Equal Opportunities and Equality at Work Charter - Italian Diversity Charter

Uniamoci is a signatory of the Equal Opportunities and Equality at Work Charter - Italian Diversity Charter: a voluntary declaration of intent signed by businesses of all sizes. This charter aims to promote a corporate culture and human resource policies that are inclusive, free from discrimination and prejudice, and capable of valuing talents in all their diversity. By adopting this Charter, we intend to contribute to the **fight against all forms of discrimination** in the workplace - gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation - committing to value diversity within the organizational structure, with a particular focus on gender equality. There are approximately 900 organizations in Italy that adhere to this charter, including businesses, third-sector entities, and public institutions. Being part of this network pushes us to make even more efforts to improve our so-called D&I, which stands for Diversity and Inclusion. It is a Corporate Social Responsibility management strategy aimed at recognizing and enhancing the differences of individual employees in order to maximize each person's individual potential. This corporate strategy is called Diversity Management and includes D&I practices aimed at extracting value from diversity among employees. The latest measurement of our D&I performance (beginning of 2023) reports an overall score of: 82.7%

Palermo Green Giovani

Palermo Green Giovani is a project co-financed within the framework of the Action and Cohesion Plan - "Youth for Social" Notice 2018, issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department for Youth Policies and Universal Civil Service. It involves the participation of young people in concrete activities aimed at fostering a greater sense of civic responsibility, particularly regarding the creation of a healthier and cleaner urban environment. This environment is intended to serve as a means for **internalizing the culture of legality, inclusion, and active social participation**. The professional resources for project activities include a total of 20 individuals, consisting of 11 women and 9 men. Among these resources, 18 are young people under the age of 35, with 11 of them being women. Additionally, there are 3 individuals facing some form of disadvantage, including 2 young women with disabilities. This implies that 90% of the professional resources involved in the project fall into the category of young individuals up to the age of 35. The project appears to have a strong focus on active participation by young people, particularly young women, and on the inclusion of individuals facing disadvantages, including those with disabilities.

Young citizens

The "Young Citizens" project is a 13-month initiative aimed at promoting legality among young people through civic engagement and active participation in social issues. It focuses on cooperation in activities to support vulnerable groups, the promotion of activities that bring young people closer to institutions through peer

education and learning by doing, involving young educators and operators, as well as students from schools and universities. The project also includes activities geared towards actively engaging young people in social awareness.

This project is part of the "Youth for Social" Notice issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department for Youth and National Civil Service. "Young Citizens" project involved a total of 27 **young people as professional resources**. It is important to note that all these young people were in disadvantaged conditions, which meant they faced specific challenges and difficulties in the occupational and social context. Among these 27 young people, there were 3 young individuals with physical disabilities who held key roles such as editor, speaker, and IT communications manager. Additionally, there was one young person with psychosocial disadvantages, responsible for video editing. Furthermore, all the young people engaged in project activities were in disadvantaged occupational situations.



CENTER FOR YOUTH INTEGRATION (Serbia)

multicultural staff and multicultural activities, international events, respecting the rights of all

The **vision and mission** of the Center for Youth Integration organization reflects the appreciation of the diversity of both employees and user groups. The organization's mission is to contribute to the creation of an inclusive society in consultation with children and the community...

Through 20 years of operation, the organization has carefully developed and revised **regulations and policies**, e.g. Rulebook on work, Rulebook on internal organization and systematization and tasks, Rulebook on volunteering, Rulebook on the conduct of engaged persons in relation to the protection of children from abuse and abuse, Rulebook on the conduct of employees.

Since the establishment of the organization in 2004, there has been **no case of discrimination** against employed beneficiaries.

The team of the Center for Youth Integration consists of people of different ethnic, racial, and religious affiliations, whose cultural beliefs, rights and needs are respected and taken into account by the management.

There is a **clear hierarchy** in the organization that is defined by the Rulebook on Internal Organization, support for employees is understood regardless of the position they work in, and in addition to formal rules and regulations, **collegial and mentoring relationships** rely on a good team and good relations in the program teams. Also, considering that the user group with which employees work is recognized as a sensitive group of children, in relation to the organization's capacities, employees are provided with regular **supervision by experts**.

The organization fosters a culture of **praise, encouragement of positive initiative**

behavior and additional motivation. The professional and personal development of each member of the collective or team of the program is also encouraged.

The well-being of all employees is one of the priorities of the organization and is reflected in the **individual approach to employees** as well as in the good relations between the program coordinators and the teams.

In the organization, employee **participation** in decision-making is encouraged, **their experience and knowledge are valued**, and there are equal opportunities for everyone. In the premises of the organization there are **objects that reflect the different cultures** of employees and users. As part of the program, various activities are organized with the specific aim of promoting diversity and different cultures. Diversity, anti-discrimination, tolerance and multiculturalism are promoted through the **publications** that the organization publishes regularly. For example, materials in the organization that depict different cultures - a rainbow flag in the office, children's works that are exhibited according to programs that depict the Roma culture, we had relatively recently workshops that depict the culture of Africa and the same around France.

The Center for Youth Integration values and respects all employees, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability. The **right to privacy** is very important to the organization and all important dates and events in the employees' lives are respected, of course if these dates are shared with the rest of the team. All rights arising from employment related to important dates and events are respected. The rules of the organization prescribe the **rights of employees**, which are often broader than the rights prescribed by law. A **culture of dialogue** is fostered, which implies good communication between employees in the form of constructive discussion.

Within the organization, **cooperation** is encouraged, both in the relationship between management structures and teams, and within the program teams themselves, and each initiative is respected and considered in accordance with the organization's capabilities. **Each employee is motivated for personal and professional development**, individual achievements are valued, and there is a **fair and friendly relationship** between employees in the teams. There were no cases of mobbing in the organization, and upon entering the employment relationship, colleagues are familiarized with the organization's policies and rules regarding anti-discrimination and rules of behavior in the collective and towards users. The procedures are the same for all employees, and all employees participate in **revising policies** and regulations during the audit.

In relation to the mission and vision of the organization, but also to the user group itself, **diversity is viewed positively and encouraged.** Stereotypes do not exist or are not expressed in relationships, and the reduction of discrimination and the encouragement of diversity is contributed to through various trainings, seminars and similar activities that are encouraged.

Management is **empathetic** towards their teams and has an **unbiased attitude** about different cultures. Of course, there are situations in which ignorance of

a certain culture is reflected, but very rarely considering the experience of the employees and without offensive connotation. As mentioned, **exposure to new cultures is encouraged**. We often organize various workshops, one of our colleagues is from Mali, we have volunteers from Asia and Europe, children from different countries come to us from time to time or we send children as guests, so they always attend such events represent the cultures of countries, games are played, rehearsals are held, etc. We used to have workshops for children on the topic of Roma culture held by that famous Roma opera singer, now our colleagues who were beneficiaries and who grew up in the settlement often hold workshops on this topic.

There were NO situations in which cultural differences would have a negative impact on work and work results, nor were there any discriminatory forms of behavior. Employees are communicated with full respect for their personality and any diversity. Management positions and team members are encouraged to **constantly improve their knowledge and gain new experiences**, especially in multicultural activities. Examples of multicultural activities through which the competences of employees are strengthened - we receive various invitations for events that provide us with opportunities to interact with people from other cultures. We often visit partner organizations abroad, organize conferences, seminars, etc.. For example, we went to Spain, France, Switzerland, etc.



IL MAGO DI OZ (Italy)

customized trainings, occupational resilience

The social cooperative "Mago di Oz" in Acqui Terme was established in December 2001 with the involvement of the cooperative "CrescereInsieme," a non-profit organization in Acqui Terme, serving as a tutor and promoter. It is a type A cooperative that primarily focuses on providing services to minors facing serious family and social issues and those affected by psychopathologies. In particular, in 2002, the cooperative initiated a "Group Apartment" program for minors and young people under the care of local services or transitioning from residential facilities. In December 2007, the Therapeutic Community "La Passeggiata" was founded. Starting from March 2013, it took over the management of the "Il Mago di Oz" Residential Care Facility (CER), and in December 2013, it acquired the Cascina Gasera facility.

The project brings together specific energies and expertise with the common goal of managing an educational and therapeutic residential space for a maximum of 10 minors aged between 11 and 14 years with psychiatric issues, specifically in the area of personality disorders or pre-psychosis (severity of the clinical condition identified through Axis 1 of the ICD-10 WHO). The shared focus on therapeutic action and the prevention/recovery of psychiatric distress and disadvantage defines the common horizon and fundamental orientation that distinguishes both organizations.

The cooperative emphasizes **an inclusive approach in its governance structure**.

Currently, the Board of Directors (C.d.A.) comprises six women and one man. Furthermore, they have made significant strides in appointing individuals under 30 to key coordination roles, demonstrating a commitment to **youth inclusion**. This multi stakeholder approach to governance ensures that a **diverse range of voices is considered** in the decision-making process.

One of the cooperative's key objectives is to enhance workforce engagement and well-being. In 2022, they continued providing psychodynamic supervision support to workgroups and individuals. This initiative aids in addressing potential issues and enhancing overall well-being. The cooperative also invested in specific training programs tailored to the profession and skills of their employees. **Customized training** helps employees grow professionally, ensuring they are well-prepared for their roles. This comprehensive approach has been instrumental in retaining a highly engaged workforce.

Occupational resilience is a priority for the cooperative. In 2022, they achieved a remarkable transformation rate of 44% for employees in unstable job positions at the beginning of the year. This transformation demonstrates their commitment to providing job security and improving the quality of employment. Their efforts translate into long-term stability for their workforce.



KRIZNI CENTER ZA OTROKE IN MLADOSTNIKE MARELIČNA HIŠA (Slovenia)

using interests and everyday activities to create cultural connections

These crisis centers are intended for children and adolescents aged 6 to 18 who find themselves in acute distress, which necessitates their removal from the environment in which they reside. Children and adolescents seek help in crisis centers when they face any type of distress that they cannot resolve in their home environment, including unbearable domestic conditions (psychological and physical abuse, sexual abuse, parental alcoholism, etc.), rebellion against parents for various reasons, rejection by parents, emotional trauma, adolescent crisis, school-related problems, and more. Staying in these crisis centers is voluntary. Crisis centers for youth operate continuously, 24 hours a day. The duration of the stay lasts up to three weeks, with possible extensions in exceptional cases.

In the center, there are young people from **different backgrounds**, traditions, religions, and diverse backgrounds. For this reason, integration and acceptance of diversity are of paramount importance. The primary method for accepting one another is through **conversation**, to understand each other's differences. Various methods are also used to help the young people understand diversity. One of these is **music**. For a period of time, they collectively choose the songs that will be listened to by everyone, with each person taking turns selecting a song. This teaches the acceptance of different people's tastes.

Another method is **cooking**. In the center, the young people, along with their supervisors, prepare dinners and weekend meals together. At the beginning of

the week, they collectively decide on the menu that will be cooked for the entire week. This way, the young people learn to listen to each other and adapt to others. They also prepare dishes from different traditions to make each person feel a bit at home. Cooking is also used as therapy because it brings back memories of their own homes, evoking many memories.

Living together with others and accepting everyone's differences is a significant element in learning to tolerate one another. For many, it's also the first time they experience imposed rules and limits, so it's necessary to teach them the fundamentals of coexistence, such as personal hygiene, household chores, and house rules.

Being an employee at the center is a very demanding job with significant responsibilities. The young people come from diverse backgrounds and have various problems, some of which are quite challenging. That's why the employees are provided with a monthly '**supervision**' service, along with a psychologist. During supervision, the employee can discuss their work-related issues or personal concerns, and together they work on finding solutions.



BETA - SOCIAL COOPERATIVE (IT)

work/membership, combining social and professional aspects, qualifications and training of managers and coordinators

Beta is a Social Cooperative Company inspired by the principles of social solidarity, they have always been dedicated to the employment integration of disadvantaged individuals. 'Working Well Together' and **transforming disadvantages into resources** are the founding principles of their mission. This means respecting individuals, paying attention to the community, valuing individual skills, providing continuous training for their staff members, participatory management, and transparent operations.

They have succeeded in becoming a flexible, competent, dynamic, efficient, and community-sensitive organization operating in various sectors, such as green maintenance, ecological services management, moving services, interior finishing, cleaning, cemetery services, meal services, catering, assembly, park security, call centers, school services, logistics.

'Working Well Together' for them means:

- ▶ Transmitting to the community a way of thinking and acting that arises from internal dialogue and sharing. Values and ethical principles underlie the goals and entrepreneurial choices of our cooperative.
- ▶ Developing more appropriate processes of social dignity through human promotion and social integration of citizens, also in collaboration with other stakeholders.
- ▶ Adding value and purpose to employment to promote social growth.
- ▶ Working to ensure the fundamental rights and dignity of individuals, to promote autonomy, growth, social integration, and to improve the quality of life.

- ▶ Creating social networks composed of institutions and individuals to realize the ideal of shared quality in content and operational methods: designing and managing services, activating territorial processes, acquiring awareness and work-related competence.
- ▶ Producing competence and social development by combining social and professional aspects, providing disadvantaged individuals and disabled persons with an opportunity for improvement and socio-professional integration, while ensuring a high level of service quality to both public and private companies.
- ▶ Valuing each individual's characteristics in a way that allows everyone to express their potential and perform tasks that suit them best.
- ▶ Beta's Management.

From a structural point of view, the democracy of action and the ability to engage and include - keywords for a social enterprise - can be sought and practiced at the level of the company's governance. Beta has an **internal regulation** that defines all the rules for admission as a member of the cooperative. All new hires also become members of the cooperative, and the share capital is the same, regardless of the role held and whether one is disadvantaged or not. The fact that all workers are also members is an expression of the centrality of the worker. Each worker has the opportunity to actively participate in the life of the cooperative, acting as a member even during decision-making moments, typically during the annual assembly.

The **employment integration of individuals with vulnerabilities** and disabilities is a constant objective for us, and we strive for the integration of individuals into our activities and the services we provide. "In 2022, we have 18 employment paths for individuals with social vulnerabilities, and there are 41 individuals with social disadvantages (20 with psychiatric conditions, 8 with dependencies, and 10 with physical disabilities). Additionally, 9 individuals under the age of 30 were hired."

Diversification of work & trainings: Cooperative Beta's mission is to activate pathways aimed at the socio-employment integration of individuals with vulnerabilities and/or social disadvantages. Thanks to the variety of services provided, the cooperative is capable of accommodating individuals with very diverse needs. The integration of individuals with vulnerabilities and disadvantages is achieved through **individual projects** that are constantly monitored to ensure the best working conditions for each person.

Particular attention is given to the **training activities** carried out during the year for worker-members, falling within both mandatory training (as per the State-Regions Agreement) and supplementary training specific to each activity and sector. Special emphasis is placed on the training and updating of **Area Managers and coordinators** in various production sectors. This represents an investment in human resources carried out during the fiscal year and is beneficial to the cooperative, with future exercises in mind. The training actions primarily involve updating on specific topics and are conducted through occasional courses, seminars, and workshops.

Organizational Climate Analysis at Beta Social Cooperative: The results obtained

from the administration of the survey among the worker-members of Beta Social Cooperative, as reported in the 2022 Social Report, reflect a positive work environment and a good organizational climate. Here are some of the key findings:

- ▶ **Motivation** of worker-members: 88% of the surveyed worker-members consider themselves motivated to perform their work well. This data suggests that the majority of cooperative members are engaged and motivated in their roles.
- ▶ **Support from superiors:** 91% of worker-members report that they can rely on the assistance of their superiors in times of difficulty. This indicates a good relationship between leaders and workers, with a culture of support and openness to problem-solving.

These results suggest that Beta Social Cooperative has created a work environment where employees feel motivated, supported, and heard by their superiors. A positive organizational climate can contribute to employee well-being and overall productivity within the organization. However, it is important to **continue monitoring** the organizational climate and strive for continuous improvement to ensure a healthy and productive work environment for all worker-members.

Corporate Ethics: **Corporate transparency** is enacted through management systems, procedures, and the relationship with workers. Democratic and participatory management is ensured by the very methods of participation of all members in the life of the cooperative. They take care of the dimension, territoriality, and specialization of the cooperative, working together with our reference territorial networks. The values they adhere to are listed in the Ethical Code promoted by Federsolidarietà, their representative body within Confcooperative.

To uphold the values that inspire Beta, an important goal is the **qualification** of active human resources, especially in the management and coordination of services. Individuals in roles with such responsibilities must have adequate training, as well as recognized specific and cross-functional competencies. In this regard, the data on Beta's human resources who possess an appropriate educational background is of value.



BETADUE (Italy)

strong monitoring of policies implementation, fair treatment of all

Betadue, established in 1998, is a Type B social cooperative dedicated to workforce integration and inclusion. They achieve this mission by managing various services such as green area maintenance, cleaning, urban hygiene services, collective catering, logistics, and front/back-office services for both public and private enterprises. In the year 2022, Betadue played a significant role in providing employment opportunities for 549 individuals, including 141 individuals with disadvantages (with at least 46% recognized civil disability), and they achieved a remarkable turnover of over 18 million euros. Their operations extended across the provinces of Arezzo and Florence, as well as other regions in Tuscany and Umbria.

Betadue's primary objective remains the creation of employment opportunities under the best possible conditions for individuals with limited contractual opportunities. To achieve this, the cooperative initiated various development pathways in 2022, aiming to enhance their attractiveness, organizational structure, and sustainability while continuing their focus on workforce integration.

The purpose of Betadue's **policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion** is to create a work environment that is aware and open to diversity, where relationships are guided by respect for human dignity, and where each individual's uniqueness is genuinely valued. This policy applies to all members, governing bodies, employees, and anyone collaborating with Betadue in any capacity. The cooperative commits to disseminating and communicating the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy through appropriate channels for knowledge, training, and awareness.

In line with its own Code of Ethics, Betadue is guided by the principle of **impartiality** and does not tolerate any form of direct or indirect discrimination based on age, gender, affectional orientation, health status, disability, neurodiversity, ethnic origin, skin color, nationality, political beliefs, religious faith, culture, union affiliation, marital status, or any other personal characteristic. Any act of bullying, psychological or physical harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, intimidation, threats, insults, or victimization against any collaborator or stakeholder is not tolerated. Anyone who becomes a victim of such acts or directly witnesses them is obligated to report them to their supervisor, the human resources department, or the oversight body, which will take appropriate action based on the report.

Structure and Composition of Members: Betadue is a type B social cooperative with a robust organizational structure. Within it, there are 343 members, of which 141 are **workers who belong to disadvantaged categories**, while 202 are workers who do not belong to such categories. The cooperative also has 17 volunteer members and 2 supporting members. Betadue's Board of Directors (BOD) consists of 18 members, evenly divided between men and women, with an average age of 46 years. The composition of the BOD follows criteria defined by an electoral regulation that ensures equitable gender representation and representation of different work areas within the cooperative. Moreover, the BOD is regularly renewed, with at least 20% of new members in each election.

Equal Opportunity Policy: Betadue's commitment is to promote a workplace environment where equal opportunities and fairness are favored in all roles and at all stages of employment, including recruitment and selection, hiring, training, development, and cessation. The personnel selection policy is based on merit recognition while respecting equal opportunities. This translates into a transparent assessment of candidates' aspirations, potential, skills, and abilities.

Betadue's **remuneration policies** are based on principles of fairness and aim to value the skills, knowledge, competencies, professionalism, and aptitudes of each member. The human resources management and development strategy focuses on enhancing individual specificities, ensuring equal opportunities for professional growth for everyone, including career advancements, horizontal development, and training programs.

Betadue is firmly **committed** to combating all forms of discrimination and promoting a respectful and inclusive work environment. The cooperative adopts concrete measures to ensure that each member is treated fairly and respectfully. Betadue has also established a **College of Probiviri** and a **Supervisory Body** to ensure compliance with these principles and the proper functioning of the organization.



DAILY CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS – PETKA (Slovenia)

integration of youth from social welfare system into the community

The Daily Center for Children and Adolescents Koper - PetKA is a preventive and social care program of the Center for Social Work Južna Primorska, Unit Koper. Its content includes preventive and educational activities as well as psychosocial assistance for children and adolescents from the City Municipality of Koper and the Municipality of Ankaran. It is intended for children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 18 who seek a higher quality of spending their free time, for those who face challenges in social inclusion, difficulties in growing up, are deprived of a suitable family life, experience behavioral and emotional issues, and require assistance and support in addressing their problems.

In addition to psychosocial support, the daily center offers and provides educational assistance and help with schoolwork to children and adolescents. Through guided, organized leisure activities, individual discussions, and other assistance from staff and volunteers, children and adolescents work on their homework during the school year, acquire study habits, overcome learning deficiencies, actively spend their free time, try out various roles, learn social skills, discover their desires and interests, identify their strengths, deepen self-awareness and interpersonal relationships, expand their social networks, set future goals, and gain positive life experiences. During vacation periods, it provides children and adolescents with free, quality, organized, and active leisure time in the company of their peers.

An increasing number of families are struggling to make ends meet, and this is also the case in Slovenia. Therefore, their association has decided to organize support for financially disadvantaged families and individuals in the form of food packages. Through the "SHARING FOOD IS COOL", project, they aim to provide additional support to the most vulnerable families and individuals while reducing stigmatization. Despite the global recession, they are fortunate to live in a relatively favorable social environment that has surplus food stocks, which are dedicated to humanitarian purposes. The project has gained broad support from various companies and has become a regular initiative. Every week, surplus products and food nearing their expiration date are redistributed for charitable purposes, reducing the expenses of the poorest households.

The center organizes various sports activities. The diving section of the SPM Society organizes diving for underprivileged youth. This form of autonomous diving has

become a supportive method for working with young people who are served within the framework of social work centers.

The purpose of conducting their own education for professional staff and volunteers of the Preventive Programs for Youth in Slovenia is to raise the professional level of program implementation in the most cost-effective manner and in accordance with the expressed need for specific knowledge required in working with children and adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds who face challenges in their upbringing.

The fundamental basis of the PROJECT FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL ISSUES is to create conditions with a specific method to achieve changes in both the environment and the individual. These changes will enable improvements in opportunities, social status, access to resources, and, in turn, ensure greater social inclusion. The purpose of using atypical working methods is to create specific conditions in which professional intervention yields better results. This is because it involves users who are not prepared, do not wish, or do not feel the need to engage in other forms of psychosocial assistance. They may also assess that such intervention would be beneficial in achieving a more effective and quicker desired specific change.

Another project is the FUSBALIGA project is a league of daily and youth centers in table football. In parallel with FUSBALIGA, there will be additional social activities, including target shooting, slacklining, floorball, juggling, etc. At the final event, all the social activities that were actually implemented during the league will also be available. The goals we aim to achieve in the project are: Networking and connecting youth centers, reducing the number of hours young people spend on their phones and increasing social interaction among them, activating those young people who spend their time unproductively on the streets and are not involved in any organized activities, strengthening the sense of fair play, promoting a healthy lifestyle and enhancing well-being. In line with these objectives, they place competitiveness in a secondary role. Nevertheless, it is part of the sport and leads us to the finals and the ultimate winner.



STANOVANJSKA SKUPINA VAL (Slovenia)

individualized approach in supporting mental health issues

Stanovanjska skupina VAL is a program that provides services to users, adults with long-term mental health issues, disorders in mental development, combined disorders and issues, who are residents of the City Municipality of Koper. The program is implemented in a residential house in Koper, providing accommodation and residence for ten users. The primary goal of the VAL program is to provide individuals with long-term mental health issues and those with disorders in mental development the opportunity to reintegrate into a local, socially familiar environment and to sustain independent living outside of traditional institutions. Therefore, the main objective of the program is community inclusion, with an emphasis on enabling active, high-quality, and

as independent as possible living, or transitioning to other housing groups with less support, or even to independent living.

The program included regular weekly or monthly activities and group-level activities, such as weekly group meetings of all users, monthly meetings to review the progress of the month and plan for the next one, weekly group meal planning, grocery shopping, and cleaning, daily duty tasks, maintaining personal space cleanliness, general cleaning of common areas, birthday celebrations, a hairdressing workshop, thematic creative workshops, resident meetings on the Resident Council, group city walks, playing board games, half-day group outings, and group meetings with the psychiatrist.

A significant emphasis was placed on the execution of the "Beautiful Day for You" project, in which 20 acts of kindness were carried out in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the program's operation. Through the project's activities, they interacted with various services and individuals living in their community, forming new connections or strengthening existing collaborations. To promote and destigmatize the program and its users, they also created a Facebook page for people to follow the program and its activities.

The program also organized various activities to engage users in the community and encourage active and quality leisure time. They attended various local events, including "Altroke Sladka Istra," the Istran Carnival Parade, Agriculture Days in Slovenian Istria, and events in other coastal towns. They also went on short trips to places like Portorož, Divača (visiting a residential group in Kras), and Štanjel.

By participating in local events and visiting new places, the residents gained valuable experiences, new knowledge, and connected with people, contributing significantly to destigmatizing mental health in society.

Long-term members of the Sožitje Society attended various events, such as hikes, performances, and trips organized by the Society. Additionally, a resident who remains a member of the Šent Society also attended individual events and celebrations. The SS Val program supports these types of activities and aims to continue collaborating with other services in their community that focus on mental health.

On an individual level, as usual, in the past months, they achieved and operationalized short-term and long-term goals defined in individual plans. They provided assistance and support in various areas, including advocating for rights and benefits under legislation, handling bill payments, managing health insurance, managing personal finances, adherence to medication regimens, maintaining psychophysical health, maintaining contact with family and important others, and community inclusion.

The program maintained an individualized approach, tailoring activities and approaches based on each individual's needs, preferences, and goals.

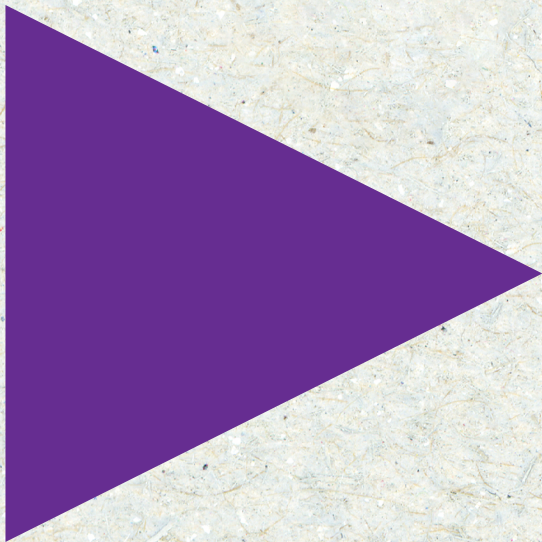
The program continued its monthly meetings with the psychiatric doctor in 2023.

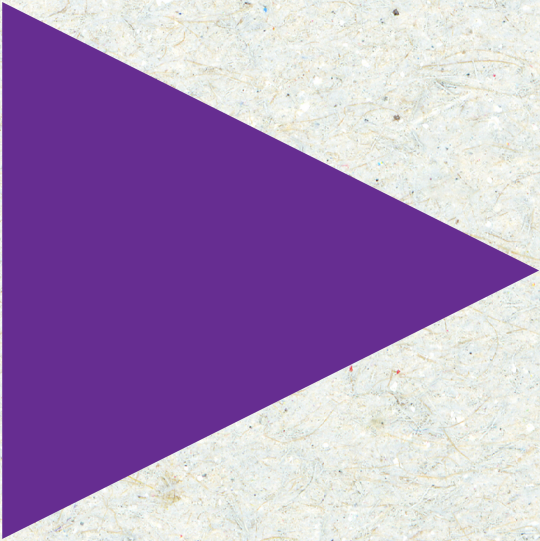
The SS Val staff, in collaboration with colleagues from the DDTC Barčica and external providers (psychiatrist, professional staff from the Koper Unit, and others), offered comprehensive care to residents, successfully addressing and resolving any deterioration in psychophysical conditions.



examples from national frameworks for diversity practice in Serbia, Italy and Slovenia

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Introduction

The diversity fostering practice is always colored with the national context, and the national context is partially colored with the international trends. So, the setting in which an organisation/institution is trying to improve its diversity fostering efforts is relevant in a way that the context could determine which initiatives will be more accepted in the concrete timing, or which initiatives are urgent to implement. On the other hand, those contexts that differ from ours can provide us with inspiration about what can we learn and bring to our local and national communities. This is why in this 3rd part of the Good practice collection, we provided with an exploration of our 3 countries' frameworks for diversity fostering practice. Here, you will find the current aspirations of larger institutions/organisations in these countries, that are in the field of diversity fostering in practice. You will find examples of models, publications, activities and more.

National framework for diversity practice in Serbia

Ana Paraušić Marinković

One of the important indicators of the implementation of the DEI concept in the three sectors: education, social work and youth work, is the way in which this issue is approached by institutions (state, regional, international) and civil society organizations (CSOs). Therefore, in the following, we will provide an overview of various activities (projects, programs, initiatives, opinions, etc.) that are in the function of promoting the DEI model, and whether this model could be recognized through climate, culture and competencies. One of the important remarks is that most of these activities were implemented or intended in the education sector, while we could recognize the components of the DEI model in social work and youth work to a significantly lesser extent.

Education

One of the long-term priorities of education policy in the Republic of Serbia is to ensure quality, equality, equity and accessibility in the system, as well as efficiency and competitiveness in the European educational framework. There are a number of measures that should be implemented in order to contribute to the achievement of this goal:

- ▶ increasing inclusion of children/students with developmental disabilities, children/students with disabilities and children/students from vulnerable social groups through education;
- ▶ preventing any form of discrimination in education;
- ▶ developing professional competencies of employees in education to support changes and development of inclusiveness of educational institutions;

- ▶ ensuring the quality of content, methods and forms of work, which will be in the function of guiding the development, participation and learning of children/students, especially those children/students who need special support;
- ▶ ensuring the conditions for the development and sustainability of a coherent inclusive culture, policy and practice in educational institutions.

Based on the search of non-formal resources of different institutions, it is evident that education is the area in which the implementation of the DEI concept has been continuously implemented, with more or less success. International and regional organizations are extremely engaged in the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion in various aspects of society. Among these actors, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and the British Council stand out. At the national level, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Team for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction of the Government of the Republic of Serbia etc. implemented or supported numerous projects in the field of DEI. The non-governmental sector is also extremely active in this area, and there are a large number of projects implemented by various non-governmental organizations in order to promote diversity in education. We grouped all identified resources according to several areas: inclusive education, intercultural education and competences, democratic culture and others.

Inclusive education

UNICEF has prepared a series of materials (manuals and webinars) in the field of inclusive education. The aim of these resources is to help UNICEF staff and partners better understand the importance of working with parents, families and communities in the process of implementing inclusive education, with an emphasis on children with disabilities. Various issues in the field of inclusive education are addressed in the handbooks.

The manual **Conceptualizing inclusive education and its contextualization within the UNICEF Mission** deals with the following topics: · Why inclusive education is important. · What is and what is not inclusive education. · How inclusive education relates to UNICEF's mission, including UNICEF's disability and education agendas. · UNICEF's latest activities regarding inclusive education at the global and regional level.

The manual **Parent, Family and Community Participation in Inclusive Education** covers the following topics: · Why the participation of parents and organizations from the community is fundamentally important for education, and especially significant in the case of children with developmental disabilities and their families. · Different approaches to family and community engagement that support inclusion and approaches that make such engagement effective and meaningful for all parties. · How to identify family and community capital that can help in the process of implementing inclusive education in practice. · Successful examples from practice in different regions of the world where parents and social organizations actively supported inclusive education.

The topics in focus of the manual **Teachers, inclusive teaching and child-centered pedagogy** are: · profile of teachers for inclusive practice; · different views on

special educational needs; • teaching approaches for children with developmental disabilities in regular education; • models of preparing students - future teachers to work in an inclusive environment; • strategies for providing support and training for teachers already working in an inclusive environment.

Numerous international and European projects focused on the topic of inclusive education. The joint European Union and Council of Europe Project “*Regional Support for Inclusive Education*” in South East Europe was a three year project (1 January 2013 - 30 November 2015)¹ that aimed to promote the concept of inclusive education as an approach that respects and takes care about diversity among all students, with a special focus on those who are at greater risk of marginalization and exclusion. For participation in the project, 49 pilot schools were selected and received a small grant to design and implement a project related to inclusive education within their school and community.

In order to foster mutual learning, professional development and the sharing of experiences among the pilot schools, the project established a regional Inclusive SchoolNetwork with 245 members (teachers, school directors, parents, students and local community representatives), and an Inclusive TeacherNetwork. Furthermore, the Inclusive Policy Network was created as an overarching platform that brought together representatives of the Inclusive SchoolNet and Inclusive TeacherNet as well as other relevant stakeholders to act jointly in the area of public policy for inclusive education.

One of the project results was the *Tool to Upgrade Teacher Education Practices for Inclusive Education* which was promoted as useful for any provider of teacher education who wishes to reflect on their practices with the aim of improving them or aligning them with the principles of inclusive education. The tool helps structuring this effort by setting out the different steps allowing a comprehensive review of what teachers need to be able to do as part of their inclusive practices and how teacher education activities can help develop these abilities.

The tool has two parts. The first part describes the procedure of upgrading as a sequence of activities that the users of this tool can get involved in. It guides the users through a problem-solving cycle with six stages: Problem Identification, Needs Assessment, Goals and Objectives, Educational Strategies, Implementation, Evaluation and Feedback. The second part describes the framework for inclusive practices. Based on the work of the European Agency on the profile of inclusive teachers (2012), a framework was developed to describe the practices of inclusive teachers.

Inclusion and Diversity in Education: Guidelines for Inclusion and Diversity in Schools is a manual resulting from the British Council project *Inclusion and Diversity in Education (INDIE)* in which 11 countries from Western Europe

¹ Project was implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia and Kosovo*.

participated.² In each country between 3 and 5 schools were included, and in each school 10-20 young leaders have been identified and one coordinator with commitment and support from the school leadership and from the relevant education authority (national, regional or local). The aims of the project are: 1) To develop best practice and shared guidelines for policy makers and head teachers on building and developing culturally inclusive schools; 2) To develop and express student voice through a charter which will be implemented through projects and activities.

In the manual, a model of a culturally inclusive school was presented. Model consists of the context of the school (legal, policy and funding environment and community support) and aspects of best practice for inclusion. The prerequisites for a culturally inclusive school are: Developing leadership for inclusion and diversity, High expectations and achievement for all, Responds positively to diversity, Encouraging innovation and change, Learner voice, Ethos of respect, Culturally inclusive curriculum, Engaging Parents, carers and families, Staff learning for inclusion and diversity.

After the basic elements of the model have been described, the procedure for implementing the model in schools is presented. *School Improvement Cycle* is a tool based on monitoring the school's progress in implementing the model through self-evaluation. The Cycle has following steps: Audit (where are we now?); Identifying outcomes (where do we want to be in short term (within one year) and longterm (within three years); Action planning (how will we get to where we want to be); Monitoring progress (how do we know whether we are on track?); Evaluating progress (have we achieved what we set out to achieve).

The Organization for European Security and Cooperation (OECD) has also supported activities to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. Project *Strength through Diversity: Education for Inclusive Societies* examines different dimensions of diversity in student populations, such as migration, ethnic groups, national minorities and Indigenous peoples; gender; gender identity and sexual orientation; special education needs; as well as giftedness. The Project plans to explore how these dimensions intersect with one another and with broader factors of socioeconomic status and geographic location (i.e. if a student attends school in an urban or rural area). A holistic approach to analyze diversity in education bringing together its different dimensions under a single analytical framework is proposed.

The purpose of the Project is to answer two overarching questions:

- 1) How can education systems support the learning and well-being outcomes of diverse populations and be more inclusive?
- 2) How can education systems support all individuals so that they are able to engage with others in increasingly diverse and complex societies?

The Project draws on different strands of research to bring together studies on diversity, equity and inclusion. It looks at issues related to the definition of

² Spain, Portugal, Scotland, Greece, Belgium, Italy, England, Malta, Netherlands, Germany, Wales.

educational objectives and standards, the organization of schooling, resource allocation and trade-offs countries face in striving for inclusion in education. Emphasis is also put on the governance challenges related to the development of coherent and comprehensive approaches aimed at serving diverse populations in coordination with other areas of policy making including health and social services.

To ensure inclusive and equitable approaches in education systems, reflecting on the following 5 elements is crucial:

1. That an overall, systemic framework for governing diversity, inclusion and equity in education are designed (Issue 1: Governance);
2. That resources are used effectively to support diversity, inclusion and equity in education (Issue 2: Resourcing);
3. That the system is able to build capacity for all stakeholders to support diversity, inclusion and equity in education (Issue 3: Capacity Development);
4. That schools provide effective interventions to support diversity, inclusion and equity in education (Issue 4: School-level Interventions);
5. That processes and outcomes are monitored and evaluated to support diversity, inclusion and equity in education (Issue 5: Monitoring and Evaluation).

Education trade unions and inclusive education: embracing diversity in education - Etuce)

ETUCE is a project aimed at reinforcing the capacity of education trade unions to prepare their affiliates to address the socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and other types of diversity in the classroom and in society and to support them in implementing inclusive learning environments enabling every student and teacher to achieve their full potential.

The main objectives of this research are:

1. to identify national findings related to the impact of the changes in society and the labour market linked to the diversification of the population, globalization, increased migration, technological progress and digitalisation, intensification of poverty and territorial disparities, on the education and teaching profession.
2. to identify specific training needs and interests of education trade unions regarding the support for teachers, academics and other education personnel in working with a diverse student population and implementing inclusive education.
3. to identify successful, innovative and transferrable good practices of creating and maintaining sustainable inclusive learning environments in various national and local contexts.

Bearing in mind the paradigm shifts in education from homogeneity³, through

³ Differences are not acknowledged; Learners grouped in an educational institution are perceived to be similar and therefore receive the same approach and support.

heterogeneity⁴ to diversity⁵, The **Joint Statement on Inclusive Schools** was created, in which key elements of inclusive schools within the context of diverse societies are outlined:

1. Clear vision and definition of inclusive education;
2. Existence of frameworks and mechanisms to support the implementation of inclusive education, accompanied by sufficient resourcing;
3. Embracing diversity;
4. Democratic culture in education institutions, including the meaningful participation of teachers and education personnel as well as learners in decision-making processes and in evaluation and improvement processes in education institutions;
5. Initial teacher training and continuous professional development of all teaching professionals, whereby learning about and practicing inclusive education is key;
6. Availability of teacher support personnel and mechanisms;
7. Sufficient time to implement an inclusive education approach;
8. Recruitment and personnel retention policies in the education sector;
9. Designing appropriate teaching-learning aids, equipment and approaches
10. Safe and healthy working and learning environments, free from harassment and bullying;
11. Cooperation as an essential component in implementing inclusive education meaningfully and effectively;
12. Adequate governance models at education institutional level and whole-school approach;
13. Adequate assessment and monitoring systems.

The project emphasizes the importance of **training and professional development** of all employees in education, and the results of the research indicated that the priority areas for improvement are the following:

- ▶ To deliver more inclusive support for students with special needs.
- ▶ To provide support on how to manage 'difficult situations' in the classroom (addressing disruptive behaviour, bullying, etc.).
- ▶ To appropriately manage an increasing workload.
- ▶ To teach in multicultural settings and manage and encourage intercultural dialogue (e.g. better understand interactions between learners from different cultures).
- ▶ To create a safe and healthy learning and working environment free from harassment and bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- ▶ To implement a whole-school approach for inclusive education.
- ▶ To use ICT tools, digital technologies and media to foster inclusion in education.
- ▶ To implement participatory and collaborative learning approaches with the

4 Differences are seen as challenges to be dealt with; Learners are perceived to be different. Adjustments are made to come to terms with their different needs.

5 Differences are seen as an asset and opportunity; Learners are perceived to be different. Their difference serves as a resource for individual and mutual learning and development.

view to strengthen the joint work of learners from diverse backgrounds.

► To recognise and better understand hidden biases and stereotypes in curricula, educational and research material.

Eu-convince (EU COmmon Values INClusive Education)

EU-CONVINCE project aims to provide teachers, other educational staff, school leaders, as well as the community of educational institutions as a whole with tools and methods for implementing inclusive education for all and better solving issues related to citizenship, both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities. The project is a direct response to current challenges, but also to the possibilities of multiculturalism, diversity and social inclusion. The project covers the following topics:

1. Civic education and democratic school culture;
2. Teaching in the context of multicultural learning for intercultural dialogue;
3. Teaching controversial and sensitive issues;
4. E-security issues: misinformation, digital responsibility and ICT critical thinking;
5. School management and "whole school approach";
6. Inclusive education as a means of preventing violent radicalization and extremism.

The main findings of the EU-CONVINCE project are that teachers, researchers, managers in educational institutions and other educational staff face a **lack of support or inclusion**, e.g. through **teaching assistants** or **intercultural mediators**. The Joint Statement on Inclusive Schools adopted by the project partners calls for free initial and ongoing teacher training on democratic citizenship and inclusive education that equips teachers with relevant skills and competencies to manage diversity in classrooms and promote mutual respect, intercultural understanding and intercultural dialogue.

Various attempts have been made to define **key competences for teachers in inclusive education settings**. One example is the profile of inclusive teachers, developed by the European Agency in 2012. The profile was developed with the involvement of teachers and other experts from 25 countries and as a guide for the design and implementation of initial teacher education programmes, around core values and areas of competence:

- Valuing learner diversity. The areas of competence within these core values relate to conceptions of inclusive education and the teacher's view of learner difference.
- Supporting all learners. Areas of competences within this core value relate to promoting the academic, practical, social and emotional learning of all learners and effective teaching approaches in heterogeneous classes.
- Working with others. Areas of competences related to this are working with parents and families and working with a range of other teaching professionals.
- Personal professional development. Areas of competence within this core value relate to teachers as reflective practitioners and initial teacher education as a foundation for ongoing professional learning and development.

When we address the national level, the **Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development** has a section on inclusive education on its website.

⁶Inclusive education in the Republic of Serbia is seen as a process that responds to the different needs of all children, youth and adults, through a continuous increase in participation in learning and a progressive reduction of exclusion from education. It is emphasized that the Ministry is intensively creating conditions for inclusive education, which includes improved mechanisms for supporting children from vulnerable groups, including students with developmental disabilities, students belonging to the Roma national minority, students from socially deprived areas, migrant students and others who need support. The goal of inclusive education is to provide quality education for everyone under equal conditions, because the right to education is a universal human right guaranteed by ratified international documents, the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and laws that regulate the field of education.

The **law** sets the key mechanisms for the implementation of inclusive education: inclusive education teams and support teams for children and students; individual educational plans; interdepartmental commissions for assessing the need for additional support at the local level, which include the education, social protection and health care. Interdepartmental cooperation and institutional capacities for management, coordination, monitoring and implementation of inclusive educational policies have been established. Teacher competencies and the quality of work in educational institutions have increased, as well as the participation of parents in deciding on the child's further education.

Respect for the **principles of education and upbringing**, which include the development of inclusivity in educational institutions, is prescribed by the existing legal framework of the Republic of Serbia, but practice shows that in this area it mostly remains at the declarative level. The current situation may be the result of various factors (inadequate initial education of teachers and professional associates, lack of professional literature, prejudices, underdeveloped teamwork in institutions, inflexible work organization, lack of financial resources, etc.).

In the previous period, there was not enough systemic support for the development of **inclusive policy and practice** in education. Key experiences and results in the development of the inclusiveness of educational institutions in the Republic of Serbia were achieved within the framework of projects and programs, the bearer of which was the non-governmental sector and were realized in cooperation with kindergartens, schools, local self-governments, relevant ministries and scientific institutions. The Ministry of Education incorporated the best solutions, models and effects, which were tested in projects and programs for the development of inclusive education, into new legal and by-law documents.

Recognizing the need to implement measures to develop the inclusiveness of educational institutions in Serbia, the **Institute for Evaluation of the Quality of Education**, through a project supported by Save the Children UK, translated and adapted the Index for Inclusion to the national context. After an intensive

6 <https://mpn.gov.rs/prosveta/obra%20D1%95ovanje-i-ljudska-i-manjinska-prava/inkluzivno-obrazovanje/>

process of adapting the instrument, a total of 44 indicators and 650 questions were obtained, which are in the function of research and development of school inclusiveness.

The **Manual for the implementation of the Index for Inclusion** is intended for all school staff, school management bodies and educational advisors, and its comprehensiveness and internal consistency ensure the planning and implementation of a wide range of activities for the development of school inclusiveness. In a broader sense, this toolkit provides enough information about inclusion in education, so that it can be used successfully even by those who do not have enough experience in this field. According to the statements of a large number of previous users, the instrument provided helped them to understand the essence of inclusion in education, which is the basis for professional planning and action. The index offers schools useful suggestions for managing the processes of self-evaluation and development planning, which include the opinions, knowledge and attitudes of all school employees, students, parents/guardians, representatives of the local community.

The index is intended for planning, implementing and monitoring activities within the inclusive approach through three dimensions - inclusive culture, inclusive policy and inclusive practice. An inclusive culture leads to the creation and development of a safe, stimulating community, in which every person is respected, and which is the foundation for the highest achievements of all community members. It develops common inclusive values, which are transferred to all new team members, students, parents/guardians and members of the school administration. The principles and values of an inclusive school culture guide decision-making about school policy and every moment of practice in classrooms, so that school development becomes a continuous process. The inclusive policy ensures that inclusion pervades all school plans. The school policy encourages the participation of students and staff in the school from the moment they arrive at the school, reaches out to all students in the local community and reduces the pressures that lead to the exclusion of individuals. The entire policy implies commitment to change and the existence of clear strategies for change. All activities that increase the school's ability to respond to diversity among students are considered support. All forms of support were developed according to inclusive principles and united in a common development framework. Inclusive practice develops school practices that reflect the school's inclusive culture and policy. Classes are designed to respect the diversity of students. Students are encouraged to actively participate in all aspects of their education, which draws on their knowledge and experience outside of school. School staff identify human and material resources that can be mobilized and used to support learning and participation.

Table 1: Index for Inclusion dimensions

Inclusive culture	Inclusive policy	Inclusive practice
1. Building community	1. Creating school for all	1. Organization of learning
2. Establishing inclusive values	2. Organizing support for diversity	2. Mobilization of resources

Each area in the three dimensions contains between 5 and 11 indicators of inclusive development. These are statements that express desirable, expected conditions and are compared with the existing conditions in the school, in order to determine priorities in the development of the institution. Each indicator represents an important aspect of school functioning, although sometimes the importance of a certain topic (for example, respect for nationality, gender or disabilities) can be seen in a larger number of indicators. The Manual describes in detail how to use the index as a means of self-evaluation of the school's work, from the assessment of the current situation, through the creation of an inclusive school development plan, the implementation of priorities, to the monitoring and evaluation of work with the Index for Inclusion.

The project Improved **equal access and completion of pre-university education for children who need additional educational support - Learning together**, is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and UNICEF with the support of the Delegation of the European Union in Serbia. The goal of the project is to improve equal access and quality of pre-university education for children from vulnerable groups. The project focuses on increasing the number of children with developmental disabilities who are enrolled in the regular education system and at the same time reducing the number of children with developmental disabilities who are educated in special educational institutions. This will be achieved by improving the quality of learning and increasing resources and additional support for children and teachers in regular schools by building an enabling, stimulating and supportive learning environment. Interventions, both in regular and special schools, will be aimed at building the capacity of teachers and professional associates. The capacity of local communities and interdepartmental commissions to provide well-designed, appropriate and tailored additional support for each child who needs additional support will be improved. It is expected that the project will directly influence the further development and strengthening of the institutional, legal and strategic framework for the implementation, monitoring and coordination of inclusive education in Serbia, which will benefit all educational institutions and children during pre-university education.

The project will cover at least 10 percent of schools in Serbia through strengthening the competences of 4,000 experts from education and other fields, as well as about 1,000 professionals from all interdepartmental commissions in Serbia. It is planned to support the development of professional learning communities and mentoring support for educators through model-institutions for inclusive education, the work of advisors-expert associates, activities of resource centres and the work of 20 networks of inclusive education in municipalities that will be directly involved in the project. The project will contribute to the establishment of three resource centres and the procurement of assistive technologies to support education for students with developmental disabilities, and will also support the work of the National Coalition for Inclusive Education.

The **Social inclusion and poverty reduction Unit** of Government of Republic of Serbia strives to achieve a positive impact on changes in attitudes and values related to the inclusion of all vulnerable groups in education by spreading the

vision of inclusive education, in order to enable their advancement and learning with their peers. The Unit strives to improve the position of vulnerable groups in the education system of Serbia through various activities:

- ▶ providing support to the Government of the Republic of Serbia in the development of a strategic and normative framework in the field of inclusive education harmonized with the standards of the European Union;
- ▶ strengthening the capacity of employees in education to create policies based on the findings of analysis and research;
- ▶ improving cooperation between the academic and research community, policy makers and practitioners as a prerequisite for improving the process of responsible creation of public policies;
- ▶ promotion of new technologies in education, assistive technologies and digital inclusion;
- ▶ providing support to all interested actors for access to various sources of financing in order to improve the quality of work.

The program **Improvement of policies and practices of inclusive education in local communities** consists of projects in five cities (Belgrade, Zrenjanin, Kikinda, Subotica, Šabac) implemented by parent and teacher clubs, within which innovative models of educational support for children/students from vulnerable groups were developed, with support of Social inclusion and poverty reduction Unit.

Each of the implemented projects in five cities dealt with the challenges in inclusive education recognized in its local community, based on the collected data and conversations with partners. The basic premise is that each local self-government has its own specificities, population structure and different needs, and in planning educational policies, it is necessary to recognize what local needs and how, in cooperation with other sectors, to ensure the coordinated implementation of policies and measures, which are directly or indirectly concerning education and upbringing.

The general goal of the program is to improve the social inclusion of children/students and vulnerable groups through the development of innovative models of educational support. The specific goals of this program are:

- ▶ development of cooperation between different partners for the welfare of the child/student or adult;
- ▶ ensuring access to education and quality of education for all children/students;
- ▶ collecting data for further development of inclusive policy and practice;
- ▶ response to the educational needs of children/students from vulnerable groups in the situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Parents and teachers' clubs as project holders had the task of defining solutions to problems or parts of problems that they can influence the most, adequately responding to the recognized educational need through various processes, concepts, ideas, services and methodologies.

The aim of the publication **Guidelines for Implementing Open and Distance Learning for Students with Disabilities While Schools Are Closed: Advancing**

Inclusive Learning in the Time of COVID-19 is to explore teaching methods used in working with students with disabilities during the pandemic, as well as the challenges faced by teachers. It also aims to offer guidance on how to design accessible educational content based on universal design for learning, as well as guidance for parents on how to implement active learning at home with their children. The guidelines provide recommendations to various stakeholders, including teachers, decision makers, developers and quality assessment agencies on how to improve inclusive education and be prepared for an uncertain future.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development in cooperation with the Social inclusion and poverty reduction Unit ensured that the Guidelines were translated and made available to all actors in education in order to improve inclusive policies and practices in the field of inclusive education and provide quality education to every child/student.

The goal of the manual **Prevention of segregation, development of inclusive enrollment policies and desegregation of schools and classes: international experiences and proposals for improving practice in Serbia**, published by the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, is that employees in the education system, both those who create solutions and those who need to apply them, employees in the system of social work and healthcare and authorities in local self-governments, get enough information about the fact that an integrated school is not only desirable, but also possible, and that it will be a useful guide for them on how to reach that goal. The first part of the manual provides an overview of the international legal and institutional framework, as well as practices related to the prohibition of discrimination, segregation and successful examples of desegregation. The second part of the manual provides an overview of the expected benefits from the integrated education of Roma children, while the third and fourth parts elaborate the necessary conditions of integrated education at the school, municipal and national level, as well as the steps that must be taken in the process of desegregating schools and classes.

Among non-governmental organizations, the Child Rights Centre has implemented a significant number of activities in the field of inclusion. During 2014, several activities were carried out in the field of promotion of inclusive education in Serbia, which are aimed at teachers. The focus of the **Teachers' Associations - Path to Quality Education** project, which this organization implemented with the Serbian Teachers' Association, is to acquaint representatives of teachers' associations with the importance of inclusive education and to strengthen their capacities for its adequate implementation. In addition to being participants in the first cycle of training, the teachers themselves had the opportunity to be lecturers during the second cycle at the trainings they organized in schools. In parallel with these activities, in the middle of 2014, the Network of Friends of Inclusive Education was launched, which aims to connect parents, teachers, representatives of local governments, formal and informal associations for joint action to improve the conditions for quality and fair education to be available for everyone. In the same year, the project **Teachers - reflective researchers of inclusive educational practice** was implemented, which is based on the idea of teachers as reflective practitioners and researchers and aims to encourage and empower teachers to be

the creators of those changes in school practice that lead to the improvement of students, teachers, parents and schools as a whole. During the 2014/2015 academic year, activities were carried out that helped members of teaching teams from all over Serbia to design and implement action research in their local areas. Each of the 14 research points to some of the key challenges facing teachers and schools in realizing the strategic goals of inclusive and intercultural education.

The goal of the project **Together towards secondary school - support for children from vulnerable groups in the transition to secondary school** was to increase the rate of transition of pupils from primary to secondary education from selected schools, i.e. to increase the number of pupils from vulnerable groups who make a successful transition to secondary school. In order to achieve this goal, a school support model was created, which, first of all, included the process of strengthening the competencies of employees (various trainings), creating and implementing Action Plans that contained various activities directly aimed at improving various aspects of the quality of school work and providing direct professional support to each school by external collaborators - representatives of the Center for Educational Policy.

In the Manual that was created as a result of the project, the ways for providing support to students from sensitive groups during the period of transition to secondary school are presented, followed by a brief description of the approach and types of support, as well as the steps in planning support (from the identification of students who need support during the transition period, through the collection of data important for the creation of a support plan, up to the actual support planning). The problems of teaching differentiation, support for students in preparation for the final exam, support for the professional development of students from vulnerable groups and peer support were also addressed. In addition, aspects of school functioning (school management, cooperation between teachers, cooperation with the family, cooperation with the local community) and how support for students can be systematized are shown.

Within the **Guidelines for planning and providing adequate intersectoral support for inclusive education in the local community (Practical Policy Proposal)**, the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia MODS considers the existence of intersectoral planning, connection and utilization of existing resources in providing support for inclusive education. Based on the analysis of existing practice in different local communities, recommendations and guidelines were given for developing and improving planning and providing adequate intersectoral support in the local community, so that all children are included in an educational system that is fair, based on inclusive principles and which provides quality education for all.

The research study on the capacities and needs of teachers in the field of inclusive education is one of the key activities in the project **Support to inclusive education through the education system**, which is carried out by the Association of Teachers of the Republic of Serbia. Empirical research on the capacities and needs of teachers for the development of inclusive education was conducted with the aim of determining what types of help and support teachers need in the development

of inclusive schools. Special attention is devoted to determining the contribution of the Network of Inclusive Education (NIE) and the Service for Improving Inclusive Education Practice to the development of the professional capacities of teachers and schools and attitudes about the need to improve quality education for all.

According to the results of the research, which included 811 teachers, 52.52% of the surveyed teachers expressed a positive orientation towards inclusive education. In this category there are more teachers from places where there is a NIE. It is estimated that the activities of the NIE influenced a more positive perception of the existing context, but it cannot be said that this influence was the only or decisive one, since there was no control of other influences (variables). A quarter of the surveyed teachers are against inclusive education. This can be explained by the fact that they did not receive adequate support in their work and that their initial education and existing school practice do not represent a good basis for the development of inclusive schools. Almost one fifth of teachers are undecided about the idea of inclusive education. They can be an important target group to whom it is necessary to direct activities in the following period.

Based on the presented findings and conclusions of this empirical research, the following is recommended to:

1. Continuation of the existing work and development of new NEI, in places that will be selected based on the assessment of the situation and examination of the needs of potential users.
2. Reviewing the existing and introducing new mechanisms for informing teachers about activities in the field of inclusive education, and especially about the activities of the NEI.
3. Examining the needs of teachers in the field of inclusive education in certain environments in order to functionally plan the activities of NEI at the local or regional level.
4. Given that teachers are a very heterogeneous group in terms of information and competence in the field of inclusive education, future support should be designed at several different levels (sensitization, information, education, horizontal exchange, examples of good practice, reputable classes, consultations, counselling. ..), in order to meet the different needs of teachers.
5. More intensive use of different, especially printed and electronic media in order to sensitize and inform teachers and the general public about inclusive education.
6. Designing and implementing activities of self-evaluation and evaluation of the work of NEI.
7. Developing different ways to inform teachers about the new legal and by-law regulations on inclusive education, in order to ensure their application in practice.
8. Launching an initiative towards teachers' faculties in order to design joint activities to empower future teachers to more readily and safely develop inclusive practice in schools (inclusion of practitioners in work with students, presentations by practitioners, student participation in research, student visits to schools, student participation in school activities, presentations of student papers at professional meetings and the website of the Association of Teachers).
9. Provide and make more accessible professional literature in the field of

inclusive education.

10. Provide different communication channels (electronically, by phone, by letters...) for questions from all interested parties and answers from experts about inclusive education.

11. Designing ways to improve cooperation between the school and families and creating a professional development program in this area.

12. Designing motivational measures to support teachers who would shape their good experiences from practice into professional development programs in the field of inclusive education, since the research results showed that teachers are the most ready for horizontal exchange and learning.

13. Inclusion of topics on quality education for all in the programs of professional meetings organized by the Association of Teachers.

14. Development and implementation of a work strategy in the field of inclusive education, in order to ensure, in the long term, continuity of engagement and synchronized implementation of various activities, with special emphasis on the development of positive attitudes towards inclusive education and an inclusive society.

Intercultural education and competences

Intercultural education and intercultural competences are another major area of promotion of the DEI concept in education. The **UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education** aim to synthesize the central issues concerning intercultural education, and represent the basic guiding principles for an intercultural approach to education as viewed by UNESCO. The first part of the manual outlines the key issues surrounding Intercultural Education, as well as its objectives and basic operating principles. The second part contains a brief overview of the normative framework for intercultural education, based on the analysis of international instruments for setting standards related to education and intercultural issues. The third part synthesizes the international position on this issue and provides three basic principles for educational policies regarding intercultural education:

1. Intercultural Education respects the cultural identity of the learner through the provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all.
2. Intercultural Education provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society.
3. Intercultural Education provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations.

The project **Intercultural/multicultural education – from practice to policy**, which was implemented by Grupa Most during 2006 and 2007, is one of the first projects in the field of intercultural education in Serbia. Its long-term goal is the improvement and development of quality multicultural coexistence in multi-ethnic communities through educational practice and school policy. More than 50 teachers, professional associates and principals of primary and secondary schools, as well as experts from local cultural institutions and NGOs from several

multi-ethnic areas (Belgrade, Niš, Dimitrovgrad, Novi Pazar, Preševo, Bujanovac and Vranje) actively participated in the project. Teachers and other experts acted through the network of intercultural education, participated in developing criteria and indicators and collecting examples of good practice.

In the guide that was created as a result of the project, key terms related to the field of intercultural education are shown; intercultural sensitivity and barriers in intercultural communication are presented, and intercultural competence is described. Within the topic of intercultural education, the key elements of this complex concept were pointed out, its roles and goals were discussed, as well as the international instruments, principles and guidelines on which it is based. The question of challenges and support of intercultural education in Serbia is also open. The guide presents criteria and indicators of quality/good practice organized in five areas: school policy, teaching and learning, school climate (ethos), professional development of teachers and connection with the local and wider community - which indicate the key areas of introduction and development of interculturality at the level of schools.

Within the joint program of the European Union and the Council of Europe (Horizontal Facility II, 2019-2022), the Centre for Positive Youth Development - CEPORA implemented the project **Promotion of Diversity and Equality in Serbia**, in 11 secondary schools in Belgrade (Municipality Stari grad). The project dealt with topics that are important for understanding the position of young people and their attitudes and experiences regarding hate speech and discrimination, such as intercultural education, school culture, school climate, cultural competence of teachers, cultural sensitivity of students and hate speech and discrimination. 254 teachers and 860 students participated in the survey, and in addition, a series of educational focus group interviews were conducted in which students discussed their experiences, but also through which they were empowered to fight against hate speech and discrimination, to foster tolerance and respect diversity.

The publication created as a result of the project is intended for teachers, professional school staff, principals, as well as other actors who shape the educational system through the definition of public policies. In addition, this publication can represent a significant resource for understanding the contextual, relational and individual level of fostering diversity and working on the prevention of hate speech and discrimination among young people through actions at all three levels of the "life" of the school.

The publication is a valuable resource for promoting the DEI model for several reasons. First, significant insights into the current state of functioning of schools in terms of school culture, school climate and teacher competence in the domain of cultural competence, i.e. respect for diversity, are given, thus enabling the introduction of measures aimed at a multi-layered approach to empowering schools and the school collective to deal with topics in Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination Strategy. Second, the publication shows the direct attitudes of the students regarding hate speech, discrimination and equality, which enables the incorporation of a larger number of measures into the Strategy that can be directly aimed at the students, and which will contribute to the prevention

of discrimination and hate speech in the school environment and which will encourage fostering diversity and equality. Third, significant recommendations for the promotion of the DEI model in schools are presented:

1. Continuously examine the school culture, climate and competencies of the teaching staff and use various opportunities for their improvement;
2. Use confirmed positive aspects as examples of good practice and a basis for exchange with other schools (in the countries and abroad);
3. Implement a response system in cases of discrimination and hate speech in the school environment;
4. Promote culturally diverse groups of students who attend a specific school through school practice (and through teaching, extracurricular and extra school activities);
5. Strengthen positive relationships between teachers and students (including representatives of the Team for protection against discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect) so that students are more willing to share their problems with school staff;
6. Provide students with many opportunities to explore other cultures, question their beliefs and build their positive personal experiences in contact with diversity;
7. Connect the school with resources in the local community that can provide support in certain segments of strengthening its practice of respecting and nurturing diversity.

The Ecumenical humanitarian organization proposed a policy of intercultural education in Serbia, in response to the problems observed during the implementation of the intercultural education program (Introduction to intercultural learning and Challenges of intercultural learning and teaching) aimed at strengthening the intercultural sensitivity of teachers, educators, pedagogical assistants and professional associates and their competencies for intercultural learning and teaching. These activities are realized within the project **Improving the living conditions of Roma and other marginalized groups, preventing irregular migration and encouraging the reintegration of returnees to Serbia**. During the project, in addition to desk analysis, qualitative individual and focus group interviews were conducted in Novi Sad and Novi Pazar.

Some of the most important conclusions of the project are as follows: 1) intercultural education (ICE) cannot be a mere "add-on" to the existing curriculum, but refers to the overall environment in which learning takes place, such as school life, decision-making, teacher education and professional development, school curriculum, language, teaching methods, student interaction, textbooks and work materials; 2) Although the declarative political will of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (Ministry) and certain legal prerequisites for ICE can be recognized in Serbia, ICE is not mentioned in any segment of the legislation, nor is the acquisition of intercultural competence among the detailed goals of education. Also, there is no legal obligation to apply the ICE principle, but rather to tolerate the passive coexistence of different cultural groups; 3) Plans for the development of the educational system in the Education Development Strategy (EDS) are not based on an intercultural approach and insufficiently promote the values of intercultural competence (IC); 4) There is no recognition of

the complementarity of ICE and other types of education that strive to prepare individuals for life in a society full of diversity, such as inclusive education, education for democratic citizenship, education for human and children's rights, peace and transformative education; 5) Teachers in Serbia are insufficiently prepared for the implementation of ICE and work in culturally diverse classes. Some teachers have a negative attitude towards cultural differences and are insufficiently aware of the stereotypes and prejudices they have towards members of other cultures.

Bearing in mind the recognized problems, the project provides recommendations for the implementation of intercultural education in Serbia:

1. The Ministry, in cooperation with the National Education Council (NPS), domestic experts in the field of ICE and teachers who already implement ICE, should define a strategy that realizes the values, principles and goals of ICE and develops IC. The ICE strategy should refer to: 1. curriculum, textbooks and teaching materials; 2. teaching and learning methods; 3. language; 4. education and permanent professional development of teachers.
2. The Ministry should develop systems for: 1. data collection and monitoring of ICE policy implementation; 2. identifying and disseminating examples of good practices in the implementation of ICE in educational institutions.
3. The Ministry, in cooperation with donors, should ensure synergy between projects in the field of ICE and projects related to other types of education that also strive to equip the individual for life in a society full of diversity.
4. The NPS should develop a guide for the implementation of legal regulations in the field of ICE, in the form of Guidelines for the implementation of ICE and self-evaluation of the interculturality of educational institutions.
5. The NPS should revise the competency standards for the teaching profession, by including intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence as an integral part of the corpus of teacher competencies. Also, it is necessary to clearly emphasize the importance of ICE in the standards, both for the professional preparation and for the professional development of teachers.
6. Faculties that educate future teachers (classroom teachers) and faculties that educate future subject teachers should include ICE in their study programs and organize students' practice in multicultural schools, where students would have the opportunity to gain teaching experience in culturally heterogeneous classes, to learn through mentoring and cooperation with interculturally sensitive and competent teachers.
7. The Ministry should prescribe that the list of priority areas for the professional development of employees in education includes ICE in order to ensure professional training and the development of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence of teachers, educators, pedagogical assistants and professional associates.
8. School administrations should include indicators of interculturality during the external evaluation of the quality of the work of the school/preschool.
9. Institutions for upbringing and education should demonstrate commitment to an intercultural approach through the formulation of their visions and missions. Development planning teams in educational institutions should include interculturality as one of the strategic goals of development plans. Teams for self-evaluation of the quality of work in educational institutions should also include a self-evaluation of the representation of interculturality indicators.

10. Researchers in the field of education should conduct research on the intercultural competences and intercultural sensitivity of teachers and other employees in education and how the wider socio-political context, educational and school policies support (or hinder) the development of these competences, in order to ensure their development and acceptance of intercultural sensitivity through initially education and professional training.

The publication **Intercultural Education in Serbia** of the Centre for Educational Policy looks at intercultural education at different levels - from the regulatory framework and educational policies, through the school level, to civil society and the local community. The first part of the publication is dedicated to the national legal framework, and comparison with international frameworks and consideration of how far the prerequisites for the successful implementation of intercultural education and the development of intercultural competences are provided in Serbia. In the central part of the publication, various topics related to intercultural education are discussed: support and opportunities that teachers have, both in the educational system and in the local community, for professional development and improvement in the field of interculturality; competency standards for the teaching profession; the representation of intercultural education at the faculties where the professional preparation of future teachers is realized; professional development programs in the field of interculturality; activities of the non-governmental sector; teachers' attitudes towards intercultural education after receiving training (national level); level of development of intercultural sensitivity of teachers. There are also recommendations for educational policies in the field of intercultural education and the introduction of an intercultural approach into the education system as a whole, especially in the professional preparation and professional development of teachers, as well as a proposal of indicators for monitoring and improving interculturality at the school level.

Democratic culture

Democratic culture and education for human rights constitute the third important topic in the field of promoting the DEI concept in education. In this sense, one of the most comprehensive resources, also available in the Serbian language, is the website **Living Democracy**, which aims to promote democracy and human rights at no additional cost to users.⁷ Educational materials were prepared by teachers from different countries and approved by national authorities and the Council of Europe. The principle of learning materials found on the site is based on the idea that education for democracy and human rights enables students to be more active in school and the community in which they live, empowers teachers, supports school principals and gives guidance to parents in their daily life with children. Education for democratic citizenship refers to education, training, dissemination, information, implementation and activities aimed at empowering those who learn to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active role in democratic life, with the idea of promoting and protecting democracy and the rule of law.

7 <https://www.living-democracy.com/sr/>

The site is organized so that materials can be selected in relation to the target group: parents, principals and teachers, or each manual or material can be searched separately. We will briefly present the materials available for principals and teachers.

Principles. Principals are leaders in today's schools and have to take into account many important factors in their work: legislation, curriculum, local authority, parents, pupils, funding, socioeconomic environment, competitions, etc. Materials from the following areas are available to this target group: nutrition, active school, communication, participation, controversial topics, learning, human rights at school, leadership.

Materials for each topics should enable:

- ▶ more complete understanding of the topic (awareness)
- ▶ preparing yourself and the school for application (preparation)
- ▶ concrete suggestions for implementation (action)

The DEI model elements were found in the following topics:

1. *Participation.* Principals and all school employees know that the institutions and principles of democracy are based on the national constitution and are included in the curriculum. The aim of this handbook for principals on democracy and participation in schools is to offer ideas about the participation of students, parents, teachers and the whole community in the process of school planning and decision-making, with suggestions, practical steps and good practical models for democratic leadership.

2. *Controversial topics.* Differences inevitably occur in today's school and should be discussed. The use of social networks and instant access to information bring students into daily contact with topics such as migration, climate change, terrorism and the rights of the LGBT population. Among other things, principles need experienced and trained teachers, a valid program of work and a school ethos that supports diversity.

3. *Learning.* In school, learning in function of the development of democratic culture should be encouraged. Diversity among young people is a big challenge for the school. If this issue is not given the necessary attention, it can affect the achievements of students and their social status in adulthood. In order to give every student an equal chance to succeed in school, this means understanding the learning needs of each student and responding to them individually. Equity in education does not mean that everyone is given the same, but that it is aligned with what they need.

4. *Human rights.* Within this area, 5 topics are proposed, and for each topic there is a set of monitoring indicators. The director, together with a special team, selects 10 indicators and performs a self-assessment:

- Is your school proactive in inclusion and seeks or enables the participation of all students, especially those who are 'different' in ethnic, cultural, linguistic, socio-economic sense, as well as in terms of skills and competences? (25 indicators)
- Is your school academically effective and relevant and does it respond to the needs of students in the context of life skills and the knowledge and competences they need? (28 indicators)

- Is your school healthy and safe enough to support the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of students? (20 indicators)
- Is your school gender-responsive as reflected in the creation of an environment and competences that support equality? (24 indicators)
- Does your school actively involve students, families and the local community in all aspects of school life and work? (18 indicators)

5. *Leadership*. This handbook explores democratic school management, which is joined by democratic school culture and is seen as a comprehensive approach to school in four themes. Theme 1: Democratic style of school leadership is focused on the principal's role as a democratic school leader and team player. Topic 2 introduces the principal to the Competence for Democratic Culture model adopted by the Council of Europe. Competencies include attitudes, values, skills, knowledge and understanding that contribute to culture of democracy. Topic 3 refers to Democratic school management as a comprehensive approach to school and shows how this work takes place in practice. Theme 4: Discipline through accountability is focused on the sensitive issue of student discipline in school. It is argued that encouraging students to take responsibility for their school is more promising than trying to maintain discipline through force and fear.

Teachers. 6 manuals have been prepared for teachers. It is also possible to organize the search through key concepts: power and politics, identity, rules and laws, media, conflicts, rights and freedoms, diversity and multitude, responsibility and equality. Also, teachers can select materials according to the age of the students: elementary, upper grades of elementary school, high school:

1. Education for Democracy - The aim of this manual is to provide support to teachers and educational experts in the process of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) - educational advisors, school principals, educational inspectors, authors and editors of textbooks. The manual addresses key questions about EDC/HRE, including the following: - What competencies do citizens need to be active members of their communities? - What are the goals of EDC/HRE? - What are the basic principles of EDC/HRE? - What do the key concepts that make up the essence of this edition of EDC/HRE mean? - In what way is the notion of a constructivist approach to learning related to EDC/HRE? - Why does EDC/HRE emphasize the importance of whole school participation? - How should teachers prepare, encourage and evaluate the learning process of their students in EDC/HRE?

2. Growing up in Democracy - The manual consists of nine teaching units on EDC/HRE. The teaching units, each of which consists of four lessons, are intended for students at the beginning of the second cycle of primary education - mostly between the ages of 10 and 12. Each unit emphasizes one key concept related to EDC/HRE: identity - pluralism - equality - conflict - rules and law - state and politics (power and authority) - responsibility - rights and freedom - media. The order of suggested steps in the work is described in detail for each lesson.

3. Living in a democracy. - The manual contains nine teaching units on EDC/HRE. The first part called Individual and Community contains 4 teaching units: What is identity, equality, diversity and pluralism; conflict. The second part Taking responsibility refers to 2 teaching units: the rights of freedom and responsibility; responsibility. The third unit, Participation, has a unit on media and the last part, Power and Authority, has units on rules and laws and government and politics.

A number of suggestions for teachers are detailed for each lesson.

4. Participate in democracy - This manual contains nine teaching units. Each teaching unit provides a special approach with the aim of empowering and encouraging students to participate in the life of their communities. Each teaching unit can be covered separately, or it can be combined with other units in many different ways. The handbook offers a complete curriculum and program of developing competences for participation in democracy. The first part Participate in the community has 3 teaching units: identity, responsibility and diversity and pluralism. The second part Participate in politics: solving conflicts and problems has 4 teaching units: conflict, rules and laws, power and politics, equality. The third part, Participating in politics through communication, has teaching units on freedoms and the media. The teaching units are intended for high school students (II-IV grade of high school).

5. Research on children's rights. - The manual has nine teaching units - these are, in fact, templates for the implementation of teaching on children's rights starting from preschool age to the final grade of elementary school. This manual includes the following elements: 1) A small informative introduction to the conceptual framework, and the learning process with the help of examples. 2) Nine specific teaching projects, each given in four phases of teaching (the phases mostly fit into the framework of one lesson), and one project is planned for each class. 3) Lesson plan with accompanying instructions for implementation. 4) The principle of solving tasks: each teaching unit aims at a specific "product", i.e. visible result of work. 5) An environment for open and cooperative learning, which coincides with the central principles of Education for Democracy (EDC). 6) Appendix containing teaching material (including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), as well as supplementary information on children's rights.

6. Teaching about democracy. This manual contains a collection of 47 exercises, that is, small teaching models and scenarios for EDC/HRE organized into eight units: Creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom; value clarification; familiarization with human rights; how we see other people; make justice work; understanding of political philosophy; participation in politics; deal with conflict. The proposed solutions are feasible and financially relatively low-demanding, scenarios for different grades/levels (from lower elementary to high school), with a special emphasis on the age of 4 to 10 years of schooling.

The material referred to by numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations is the Council of Europe's 2016 **Competences for Democratic Culture: Living Together as Equals in Culturally Diverse Democratic Societies**.

This document describes a conceptual model of competencies that students should acquire in order to effectively participate in the culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies. The model is intended to be used for the purpose of information, decision-making and planning in education, whereby it will help the educational systems to be in the function of preparing students for life as competent democratic citizens.

The publication first states the educational purpose of the competency model. It is also described that the term "culture of democracy" is used to emphasize the fact that, while democracy cannot exist without democratic institutions and laws, these institutions cannot function, nor can laws be applied in practice if they are not based on the culture of democracy, that is, on democratic values, attitudes and

practices. The authors also presented some of the related assumptions underlying this model. While it is necessary for citizens to acquire a number of competencies in order to effectively participate in the culture of democracy, these competencies are not sufficient to achieve the mentioned participation, because appropriate institutional structures are needed for democratic participation. In other words, both competences and democratic institutions are necessary to support a culture of democracy. It also describes the concept of intercultural dialogue, which occurs when an individual perceives another individual, or group, as someone who is culturally different from himself. Intercultural dialogue is therefore defined as a dialogue that takes place between individuals or groups, who perceive themselves as someone whose cultural affiliation is different from another.

The competences for democratic culture are described. Democratic and intercultural competence is defined as the ability to mobilize and use appropriate values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding, in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that democratic and intercultural situations represent. Competence is treated as a dynamic process in which a competent individual actively and adaptively mobilizes and uses groups of psychological resources to respond to new circumstances that arise.

After presenting the basic concepts, the working method used to determine the specific competencies to be included in the existing model is described. The model is based on a systematic analysis of existing conceptual schemes of democratic and intercultural competence. 101 such schemes were identified and then analyzed to determine all the individual competencies contained in them, after which these competencies were grouped into related groups. This determined 55 possible competencies that can be included in the model. By applying certain criteria and consideration, 20 competencies were determined that should be included in the model, that is, three sets of values, six attitudes, eight skills and three groups of knowledge and critical understanding. This model should be applied in making decisions in the field of education, but also be a means of empowering young people, as autonomous social actors capable of working to achieve their own goals in life, within the framework provided by democratic institutions, as and in respect of human rights.

The project **Encouraging democratic culture in schools** is implemented within the Horizontal Facility program for the Western Balkans and Turkey of the European Union and the Council of Europe, which is implemented by the Department of Education of the Council of Europe. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and twenty schools, as the main partners of the Council of Europe, had the support of the Institute for the Improvement of Education and the Institute for Evaluation of the Quality of Education, as well as the local partner (Centre for Education Policy), local communities, media, non-governmental organizations, experts and others. The main goal of the project is to improve the quality of education by encouraging a democratic culture in the formal education system, by applying anti-discriminatory approaches based on the standards and practices of the Council of Europe. Specific goals relate to improving the knowledge and awareness of teachers, staff, students and

local communities about the concept, policy, practice and benefits of inclusive education and democratic culture in schools, strengthening pilot schools to eliminate prejudices and discriminatory approaches to vulnerable groups, and solving cases of violence.

Before starting the implementation of the activities of this project in schools, local coordinators were appointed and trained, who visited all schools and introduced them to the concept of competences for democratic culture. The schools have decided on three priority competences that they will implement in the schools through the planned activities. Using the Model of Competences for Democratic Culture, teams of selected schools composed of teachers, pedagogues, psychologists and principles developed examples of good practice and piloted them in teaching and extracurricular activities, including the wider local community.

Within the framework of twenty competences from the Model schools organized a large number of different activities, with pedagogical approaches suitable for the development of competences for democratic culture and the creation of a more pleasant, interesting and safer school environment, strengthening at the same time capacities for eliminating violent, discriminatory and anti-democratic structures in the school and the school environment, improving the ethos in the school and providing support to students.

Cooperation with the Institute for the Improvement of Education and the Institute for Evaluation of the Quality of Education in the process of implementing the **Quality Education for All** project significantly enriched the application of the original idea of civic education, activism and education for human rights. As a result, the Guidelines for the Integration of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) in selected teaching and learning programs were published, which should enable teachers to assess their contribution to the implementation of the RFCDC in curricular and extracurricular activities and provide them with practical examples and advice on how to make their own lesson plans. In this handbook, examples are given on how, through teaching, in accordance with the age and developmental characteristics of students, competences for democratic culture can be developed. Examples are given through the subjects Serbian Language / Serbian Language and Literature, Mathematics, World Around Us / Nature and Society, Foreign Language, History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Psychology and Civic Education. The examples are designed to show teachers the possibilities of how they can work on developing competencies for democratic culture through their programs and teaching methods.

Other resources in education

Resources that do not refer to a precisely defined concept, such as competences, inclusive education or democratic culture, are also significant, but start from a broader approach to diversity. Such is the project Connecting Classrooms is a global project of the British Council that establishes partnerships between schools in Serbia, Great Britain and other schools around the world. Through

these partnerships, the schools involved in the project provide students with an international dimension of education and improve their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and prepare them to live and work as global citizens. **Connecting Classrooms** partnerships are supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia and the Provincial Secretariat for Education. During the 2010/11 school year, ten high schools from Serbia were included in the project. School partnerships will last from two to three years.

After establishing cooperation with other schools in Europe, teachers and students of the first and second grades design and implement activities within their community and school that aim to get to know other cultures and achieve intercultural dialogue. Students have the opportunity to acquire new and interesting knowledge through cooperation with peers from other communities and cultures. The focus in this cooperation will be on understanding diversity and developing personal skills that young people need to become global citizens.

At the national level, the Institute for the Improvement of Education accredits numerous training in the field of DEI intended for those employed in education. We recognized trainings important for the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion in two priority areas: *Strengthening the educational role of the educational institution through the development of programs for the prevention of violence, discrimination, abuse and neglect* and **Methodology for working with children/ students who need additional educational support (work with children from vulnerable groups, children with disabilities, migrants...)**. What is important to note is that most of the workshops on inclusion relate to working with children and students with disabilities. A list of these trainings with objectives is in the Appendices of this document.

Open Club: The Society for the Development of Children and Youth has implemented a number of projects in the area of promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, the target group of which are young people, teachers, parents and the wider local community. The goal of the project **Better understanding of diversity**, which was realized during 2007-2008 was the development, adoption and promotion of learning systems that are inclusive, focused only on learning and sensitive to gender issues and marginalized groups, and that the model as such respects the peaceful coexistence of all. The project aims to increase students' knowledge about interculturality, tolerance and gender equality and sensitize them to respect diversity. The project was implemented in 10 secondary schools in Nis, Aleksinac, Sokobanja, Boljevac and Svrljig.

Social welfare

Unlike the education sector, finding non-formal resources that promote the DEI concept in the social service sector is a far more challenging task. One of the reasons for this situation may be that the basic task of the social service sector is to care for sensitive, vulnerable and marginalized groups, and respect for diversity is the principle of daily work. Regardless of this, several important resources have

been recognized in the area of promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the social service sector.

The publication **Guide for culturally competent practice in social service** was prepared as part of the project *Development of kinship foster care, shared care for children with developmental disabilities and culturally competent practice in social service*, which the Provincial office for Social service implements as part of the wider project Improving children's rights through strengthening the system of justice and social protection in Serbia, funded by the European Union, and implemented by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs.

This guide has the following objectives:

1. to lay the foundation for the improvement of knowledge, skills and values in the practice and policy of social work and social service that is relevant for culturally diverse populations;
2. to set specific requirements and provide guidance that will guide growth, learning, assessment and evaluation in the area of cultural competence;
3. to improve the quality of social services in this area;
4. to train users, representatives from civil society, regulatory bodies and others on expected behaviours and policies in providing culturally competent services to users of social services;
5. to illuminate and clarify issues of culture as a basis for ethical professional practice in social services;
6. to set the basis for the development of standards and indicators of culturally competent practices and policies in social services.

In the guide, the cultural competences of professional workers in social services are considered, by presenting the way of understanding cultural differences and considering the way in which obstacles arise in cross-cultural communication; culturally competent policies and practices at the organizational level, and an analysis of two cases from the practice of social services in Serbia is presented as an illustration of the topics and problems that social services practitioners face on a daily basis.

In 2015, the Chamber of Social Service published the **Code of Professional Ethics of Professional Social Service Workers of Serbia**, which shows the values, principles and standards of professional behaviour. Several articles refer directly to the respect of the DEI. Article 10, states that the professional worker must oppose discrimination based on any personal, family or group characteristics such as age, gender, disability, family, ethnic, racial or cultural affiliation, marital or socio-economic status, sexual orientation, political, religious or other beliefs, as well as other characteristics by which individuals and groups differ, which may put them in an unequal position. In addition, there is an obligation to recognize and appreciate diversity in the social environments in which the practice of social service takes place. Professional workers oppose social circumstances that contribute to social exclusion, stigmatization or subjugation of social welfare beneficiaries, and work to promote and build an inclusive society. Article 25 emphasizes "Cultural competence and respect for diversity", where it is stated that the professional

worker should understand culture and its importance for the behavior of people and the functioning of society, and to recognize the strengths and potentials that exist in all cultures. Therefore, professionals are obliged to possess and develop their knowledge and require consultation about the cultural peculiarities of their users, in order to develop the ability to provide culturally adapted services and respect the differences between people and cultural groups.

Centers for social work deal with many marginalized groups in their work and often witness the devastating consequences that social stigmatization has for many of their users. However, some groups are less visible than others. Taking into account that most of the experts were educated according to programs that included outdated information about different sexual orientations and gender identities, the need for additional training programs for working with LGBT users was recognized. Association DUGA has developed an accredited basic and advanced program for **Sensitization for work with sexual minorities**, which a large number of CSW employees from all over Serbia entered. The main goal of the training is to improve the capacity of CSW employees to work, and thus, indirectly, to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the process of assessment and planning of services in CSW that are provided to vulnerable populations, with a special focus on LGBT people and their families. The expected outcome is that after attending the training, CSW experts will proactively identify the needs of LGBT persons and their families, create and provide appropriate services in the community, as well as lobby for the introduction of new social services for this population. The final impact of the training is reflected in the contribution to more successful inclusion and improvement of the position of LGBT persons in our society.

The association states that 1,037 professional workers of the social service system and 146 Centers for Social Work and 3 Centers for Family Accommodation and Adoption passed accredited training, and another 206 of them passed accredited advanced training. They have established a referral and reporting system between DUGA Association and Centers for Social Work, and in every city in Serbia they have at least one educated social worker, psychologist and lawyer who have undergone training for working with LGBT people and their families. They also state that so far, together with CSW, they have handled 19 joint cases in which the clients were minor LGBT persons who had problems in their families.

Youth work

As was the case with the social service sector, identifying resources important for respecting diversity, equity and inclusion in youth work resulted in significantly less coverage than was the case with the education sector. Therefore, we expanded our search beyond the European context.

Cultural diversity as a learning tool in youth work was a two-year Erasmus + project, co-funded by the European Union.⁸ This project has cultural diversity as

8 The partners are Dacorom Council for Voluntary Service (working name Community Action

its central theme and looks at ways of engaging young people in understanding other opinions, ideas, cultures and people within the context of youth work. It took the form of desk research into youth worker education and training, and how – if at all - cultural diversity exists as a standalone topic. The research found a wide variation in the training provision for youth workers across the five partner countries. Differences appeared at almost every point in the research, including the term, concept and function of youth work. In addition, the level, type and cost of training and qualifications offered varies, ranging from free workshops, online, on-the-job and ad-hoc training through to costly university Masters degrees and beyond. The availability of training is also affected by country-specific issues including levels of immigration, social trends, finances and the nature of the education system.

Resources for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality – RIDE is a Erasmus+ funded project with the aim to collect fresh and innovative resources and practical tools for youth workers, social workers, training providers and University lecturers. Objectives of the project are:

- ▶ Establish a network of partners who share a common vision to understand and develop quality youth work practice with inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity as core principles guiding practice
- ▶ Create a community of practice to share understanding, challenges and best practice of inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity
- ▶ Develop the RIDE Toolbox. The toolbox is a set of resources that includes:
 - ▲ Principles and Approaches;
 - ▲ Good Practice Directory;
 - ▲ Practice Resources;
 - ▲ Education and Training Resource.

Youth Work in Diverse Societies is a unit developed by a team from the School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences at Ulster University in Northern Ireland. The team created a digital platform which shares their experiences of Community Youth Work in a diverse society. The goal of the unit is to help with gaining critical knowledge about the diversities that exist in society and how these are debated, understood, and recognized in different contexts. It should initiate users' thinking on the purpose of Community Youth Work practice in a diverse society. The topics are: 1. Enhanced knowledge about the diversities that exist in society. 2. Initiate thinking on the purpose of Community Youth Work practice in a diverse society. 3. Self-awareness, personal and professional attitudes and values in relation to anti-oppressive youth work.

Australian Centre for multicultural youth published **Culturally-Competent Youth Work: Good Practice Guide**. This Good Practice Guide is designed to provide organisations and workers with some strategies to enhance the accessibility and responsiveness of their service when working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. There are five key elements for culturally competent youth work:

Dacorom), (UK); Zavod Voluntariat (Slovenia); Pozitiva Doma (Latvia); Vicolocorto (Italy) and Asociacion Cultural Integra (Spain).

1) Cross-cultural Communication (Be open to different values, perceptions and behaviours; Recognise that culture is not homogenous and is shaped by class, ethnicity, family, gender, religion, political beliefs, age and migration experience. Learn about other cultural and ethnic groups by showing interest and asking questions. Not make assumptions about culture or language. Use the correct pronunciation of a young person's name and ask if they are not sure. Avoid judgements or assumptions about language proficiency. Use an interpreter when necessary and learn about the language needs of a particular cultural or ethnic group. Employ a range of communication strategies)

2) Environment (Location. Visual representation of cultural diversity. The way in which newly arrived young people are welcomed. Opening times, the cost of services and providing a drop-in service if possible.)

3) Practice (Access interpreters and translated materials. When meeting a young person for the first time, try to arrange for the person who made the referral to also be present. Be clear about your role by communicating simply about what you do and don't have the capacity or power to do. Build knowledge of the service system. Avoid assumptions about a young person's stage of life, role within the family and connections to their community or religion as these are often complex areas. Offer practical support. Provide outreach by meeting with the young person where they feel most comfortable.)

4) Inclusive of families and communities (Ensure your work practice is determined by the needs of the young person in the context of their family. Be aware that you may need to work with family members in order to provide appropriate support to a young person. Consider strategies to welcome parents of family members. Be aware of the way you talk about your service. Seek information about the communities in your region, and the issues arising for them. Clarify cultural information with either young people or family members. Accept gestures of hospitality.)

5) Be responsive to feedback (Ask for feedback on your service. Be responsive to feedback given by your clients or community members- Deliver your service within an Action Research framework by dedicating time to reflect on how you deliver a culturally responsive service at both the individual and organisational level.)

One of the important actors in the promotion of the DEI model, especially in the field of youth work, is the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Since 2014 (when the results of open call are published on the website), it has supported the following projects that could be connected to the DEI model:

- ▶ "Mentoring of active youth inclusive teams in local communities" (Association of students with disabilities)
- ▶ Peer mentoring and youth inclusive teams in the local community (Association of students with disabilities)
- ▶ Peer mentoring as support for young people with disabilities in an inclusive society - a new generation (Association of students with disabilities)
- ▶ Young people with disabilities in an inclusive society through increasing the capacity of youth offices for the social inclusion of young people with disabilities (Association of students with disabilities)
- ▶ Network of inclusive work of Youth Office - MIR KZM (Association of students with disabilities)

- ▶ Theater of Inclusion: involving young people from vulnerable groups through artistic youth work (Organization of a creative gathering)
- ▶ Train equality! -Training for young trainers in the field of human rights and the fight against discrimination in Bačka (Sombor education center)
- ▶ Inclusion Live 4.0 To inclusive communities for young people (Belgrade Center for Human Rights)
- ▶ Inclusion Live 3.0 From inclusion standards to inclusion as a standard (Belgrade Center for Human Rights)
- ▶ Ritual of inclusion - project against discrimination of young people with disabilities (BLUE theater - theater laboratory)
- ▶ This is How we do it - inclusive workshops (Civil Society Development Center)
- ▶ "PredICT the future!" - empowering young people with disabilities and/or without parental care for employment through training and internationally recognized certification for digital skills (Citizens' Association "Youth for Impact")
- ▶ "Diversity connects" - Network of student councils/union of Serbia in the fight against discrimination, radicalism and youth violence in the community (Educational Center Leskovac)
- ▶ "Young men as agents of change for a gender-equal society without violence - Be a man (Center for the promotion of healthy lifestyles)
- ▶ Treasury of Diversity 2.0 (Balkan IDEA Novi Sad)
- ▶ MUSUS in action - Network of student councils/unions of Serbia in the fight against discrimination, radicalism and youth violence in the community (Educational Center Leskovac)

One of the important actors in the promotion of the DEI concept among the youth is the **Youth Office**. The Youth Office is part of the local administration and is the first in a series of entities that started the development of youth policy in municipalities and cities in Serbia. The standards of work of the Youth Office (YO) define the quality that must be achieved in the work of YO. In order to reach the standards, it is necessary for the local self-governments to provide conditions for the implementation of appropriate activities through the work of the YO and the youth club (YC). YO will work successfully if it implements activities that ensure: good management of local YO; active partnership with local actors; high level of youth participation in local youth policy and inclusive youth policy. It is evident, therefore, that the last standard is directly related to the DEI concept. It posits that respect for the diversity of each individual is ensured and provided to all young people regardless of individual differences, equal opportunities for participation in all areas of social life, in accordance with the principles of the National Strategy for Youth and the principles of the Law on youth.

Quantitative and qualitative indicators for inclusive youth policy are:

1. Number of young people informed about the activities of YO and YC;
2. The number of young people from vulnerable groups who benefit from the services/activities of YO/YC;
3. The number of young people from vulnerable groups who are involved in the process of planning the activities of the local YO/YC;
4. The number of young people from vulnerable groups who are involved in the implementation of local YO/YC activities;
5. Number of activities to sensitize young people to the problems of youth from

vulnerable groups;

6. Number of activities organized through YO/YC for empowering young people from vulnerable groups;

7. Number of inclusive activities for young people;

8. Number of realized projects in which YO is a partner, with youth associations/ for youth and institutions, and which aim to improve the position of vulnerable youth;

9. Conducted research aimed at targeting vulnerable groups youth;

10. Conducted research on certain topics/problems of certain vulnerable groups youth.

The Belgrade Center for Human Rights, the OSCE Mission in Serbia and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia jointly developed and implemented an educational course on the topic - **Work with sensitive groups of young people and the principles of non-discrimination**. Based on this course, a **Guide for working with vulnerable youth groups** was created for local coordinators of youth offices. The guide for working with vulnerable groups of young people consists of three parts and follows the content and program of the educational course. The introductory texts provide a brief overview of the development of youth policy in Serbia, present key documents, especially those relevant for work with vulnerable groups, and describe the intended role and obligations of local YO, coordinators, in working with these youth groups. In the introductory part, discrimination and its causes are described, the ways in which we can recognize it and adequately react, as well as how to actively work to prevent discrimination among young people in local areas.

Considering the goal of the course and the guide, which is related to the introduction of the principle of non-discrimination in youth policy, the second, special part deals with individual groups of young people, which are most often exposed to discrimination. Within the special part, a better understanding of the position and social context in which people with disabilities and members of various minority groups live, among which special attention is paid to the Roma, as well as the position of young women, through the prism of gender equality.

The last, practical part of the guide, is a reminder in planning the steps aimed at establishing a system and developing practices/interventions in working with individual groups of young people. It offers a presentation of basic guidelines, what should be thought about and how to organize activities, in order to successfully start the process of establishing a system, that is, initial activities, aimed at building institutional capacities and human resources for working with these groups of young people. Also, in this part of the guide, specific recommendations for work, examples of good practice are presented from both institutions and civil society organizations that can be partners of coordinators in work at the national and local level.

Coordinators and associates, in their work, should ensure the realization of four key tasks, aimed at supporting the integration of young people from vulnerable groups:

1. Recognize who are the vulnerable groups of young people in the local area and start a system for monitoring their needs, developing intensive cooperation with all significant institutions; at the local and national level, and civil society

1. organizations that focus on certain target groups, recognized as vulnerable;
2. Recognize the act of discrimination and refer individuals who have been exposed to discrimination to institutions that can provide further assistance (independent bodies, free legal aid services, civil society organizations that provide various types of assistance and support to specific target groups);
3. Prevent discrimination, actively promoting an atmosphere of tolerance, solidarity and the right to equal opportunities for all young people in the community, on all occasions and through all activities;
4. Improve the position of young people from vulnerable groups: a) develop strategic partnerships with local subjects of youth policy, which help and develop effective mechanisms for reaching young people from vulnerable groups and their inclusion in programs and activities supported/implemented by YO; b) when developing local public policy documents, take into account the inclusion of the needs of young people from vulnerable groups and encourage the direct involvement of young people from vulnerable groups in the processes of drafting local public policies; c) encourage/support/realize, in cooperation with others, or independently, inclusion programs, activities and services on specific topics, in accordance with the needs and interests of young people (for example, employment and entrepreneurship, informal education, mobility, information, culture and sports, etc.).

As an additional help, in the practical part of the guide there is a List for self-assessment and monitoring the development of capacities for working with vulnerable groups. The list aims to help coordinators to review the current capacities for working with vulnerable groups, as well as to enable systematic planning of the development of various capacities - material, technical, human, program, to improve the position of individual vulnerable groups of young people in the community.

Association DUGA has prepared a **Handbook for youth workers: coming out of unemployment**, which was created as part of the Coming Out of Unemployment project, dedicated to raising the professional capacities of youth workers for the economic empowerment of LGBT+ youth, through social entrepreneurship. Through the trainings, 36 youth workers acquired knowledge and skills related to the training of young LGBT+ people on social entrepreneurship through interactive workshops. The manual shows how to create and conduct workshops as an efficient way to acquire knowledge and skills, i.e. all stages of scenario creation, conducting the workshop itself, technical aspects of the organization as well as evaluation.

Based on the search and analysis of non-formal resources in the field of education, social service and youth work, we can draw several summary conclusions:

- ▶ Diversity, inclusion and equity represent a significant theme in all three sectors, as shown by the large number of non-formal resources analyzed
- ▶ Numerous actors are interested in promoting the DEI concept, from the international community, regional organizations, national authorities to the non-governmental sector.
- ▶ The position of sensitive groups of young people in Serbia has somewhat improved compared to the previous period, but members of the Roma

population, LGBT people, people with disabilities, national minorities and migrants and asylum seekers face permanent and specific challenges in education, social service and youth work.

► By far the largest number of analyzed resources refers to the field of education. In this sense, several topics were identified: inclusive education, intercultural education and competences, and democratic culture.

► Inclusive education is an area that has traditionally been the focus of interest of various actors. However, it is noticeable that at the national level, inclusion is still approached from the perspective of including students with developmental disabilities or students belonging to the Roma minority, while at the level of the international community and the NGO sector, inclusion is discussed for all students.

► While the activities and projects of inclusive education implemented by national institutions and authorities are numerous, there is much less interest in the topics of democratic culture or intercultural education.

► Identifying resources in the field of social service was a challenging task, so this section is the shortest in terms of content. One of the reasons for this situation may be that the basic task of the social protection sector is to care for sensitive, vulnerable and marginalized groups, and respect for diversity is the principle of daily work.

► Bearing in mind that youth work is a significantly narrower field of activity than education or social service, we believe that there is adequate interest in the promotion of the DEI concept in this sector, regardless of the smaller scope.

At this point it should be noted that the proposed document does not represent an exhaustive list of all non-formal resources at international, European, national and local levels, which is a task that exceeds the time frame and objectives of the project. However, the presented and analyzed resources can serve as a framework for further and detailed analysis in the individual sectors of education, social service and youth work.

National framework for diversity practice in Italy

Giulia Messina

Social welfare

Community of Capodarco: a good practice in promoting social inclusion

The Capodarco Community is a non-profit association committed to welcoming people in conditions of serious hardship. It is organised in a general community and in local communities, made up of members and with their own governing bodies. It was founded on Christmas 1966 by Don Franco Monterubbianesi who, together with a group of thirteen disabled people, decided to try a joint life project in an old abandoned villa in Capodarco di Fermo in the Marche. The group grew very rapidly thanks to the contribution of many volunteers and other people with disabilities who embraced the project: from the initial thirteen it passed to one hundred members in 1970. The Capodarco Community organises services for the rehabilitation and social and work integration of the disabled. Over time, its sphere of action has expanded from the needs of the physically and mentally disabled to those of young people, minors, drug addicts, immigrants, and psychiatric patients.

The Community has also always paid close attention to how social news is spread. For this reason, since 1994, it has organised an annual training seminar for journalists, called *Redattore Sociale*, with the aim of helping the profession to deal with news concerning the vulnerable population beyond the stereotypes of the crime news and occasionality. The initial project of the Capodarco Community was very innovative for the time. It started from the observation of the state of total abandonment of people with disabilities who were forced to spend most of their life in an institution without any possibility of redemption and fulfilment. Hence the desire to try to create a community where the disabled could become the protagonists of their lives. The process had to go through the formation of an awareness of one's rights and duties and was governed by a series of basic principles:

- ▶ the refusal of the pietistic attitude towards those in difficulty and the overcoming of any kind of assistance;
- ▶ the style of sharing, of deep involvement with the other's story, of paying in person;
- ▶ the territoriality of the intervention to avoid closing oneself in one's own structure and opening up to the surrounding realities;
- ▶ everyday life as a space where everyone has the opportunity to grow and become emancipated through work, moments of common life, and social service activities.

Recommendations from the Minplus project

Minplus project proposes a Collaborative governance and integrated care of applicants for international protection and unaccompanied foreign minors.

Only a **careful approach to differences** can guarantee the dignity and integrity of each person. The guarantee of recognition at all levels and in all phases and respect for the uniqueness of each person is welcomed, preparing effective devices for listening and involving and proposing customised solutions consistent with experiences, needs and individual expectations.

Formulate **local action plans on reception and integration** that contain explicit indications on visions and scenarios, short, medium and long-term objectives, actions to be implemented, system of roles and responsibilities.

It is necessary to invest in knowledge of the phenomena as a basis for planning policies and interventions and as a starting point for an open and non-prejudicial dialogue between all those involved. Monitor processes, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and policies, collect and analyse data, disseminate information and analysis.

Everyone's knowledge, sensitivities and skills must be supported and strengthened with fully integrated training and supervision interventions in territorial planning.

Guidelines diversity & inclusion in the companies: the experience of the observatory D&I of UN Global Compact Network Italia

UN Global Compact Network Italia is a foundation with the main aim to contribute to the development of the Global Compact of the United Nations in Italy (the global compact is an initiative for the promotion of the culture of corporate citizenship, promoted and managed on a global scale by the United Nations). They created an observatory dedicated to D&I to collect the experiences of 17 leading companies in several sectors (banking, energy and multi-utility, agro-food, technological sectors) with the involvement of their contact persons with functions of HR, Sustainability, CSR and D&I.

The involvement of transnational actors as the International Labour Organization and national ones as AIDP, the Italian organisation for personnel management allowed local regulatory overviews and guidelines from the International agreements.

The result is a paper containing best practices and reflections, but also challenges and criticalities, and hints by UN Global Compact Network Italia, ILO and AIDP: D&I is explored in relation to the categories of disability, migrants, gender/woman, youth and each of them in terms of regulations, needs, policy and good practices, reports and measurement, criticalities, recommendations by UN Global Compact Network Italia and Business cases.

One of the first analysed aspect is the need to create a **climate characterised by**

an **inclusive leadership**, that should be based on some main pillars:

- ▶ to guarantee emotional security: it allows a person to feel welcome and to express themselves freely;
- ▶ an equal access to information and resources, accordingly to the abilities of the people;
- ▶ the removal of the obstacles to the full collaboration;
- ▶ the inclusive leader serves and can influence all company components and processes.

In case of **employees with disability** it is recommended to:

- ▶ to nominate a manager of disabilities to balance the right to work and work inclusion of the person with the needs of the company and to create a D&I committee made of people with different disabilities and the participation to survey mix working groups;
- ▶ to value the real competences of the workers and to not underestimate the phenomenon of overqualification;
- ▶ to ensure a role-adjusted salary and a climate where colleagues and superiors respect the times and rhythms of work and involve the disabled worker;
- ▶ to use an inclusive language: "person with disability" is adequate because it focuses on the person, while medical expressions should be avoided because they strengthen stereotypes and stigma.

Moving to the topic of **migrants**, the main suggestions for an effective D&I management are:

- ▶ to evaluate the real competences of the employees with a migration background in order to avoid the widespread phenomenon overqualification;
- ▶ to collaborate with the academic system for the recognition of qualifications
- ▶ to include the foreign employees in the D&I committee;
- ▶ to provide or to facilitate the access to language courses to facilitate the socio-occupational integration;
- ▶ to provide coaching and mentoring, and even projects of reverse mentoring to value the target's soft skills.

For the **promotion of gender equality**, it would be necessary to:

- ▶ to communicate your commitment towards gender equality to new employees and stakeholders;
- ▶ to assume position of zero tolerance regarding gender violence in the workplace;
- ▶ to promote community projects to determine cultural changes and to attract young women in the scientific and technological sector;
- ▶ aim at non discrimination of working mothers, promoting their work reintegration, breastfeeding and reconciling career and family welfare activities;
- ▶ to cancel the cognitive bias about women employees in each field, from recruitment processes to career opportunities and equal payment;
- ▶ to provide in-company training for everybody, from the top management to the human resources on the topic of D&I and unconscious biases.

Talking about **youth**, it is recommended to:

- ▶ to use alternative recruitment channels and gamification;

- ▶ to adopt adequate contractual arrangements, minimum salaries and opportunities of perspectives of medium-long term, coaching and training programmes, reverse mentoring.

Education

Finally, the article underlines the importance of teaching **empathy** in schools: the teachers have to take the responsibility to guide the children to know and recognize their emotional inner world, to learn to listen and cope with emotions. The school is a place where one can learn to build relations, and it is in the relationships that one can learn to develop emotional and cognitive competences of each human being that are the basis for the future society. Empathy and emotional competences can be boosted by teaching the children to work in groups respecting the others' ideas, or through guided games where there is the possibility to take each other by the hand, to caress the schoolmate, to hug them or to simply stand next to them in respectful silence. It is presented in the good practice "Fuori classe in movimento", a network of more than 170 schools all over Italy with the aim to promote the students' school wellbeing, renewing methods and instruments to face the phenomenon of school drop out; the project is based on the assumption that school means mainly to listen, to love, to educate to self-respect and respect for others and to accompany the child to know themselves and the entire world, giving them the instruments to face the future. The activities used by the project to reach those aims are paths of participation managed by representatives of teachers and students, to find shared solutions and to realize a continuous action of change in the school, made of interventions of:

- ▶ Requalification of school spaces: libraries, gardens, laboratory classrooms etc.
- ▶ Renewal of teaching through outdoor education, open class lessons, play time etc.
- ▶ Strengthening of relationships between peers and with reference adults through circle times, sentimental education workshops, paths to combat bullying etc.
- ▶ Expansion of alliances between school and territory through actions of redevelopment of public spaces, dialogue with institutions, awareness of citizenship on the issues of children's rights etc.

Class lessons to give the students of any school cycle, the possibility to understand the topics of bullying, diversity, and homophobia, in a participatory way, through: brainstorming to evaluate the students knowledge on words as homosexual, lesbian, bisexual, transgender; an activity to distinguish among facts and opinions related to those topics; an activity in small groups, through the method of the pleasure of discovery and discussion/peer learning, to make the students able to identify the false myths about those topics; a group discussion, mediated by the use of cards with characters, to question themselves about the idea that homosexuality can be easily recognized for their effeminacy or masculinity; to check the acquired competences, by asking the students to complete some sentences; reading and discussing a story to stimulate empathy; support the students in exploring their own ideas about sexual orientation through the writing of a letter addressed to the girl of a case study who is facing some troubles, followed by a

group discussion; discovering the different faces of bullying by working in small groups and following group discussion, stimulated by reading some stories; learn how to cope with bullying through role playing.

General **tips** for the teachers are:

- ▲ To promote the knowledge about diversity showing models through literature, cinema, or lessons facilitated by external guests es. Suggesting books or series/ films containing men and women, even families which are different from the stereotype given by the advertisements or inviting a female soldier to talk.
- ▲ To avoid using a perspective referred to an heteronormative perspective.
- ▲ To avoid to group the students according to their sex.
- ▲ To be aware of gender stereotypes and to avoid behaving accordingly to them (female and male personal features or interests).
- ▲ When elaborating the assignments for homework, to invent situations referring to a variety of family structures and gender expressions, ex. "Rosa and her fathers bought 3 cans of iced tea..." or a man baking a cake.

Youth work

Diversity management in Italy has gained importance in recent years, as organizations seek to promote an inclusive work environment and better reflect the diversity of Italian society. Unfortunately, there are still not to many NGOs that adhere to diversity charters and policies but these are the common values, usually, shared from NGOs implementing diversity policies:

▶ *Diversity and Inclusion policies*

Organizations are developing specific diversity and inclusion policies that promote the acceptance of individuals from all backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, abilities, and more.

▶ *Training and awareness*

Companies offer diversity awareness training programs to educate employees on diversity and inclusion issues.

▶ *Inclusion of people with disabilities*

Companies are increasingly focusing on the inclusion of people with disabilities through infrastructure adaptations and providing employment opportunities.

▶ *Workplace flexibility*

Introducing flexible working hours and remote work policies to accommodate diverse employee needs.

▶ *Diversity monitoring*

Many organizations continually monitor diversity data of their employees to identify any imbalances or areas for improvement.

▶ *Employee engagement*

Involving employees in diversity and inclusion initiatives and task forces to promote an inclusive company culture.

▶ *Awareness campaigns*

Organizing awareness campaigns to promote diversity and inclusion both internally and externally.

▶ *Support networks*

Creating support networks for employees from underrepresented groups to

help them advance in their careers and feel supported.

► *Collaboration with external organizations:*

Collaborating with external organizations and diversity associations to share resources and best practices.

► *Clear communication:*

Communicating openly and clearly about efforts to promote diversity and inclusion within the organization.

The following examples of concrete project suggestions can help organizations address discrimination, promote inclusivity, and create a more equitable and diverse work environment throughout an employee's career journey.

Dimicome: a fami experience about diversity management with migrants

The project "DIMICOME - Diversity Management and Integration of Migrants' Skills in the Labor Market" is co-funded by the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (FAMI) 2014-2020 under the national program OS2 - ON3. The coordinating body for the project is the ISMU Foundation. The project involves several partners, including the Association Francesco Realmonte Onlus, Centro Estero per l'Internazionalizzazione Scpa (Ceipiemonte), Fondazione Casa di Carità Arti e Mestieri Onlus, Fondazione Mondinsieme, Unione italiana delle Camere di commercio, industria, artigianato e agricoltura (Unioncamere), the University of Bari Aldo Moro, and the University of Verona.

The overall objective of the project is to promote the economic integration of migrants by recognizing their skills and fostering a positive impact on the competitiveness of companies.

The project activities are implemented in five Italian regions (Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, Piedmont, Apulia, Veneto) and involve organizations in five European countries (Denmark, Germany, France, Hungary, and Spain).

The project includes various activities, such as the development of guidelines on how to recognize migrant human resources in labor market organizations, the dissemination of best practices in migrants' labor inclusion, the creation and distribution of informational and training materials for labor market organizations, and the provision of Diversity Management training to 35 companies.

Furthermore, the project identifies the main strengths and weaknesses of existing methods for assessing migrants' soft skills, provides a soft skills portfolio to 120 migrants, and compiles a repertoire of soft skills derived from migration experiences.

The project targets three main groups: economic actors, organizations involved in migrant integration and labor market governance, and migrants and their associations. The activities involve a wide range of representatives from these groups, contributing to the promotion of migrants' economic integration and enhancing their participation in the labor market.

Guidelines to assess the soft skills in migrants

One of the written guidelines aims to provide operational suggestions to enhance the identification and assessment of soft skills in migrants. "Identification" involves recognizing and describing a migrant's soft skills in a portfolio, primarily based on their prior educational, work, and personal experiences. "Assessment" quantifies the possession level of specific soft skills, mainly when precise measurement is essential for particular job roles. The process begins with identifying the participant's needs and sharing goals and tools.

Soft skills are identified through **autobiographical narratives** collected via individual or group interviews and observations in various situations. The identified soft skills are then transcribed and described in a portfolio, which is shared and discussed with the beneficiary. The portfolio serves as a tool for self-awareness and job market promotion.

Assessment aims to measure and validate specific soft skills, selected from those highlighted in the portfolio, through the involvement of a qualified third-party evaluator. The evaluator defines the methodology and tools for observation and assessment. They suggest switching the languages adopted, to make them comfortable. After assessment, a concise report is generated, describing the possessed soft skills and their coverage level. This report can be used by the beneficiary to document skills alongside their CV and by intermediaries and employers for screening candidates. The credibility of the report depends on the reputation and impartiality of the evaluator, often organizations involved in migrant integration, universities, employer associations, or unions.

The experience of the D&I observatory of UN Global Compact Network Italy

The Guidelines for Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace are essential for promoting an inclusive and diverse work environment. The experience of the D&I Observatory of UN Global Compact Network Italy, led by Marco Frey (President), Daniela Bernacchi (Secretary General), and Stella Sigillo (Programme & Engagement Manager and Project Coordinator), provides valuable insights into how companies can effectively adopt Diversity & Inclusion practices.

Here are some key guidelines:

- ▶ **Committed leadership:** Company leadership must demonstrate a strong commitment to Diversity & Inclusion by clearly defining objectives and strategies for promoting diversity at all levels of the organization.
- ▶ **Policies and procedures:** Establish company policies and procedures that promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the work environment, from recruitment and hiring to career progression and training.
- ▶ **Training and awareness:** Provide ongoing training to employees on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics. This helps create an aware and respectful corporate culture.
- ▶ **Metrics and monitoring:** Collect data on D&I initiatives and continuously monitor progress. This helps identify areas that need attention and measures the success of initiatives.

- ▶ Promotion of opportunities: Ensure there are growth and career advancement opportunities for all employees, regardless of their background, gender, sexual orientation, or abilities.
- ▶ Inclusion in communication: Reflect diversity in the company's image and external communication, demonstrating a commitment to D&I.
- ▶ Collaboration: Collaborate with external organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Italian Association of Personnel Management (AIDP), to exchange ideas, best practices, and resources.
- ▶ Assessment and adaptation: Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of D&I policies and initiatives and make changes based on feedback and results.
- ▶ Creating a safe work environment: Ensure that all employees feel safe reporting discrimination or inappropriate behavior, and take appropriate measures to address such situations.
- ▶ Global awareness: If the company operates internationally, consider the challenges and opportunities related to diversity and inclusion in different cultures and societies.

Inclusive leadership

Leadership must play a guiding role in promoting inclusivity, embedded within a robust strategy supported by appropriate tools to ensure its impact. Therefore, the role of measurement and monitoring of key performance indicators for established objectives is crucial in achieving maximum inclusivity.

Gender equalities

It's worth noting that unfortunately, discrimination can occur in many aspects of employment, including selection, compensation, working hours, vacation, maternity, job security, assignments, training, performance evaluation, career advancement, salary, safety, health, and termination of employment.

This guideline suggests some activities to do to avoid that.

During recruitment/selection:

- ▲ Transparent selection process with public job postings.
- ▲ Blind recruitment, voluntarily removing personal information from candidates' CVs to avoid bias.
- ▲ Indicating in job listings the willingness to accommodate specific candidate needs and adjusting interview settings accordingly.
- ▲ In-house events with role models to create an attractive environment for diversity.

During training/education:

- ▲ Providing adequate preparation for diversity management through coaching and mentoring, including Training of Trainers programs, while also identifying forms of cross-mentorship and inspiring ambassadors.
- ▲ Monitoring training with disaggregated data by target (gender, age, etc.).

During career opportunities/career advancement:

- ▲ Adapting promotion opportunities to employee characteristics (e.g., business trips, work hours, etc.).
- ▲ Annual monitoring and reporting of promotions with disaggregated data by

target.

- ▲ Ensuring equity in compensation based on both the individual's seniority and their role's seniority for all targets.
- ▲ Enhancing the objectivity of evaluations by integrating top-down feedback with feedback from peers, both internal and external to the company, along with mapping process flows among individuals and incorporating bottom-up feedback where possible.
- ▲ Balancing candidate pools for managerial positions.

During job retention & return to Work/fidelity and reintegration:

- ▲ Introducing flexible working hours and work-life balance plans.
- ▲ Establishing a D&I committee.
- ▲ Conducting internal climate surveys to derive intervention plans based on the evidence obtained.

Disability management

In order to implement productive pathways and projects, it is essential to involve the individuals concerned as much as possible in policies that affect them. In this regard, the creation of a D&I Committee is encouraged, composed of individuals with various physical and intellectual disabilities, along with participation in surveys and mixed working groups. One of society and the private sector's major challenges lies in overcoming cognitive biases towards people with disabilities. Therefore, it is not only advisable to promote measures aimed at increasing the employment of individuals with disabilities but also to facilitate and make their employment productive, valuing the actual skills of workers and not underestimating the phenomenon of overqualification.

It is useful to consider that the job satisfaction of workers with disabilities is closely linked not only to ergonomic factors related to workplace accessibility but also to economic and relational aspects. Effective and productive integration of individuals with disabilities occurs when a salary that corresponds to their role and skills is provided, and when colleagues and supervisors respect their work pace and involve them in the work process.

Clear guidance on the type of language to use in communication, including within the company, is provided by international conventions and local associations. The term "person with a disability" is appropriate as it places the individual at the center, while it is advisable to avoid medical expressions and labels that tend to reinforce stereotypes and stigma.

Policies with migrants

- ▶ It is essential to assess the actual skills of the migrant population employed in the company to avoid the widespread phenomenon of overqualification. In this regard, it is important to start with surveys and mapping, collecting disaggregated data that also take into account the positions held in countries of origin and transit.
- ▶ It is also useful to establish collaborations with the academic world to more easily recognize academic qualifications obtained.
- ▶ Companies are advised to include foreign resources employed within D&I

Committees, also to fully bring out any underdeveloped skills.

- ▶ In this regard, selection processes that consider cultural diversity are recommended, with adjustments to the setting, and the provision of Italian L2 language courses to facilitate the socio-professional integration of foreign workers.
- ▶ Finally, it is appropriate to consider, in addition to coaching and mentoring programs, reverse mentoring projects aimed at enhancing the soft skills of the target group.

Diversity management in La Lanterna - guidelines

Needs analysis

During the design phase of Diversity Management policies, the Lantern Cooperative conducted a mapping of the diversities present within the organization. It is important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all standard for diversity, as it varies across contexts. This activity was accompanied by an external analysis of the labor market, enabling the Cooperative to understand how to direct recruiting policies, aiming to promote certain diversities or target groups (e.g., women or people with disabilities).

Defining objectives

Once the situation has been assessed, the organization must set short, medium, and long-term objectives. In this phase, it is essential to involve all those responsible for diversity, primarily the Board of Directors (CDA) and top management, and potentially redefine the organization's vision, emphasizing the value of diversity.

Defining actions

Concrete actions must be associated with each objective, whether they are short, medium, or long-term. These actions should be defined in detail and for different levels within the organization.

Resource allocation

Organizational change is never cost-free. Therefore, it is not enough to express a desire to become a more diverse organization; a budget must be allocated to the planned actions.

Monitoring actions

Each action corresponds to results. For example, welfare policies should reduce absenteeism and turnover rates. Each result must be measured with indicators defined before the intervention.

Establishing a Diversity Management system

Recruiting involves attracting the best candidates selected from a pool of applicants. This is one of the key stages in implementing a Diversity Management policy. Candidate characteristics should focus solely on their professional competencies that best align with the Cooperative's needs, regardless of demographic characteristics, sexual orientation, skin color, etc. After that, it is necessary to enable them to become part of the organization's established culture.

When an organization lacks diversity, it may make sense to instruct recruiters to select individuals from minority groups (women, people with disabilities, people of different ethnicities, etc.); incentivizing these behaviors, for example, with higher compensation. The system should also extend to socialization (mentoring newcomers by more experienced colleagues, assistance from office peers, etc.) and all levels of performance evaluation, ensuring equal career advancement opportunities for everyone, regardless of their personal characteristics (gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc.).

Evaluation and follow-up

Every Diversity Management intervention must be evaluated, both at the end of the process and subsequently, as it is in the organization's interest to make the change structural.

National framework for diversity practice in Slovenia

Tea Radojković, Anja Palčič

Education

Given the particular dimension of inclusion of asylum-seeking and refugee children into education, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport recommends a **two-step inclusion model**. Prior to enrolment of a pupil into regular classes, a 20-hours preparatory phase is organized for the children. Thereafter, children are included in regular classes, whereby they are entitled to additional professional assistance in learning the Slovene language; a continuous form of implementation is recommended. After completing the introductory phase, the pupil is included in a follow-up program, where he is provided with additional support in the period of two school years, as the program includes activities offered both by school and in the local environment (learning Slovene as the second language, learning assistance, individual programs for pupils, adapting methods and forms of work in teaching and adjusting the assessment during the school year, supporting involvement in interest activities at school and in the local environment, various holiday opportunities and activities in the local environment, advanced language courses and support in organizing complementary classes of mother tongues and the culture of immigrant children).

In 2016, an addendum to the Literacy program in Slovene for adult speakers of other languages with an annex for underage international protection applicants, aged 15-18, was developed and adopted. The program supports more adequate inclusion in primary school program for adults. Literacy in Slovene for adult speakers of other languages is an educational program designed to literate people whose first language is not Slovene. The program has an addendum with specific contents and instructions for implementation for underage asylum-seekers, aged 15 to 18 years. The purpose of adapting this program to underage asylum-seekers is their empowerment to integrate into adult education, thereby increasing the possibilities for their integration into Slovene society. By enhancing their literacy skills, it shall be easier for them to integrate into different areas of society.

Livada Primary School Livada Primary School (Ljubljana) has a specific character in Slovenia due to the diversity of its pupils: more than 90 % of pupils are of other ethnic or ethnic affiliation. Excerpt of an interview with the principal Mr. Goran Popović (Slogopis Nr. 24, October 2016). "We have been building the model of including immigrants in regular education and strengthening the knowledge of the Slovene language throughout the years. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport provides schools enrolling migrant children with hours /of Slovene language classes/, but ./ significantly too little, and learning in a large group is significantly less successful than individual work. Our solution was the so-called preparatory phase - immigrant children starting the classes with a Slovene language lesson.

The preparatory class is not part of the compulsory lessons, but the response of students and parents is very positive, as children learn the Slovenian language free of charge and at the same time, as a pre-lesson, the Slovene language class does not interfere with regular lessons.

In the preparatory class, pupils are part of an age-heterogeneous group, but this is not disturbing, as the emphasis is on learning the Slovene language, and they all share the same (lack of) knowledge and (il)literacy. This model allows them to be partially involved in regular classes and in contact with peers, which is an advantage in terms of socialization.

Our two-level model of integration of immigrant children differs from European two-level models, which usually represent a parallel educational line, whereas we include pupils in the regular program, which could be defined as a gradual two-level model that merges into a one-level model. Our working methods are also recognized at European level as of exceptional quality. Despite many difficulties in managing inter-ethnic conflicts at school in the past, these have faded with many of our efforts. We place great emphasis on getting to know different cultures and strengthening respect for diversity, which reduces intolerance.

As part of the **#MigratE D** project, the pupils of the Livada Primary School (Ljubljana), in cooperation with the SLOGA Platform, prepared a short film on multiculturalism and migration at their school. The short film presents the stories of students and a teacher of the Livada Primary School, a multicultural school known for enrolling children from immigrant families. The pupils and the teacher think about their arrival to Slovenia, the reasons for leaving their homeland, the first impressions of Slovenia and the school, and their plans to stay in Slovenia or return to their homeland.

Different forms of **positive discrimination** allow underprivileged children at least roughly the same opportunities in education. The policy of positive discrimination in education began as a response to the theory of cultural deprivation. This theory emphasizes that equality of educational opportunities can only be realized by compensating for the cultural disadvantage of children who come from poor families and live in a culturally impoverished environment. Therefore, special compensation programs are needed.

Forms of positive discrimination made possible by primary school:

- ▶ subsidized food;
- ▶ additional learning support;
- ▶ additional help for children with special needs;
- ▶ free textbook fund;
- ▶ financial assistance to poorer students in paying for school in nature, excursions, etc. (school fund);
- ▶ computer use and assistance;
- ▶ school for parents.

Social welfare

Family support programs

With family support programs, we reduce inequalities in society, strengthen the position of vulnerable families and contribute to greater social inclusion of families and individuals. Above all, these programs are aimed at children, young people and their families, because care for the healthy development of our young generation represents care for the whole society. The programs are long-term, free and widely accessible and are based on modern concepts of support and (self) help.

Family Centers

We have organized Family Centers, which are a place for different generations to socialize, to strengthen the social roles of individuals, to support easier coordination of family and professional life, and a place to exchange good practices and positive experiences. In addition, the Centers provide educational and practical workshops on developing positive parenting, carry out holiday activities for children and organize occasional childcare. Family centers offer their services free of charge.

Family representative

The family representative offers the family of a child with special needs conversation, support and information about programs to support the family.

Examples of projects in Slovenia with diversity fostering in its focus:

PROJECT ŠIPK: Development of the Support Program for Children Refugees in Inclusion to Social Environment (STIK), which included work with immigrants

The main goal of the project was to fill the gap in structured, deliberate and professionally based activities that would help refugee and immigrant children included in the programs of the business unit of Slovene Philanthropy in Maribor to join the new social environment, especially in the context of the school. Indirectly, through the guidance and planning of students' work, the professor worked in this field within the framework of the above described project ŠIPK STIK. Most of the twenty students who were involved in the project were included in the education of Slovenian language during the school year, when the project was under way, so that about half a year ago they were already involved in education before actual project participation.

During the project, students worked intensively with 20 refugee and immigrant pupils. The pupils received training aid and psychosocial support in the form of regular meetings with students twice a week, in the form of regular monthly meetings of all pupils and students, and in the last month also in the form of occasional meetings with tutors – their peers who were trained for tutorial work during the project. The students, the pupils and the counsellor at school reported the positive effects of these meetings both for learning activities and the social inclusion of children of refugees and immigrants. The professor met with the students regularly (every second week), and together they reflected their work

and planned future activities. In case of dilemmas, the students also consulted the teacher individually. Together with students, the teacher planned and attended joint monthly meetings with children, where the students performed group activities for all children involved in the project.

The project mostly provided individual support in the learning process, while the students were very innovative in their choice of learning activities and resources. They quickly realized that good preparation was necessary, but that at meetings the work should be adapted to the abilities, the current mood and current responsibilities of pupils.

The professor emphasized that for any effective help to the pupil – both for learning the language and acquiring a wider cultural aspect – it is key for the pupil to being able to get as much contact with his/her peers as possible, and to strive for a supportive relation with him/ her, sometimes at the expense of attaining the learning goals. The support relation between the teacher and the pupil has an enormous potential to stimulate learning. The problem, however, is that in excessive productivity orientation it often occurs that learning becomes an alienating factor between the teacher and the pupil. When choosing a communication channel, professor Košir explains that it would be difficult to highlight the best communication channel, because every child has a different one. She believes that it is important for a child to show that we care about him/ her and that we are genuinely interested in him/her, gradually giving him/her a sense of security, which sometimes takes several weeks, or months.

A great medium for overcoming language barriers can be games, fine arts activities, sports, and, of course, various didactic tools for language acquisition.

For the successful socialization of the child, it is also necessary to work with the group. A consistent message is that we are responsible for the well-being of everyone in the group. In the project, a system of peer tutoring turned to be an example of good practice. The activities that were the most effective and where the feelings of attachment and affection were strengthened were joint meetings of all pupils and students, where they did not merely learn, but also and mostly had fun.

Project USTuj, DIMEP in ŠIPK-STIK

The selection of activities for learning assistance was always adapted to the needs of the children. The two girls the student was helping often said themselves what the areas they felt as not having enough knowledge about were. Introduction to the activity lasted a few minutes and contained relaxed conversation, for example, how they spent their day, how they were feeling, if they wanted to talk about something special, or they performed relaxing activities such as ball games, memory, etc. Although these were games, these activities helped the girls to continuously enrich their vocabulary. The indirect language with the girls was Albanian, as the performer/graduate student also had a refugee experience (a refugee from Kosovo). She tried to speak with the girls in the Slovenian language, while for longer interpretations she used the Albanian language. The graduate

student believes that the best communication channel to get through to the child are definitely drawings; through drawings, pictures, and illustrations, children can communicate a lot and successfully.

In overcoming language barriers and for successful child socialization, the interviewer Rezarta Zumerri, from her own experience, as a child coming from a different cultural environment, stresses that she always wanted to be placed into groups by the teachers themselves, so as not to feel excluded. She is aware that she has had problems with her classmates about mockery and non-acceptance regarding national and religious affiliation. She thinks that teachers should be more aware of the attitude of other children to children in a disadvantaged language position and to be more alert to the fact that these children feel comfortable in the classroom, and not merely focus on the learning achievements of the immigrant child. As the most effective activities, she emphasizes spontaneous conversations, because through a sincere and relaxed conversation we let the child know that we do care about him/her and that we wish to help him/her.

An example of the activity in which the children were happy to participate were the joint monthly meetings of the ŠIPK-STIK project aimed mostly at relaxation. At one of the joint meetings, they planned to create cards with their names, and on the back, the children drew what they liked doing in their spare time. Such activities proved to be good because they made it easier for the students to plan activities related to children's hobbies (e.g., at the first joint meeting one of the girls drew a book, thus indicating that she liked reading books in her spare time; and so the graduate student brought her various books and they read them together, discussed them, explained the words she did not understand in Slovenian, and at the same time the girl enriched her linguistic knowledge).

Another example of activity: at one of the lessons, the graduate student planned a simple activity, i.e. finding a hidden object in the room. This game required the use of words as hot, lukewarm, cold, icy. At first, the graduate student was worried to a certain extent that the game would be boring for the girl, but during the first run of this activity, the student learned that sometimes even the simplest activities can be difficult for children not fluent in the Slovenian language; namely, the girls did not manage to use the words hot, lukewarm, cold etc. correctly for quite some time, they seemed very uninterested; and after some more playing, the graduate student realized that the girls did not understand the instructions. When she explained the rules of the game to girls in Albanian, the game became interesting and the girls even repeatedly asked the student to play it again.

Tabor Primary School 1, Maribor

Working with children combines pleasant and relaxed activities; if children do not understand any other language, the teacher communicates with gestures, with miming, and with pictures. If children come from the Slavic area, the teacher uses their language or simple Slovenian, which the pupils can understand with the support of facial expressions and gestures. The teacher uses a frontal, individual form of learning, work in pairs and groups, all depending on the age and knowledge of the pupils. At the first contact with a child who does not understand Slovenian,

the teacher presents herself with a gesture of herself, saying her own name, and then gesturing to the pupil to do the same. It is always important that the first approach is relaxed, a smile and an encouraging word should be present, although they are not verbally understood. The tone of voice is also very important.

The teachers use various activities, e. g. drawing, painting, playing (especially with younger children), through pictures, image descriptions and conversations. If there is a possibility to use an indirect language, the teacher definitely uses it, as it facilitates communication; for example, with English, Serbian, Croatian, the basics of Albanian, Russian ... If there is no possibility to use the indirect language, gestures and facial expressions with the help of pictures are usually used.

The child can most easily open through conversation or gestures, with a smile, and certainly with kindness and understanding. Language barriers can be overcome with facial expressions, gestures, even with a compiler or dictionaries, but it is definitely the easiest way to use image material. The classmates should be encouraged to talk to a child coming from abroad, to do various activities together ... Children accept games such as Activity or Memory very well. Many materials (especially visual and textual) are prepared and adapted by the teacher herself. The teacher's ideas arise promptly, from experience. The game can be included in the activity at the basic level.

The teacher has learned a lot from the children and the adults she taught, including the basics of their languages such as Albanian or Russian, and she realized that some of us are culturally very different, and that the same gesture or facial expression that we take for granted, can be very different from ours. For example, she taught a highly educated Albanian woman from Tirana, and the language of communication was English. At the end of the teacher's explanation, the teacher asked her if she understood. She nodded from left to the right. The teacher explained to her again and asked her once again, if she understood. She nodded from left to the right again, this time stronger. The teacher repeated the explanation one more time, slowly and precisely, but the woman's reaction was the same. Then the teacher asked the woman what is the thing that she did not understand. The woman looked at her surprisingly and told the teacher that she had understood everything and that she had understood everything the first time. They found out that, in Albanian, nodding left to right means YES and nodding up to down means NO, as opposed to Slovenian.

For learning and the process of learning, intercultural differences are very important. As an example, the teacher says that the Russians are very respectful of the teacher and will do everything the teacher instructs. For Arabs, it depends on whether a woman (also a girl) is taught in a group of men (boys). If she is, she will not even utter a single word, although she knows a lot, because she does not want to show her knowledge to men and thus overshadow them.

There are also some thematic fields that are more difficult to accept by some cultures, e. g. the human body. These kinds of cultural differences are sometimes very difficult to overcome, for example, the teacher taught women from Arabia. The teacher worked with women during breaks when the men went for a drink. At

that time, the women spoke in Slovenian openly and without shame, and many showed a greater knowledge of Slovenian compared to their husbands.

Olga Meglič primary school, Ptuj, Slovenia

The method of work depends on several factors: if a student is from a Serbian or Croatian speaking environment, it is easier for him to talk, understand Slovenian, he/she adapts faster and makes contacts with other pupils easier. Therefore, first it is necessary to talk to the pupil. Olga Meglič Primary School, Ptuj, Slovenia to determine his/her understanding of Slovenian and based on these preliminary findings the teacher prepares a working plan. The forms of work that the teacher uses are similar to those she uses to work with other pupils, but their execution takes more time, as the teacher also uses the method of visualization, including drawing or playing. Efficiency depends on the degree of understanding, expressed interest, and domestic support. Such a pupil sits in the first row, so that the teacher can easily follow his/her progress, help him/her, translate. During the lesson, held separately, the teacher and the pupil read a story together, the teacher sketches the course of the story, translates the instructions for language practice, so the pupil can understand them and is then able to do the exercise (when dealing with, for example, verbs). The teacher often encourages comparison with the child's mother tongue, which is also interesting for pupil's schoolmates.

When working with Chinese students, the approach is different. The teacher prepares the pupils some basic questions of Slovenian language, which they write on the computer and translate them. For a better understanding, drawing, painting, and photography are extremely important in the acquisition of certain literary texts, also watching a film (e. g. Pastirci, Bratovščina Sinjega galeba).

The manner of overcoming language barriers depends on the language the pupil is speaking. The use of a certain compiler is certainly helpful; nevertheless, at times, there is already a pupil coming from the same language environment at the school already, and he/she serves as a translator; this is particularly well accepted among the Chinese.

When socializing a child into the environment, the first impression is definitely the most important, especially when we need to let the pupil know that he/she is welcome and accepted. The pupils are prepared to accept their new schoolmates beforehand, learning about their possible difficulties, especially in the case of language, thus letting him/her know that he/she is accepted, they help him/her with daily and basic issues (schedule, changing classrooms, snacks, etc.). Other pupils always respond positively, they are curious. As a teacher (and even more as a class teacher), the interviewee assigns one pupil per week to make sure that the new pupil is not excluded, he/she helps him/her when there is a sign denoting the end of a lesson, when they change classrooms, take sports equipment, etc.

The immigrant pupils like it very much if they can present their country in front of the class, if they can do anything that is related to their culture. For example: the pupil, who was a Muslim, presented her country and religion; whereas, while reading the Koran in Arabic, she also mastered the Arabic script; she wrote on the

board what other pupils and the teacher had told her to write. This was extremely interesting for all the pupils. When speaking in front of the classmates about describing the process of making something, the pupils from abroad were very interested in presenting some dishes from their culture, their customs, etc. For home reading, they chose the most popular youth literature of their national literature and presented it to the classmates.

The inclusion of children and adults at "Pegas"

The purpose of the operation, as the name itself suggests, is the inclusion of children and adults. The concept of inclusion stems from the mentality of enabling the optimal all-around development of individuals in accordance with the needs and abilities of each child, as every child or adult has the right to an equal life in society. UNESCO (2009) defines inclusion as the full acceptance and inclusion of all children and young people with the aim of developing harmony and a sense of belonging both within the group and in society. Inclusion as such is therefore a process of acceptance, seeking better ways, identifying and removing or overcoming barriers, providing early and comprehensive care and support to the child and the environment, a process that enables the presence, participation, and success of every child and young person. This encourages all education providers to discover innovative, interactive teaching and learning methods that create a supportive learning environment for children, as well as adults, who, for various reasons, are exposed to marginalization, exclusion, or lack of success. Therefore, the Tourist Farm Zevnik, in collaboration with its partners, decided to apply for the project to offer children and adults with special needs the opportunity for free accommodation and participation in activities taking place on the farm.

Through caring for horses, horseback riding, assistance on the farm, workshops, camps, outdoor school, and other activities, they aim to connect users with regular farm activities (riding school, workshops, etc.) and thereby stimulate spontaneous, informal learning of social skills, acceptance of diversity, inclusion, destigmatization, and, in turn, build an inclusive, helping society with a healthier lifestyle. The goal is for all farm visitors to learn about mutual support, mutual assistance, and knowledge of horse handling, as well as a healthier lifestyle, respect for nature and the environment, coexistence with animals, respect, and understanding of traditional farm life, thus improving the conditions for the inclusion of vulnerable groups in everyday society.

The project aims to build a covered riding arena, which will permanently enable the implementation of activities throughout the year and not just 2-3 months, as the execution of activities is heavily dependent on weather conditions and is therefore severely limited in conducting various activities. This investment could immediately increase the number of individuals with physical or mental disabilities included, as organizing these events is very demanding, which was also the main reason for building the covered riding arena. An additional goal is to have regular riding lessons and other events run in parallel with the free activities from the project, allowing for spontaneous interaction, adaptation, assistance in horse preparation and finishing, and thus acceptance and understanding of diversity on a human, empathetic level. Already, with the occasional visits of various vulnerable

groups to the farm, the vulnerability and stigmatization of people with special needs have become increasingly evident, while positive effects of living in nature, coexisting with animals, improving health, and better overall psychophysical well-being have also been observed. Through conversations with various parents and organizations, the idea of connecting regular farm activities (riding school, camps, etc.) with activities related to organizations and associations dealing with a more vulnerable population arose, with the aim of mutual acceptance and understanding, as well as promoting the beneficial effects of connecting with horses both on a health and social level. The project includes activities that cover all 6 municipalities in the Posavje region since the project's purpose is also to raise awareness about the importance of mutual respectful coexistence with people, animals, and nature. Because of the covered riding arena, activities can be conducted throughout the year and in all weather conditions, which will lead to greater utilization of the facility and greater accessibility for all target groups, especially the vulnerable ones. The development of tourism activities adapted to people with special needs would strengthen the identity of Čatež, which has been enhancing its other local therapeutic and tourism offerings for many years.

Class teachers and the inclusion of marginalized groups of students in classroom communities

A class teacher has a very important role in the process of education. Student diversity is one of the challenges he/she faces at work. Diversity is a result of the various religious, racial and ethnic groups to which students belong, as well as of special needs status and the socio-economic status of students' families. All of the differences listed above may lead to marginalization at the school level and even more at the class level, where students spend most of their time in contact with one another. It often happens that students who are different from the majority are pushed aside. We can talk about segregation here. Peers react differently to diversity. In most cases, being different is something unwanted, and that is why students seen as 'different' are stigmatized. Goffman (1984) describes social stigma as a particular response of the environment to what is perceived as 'different'. Stereotypes and discrimination are terms closely connected to stigmatization. Manstead and Hewstone (1995) define stereotypes as degrading standpoints, negative emotions or hostile or discriminatory behaviour of a person towards others who belong to a particular social group. Šetinc Vernik and Vernik Šetinc (n.d.) understand discrimination as putting stereotypes into action.

Three hundred and eighty-one class teachers in Slovene schools were included in the survey. We found that neither the working age, the size of the place where teachers work nor the level of teaching are correlated with the self-evaluation of class teachers about the degree of qualification needed to integrate marginalized students. When talking about the amount of knowledge needed for integrating marginalized students into the class, we found that those who teach classes from the first to the fifth grade have acquired more competence in integrating marginalized students than those who teach the grades from six to nine. We believe that the reason is the higher number of pedagogical subjects that are included in the curriculum. The data analysis showed that teachers from larger towns have more experience with integrating marginalized students. The reason

for this is probably the greater flow of people in big towns and consequently a very diverse population. We also established that teachers in the grades from one to five spend more time planning lessons for marginalized students than those who teach in higher grades. These results were expected, given the fact that teachers in lower grades have a greater role in teaching socialization skills than do teachers in higher grades. In the survey we asked class teachers about the difficulty of integrating particular marginalized groups. We found that class teachers have the most problems when integrating students from different cultural backgrounds, and the least difficulties when integrating those who live in disadvantaged social conditions. The research shows that teachers mainly evaluated the proposed strategies as very successful. Class teachers gave first place to the strategy that motivates students to bring an object that reminds them of their culture to school. Next in line is the strategy where students from a different language environment teach their school friends a song in their first language. Then there is the strategy of forming diverse and ever changing groups for teamwork. Students thus have the chance to communicate with others. The worst strategy was the one that suggests offering help to marginalized students by a reward system, meaning that any student who helps a marginalized student receives a token. After accumulating a certain number of tokens, the student receives an award. We assume that the strategy was reviewed as undesirable because it involves trying to buy affection towards marginalized peers. Based on the research results, we conclude that it would be wise for class teachers to acquire as many strategies as possible for integrating marginalized groups during their formal education. That would make it easier for them to choose an appropriate strategy that suits the work in a classroom community and would consequently ease the integration of students considerably.

The digital skills of vulnerable groups to enhance their employability in the labor market

1. Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

The aim of the MoLeNET program is to promote the broader use of mobile learning. The project is focused on the development of "life skills." Its purpose is to build confidence and encourage users to improve their basic knowledge and progress to further training. It motivates users to work both individually and in groups. Additionally, learning mobile technology as an educational aid also enhances the communication skills of users.

2. Preparing Youth for the Future Job Market: Innovative Approach

The aim of the project is to transform the career guidance of the younger generation by introducing an innovative approach to prepare them for future jobs. The specific project objectives are as follows:

Promoting Innovative Thinking and Future-Oriented Mindset; Engaging young individuals in innovative 3D virtual learning environments, including games, to help them better prepare for future job roles. Additionally, partners have initiated the "Jobs of the Future" competition, where young people can showcase their creativity, critical thinking, and future-oriented mindset.

Enhancing Innovative Abilities of Career Counselors and Professionals: Developing scenarios, creative workshops, a European competition for innovative career counseling services, and an e-book of best practices in game-based career counseling to improve the innovative capabilities of career guidance providers. These approaches aim to empower young adults with the skills and mindset necessary to adapt to the evolving world.

The project partners have developed a game that assists students in critical thinking, decision-making, and other essential skills. Based on research, it was found that it's crucial for young people to be informed about future jobs and changes in the world of work. However, half of the respondents currently do not learn about these topics in school. In addition to creativity, innovation, and an entrepreneurial spirit, respondents rated knowledge of labor market trends, self-awareness, flexibility, and openness to change as the most important career skills for the future. The research also revealed that career guidance providers need better preparation for future job trends. Specifically, they should improve their knowledge of labor market trends and youth needs, as well as their ability to create new tools designed for the new digital generation. Most respondents cannot identify a specific online information source and acknowledge the lack of an "all-in-one" platform that adequately provides information on how to work with young people on this topic.

Based on these findings, the partnership has developed a plan for future career guidance, created a game-based learning scenario, and introduced a 3D virtual world platform aimed at helping young people better prepare for their future jobs. The main outcome of the project is the career game "Future Time Traveler," which innovatively combines new digital technologies (3D virtual learning environments) with educational gaming methodologies to create a unique simulation of the future world.

The career game is based on challenging missions in which young people explore the future world, understand the trends shaping the future job market, new job roles, and the skills they will need. It encourages their career mindset in decision-making and future orientation. Serious game scenarios include elements of escape rooms, online quests, treasure hunts, strategies, and adventure games that can facilitate the career decision-making process and assist users in using labor market information. Visual stimuli and a user-centered approach promote engagement and create a genuinely unique learning experience. The virtual reality environment is designed around a story that engages users in a learning journey, including various virtual spaces.

3. Labour market activation of vulnerable groups

The project's goal is to reduce long-term unemployment and dependence on guaranteed minimum assistance by effectively integrating vulnerable groups, especially recipients of guaranteed minimum assistance, into the labor market through their participation in specific skills development and service programs.

The program consists of two types of support: counseling Support (before individuals actively engage in employment): This support is designed to assist

recipients of guaranteed minimum assistance in their activation and integration into the labor market. The expected outcome is the engagement of 1,200 individuals. Mentoring Support (while the beneficiary is participating in training or other active employment measures): This support is aimed at identifying personal and professional obstacles and challenges that recipients face in the training or employment process. It also seeks to determine the factors and reasons that hinder the beneficiary's integration into the educational or employment environment. The expected outcome is the engagement of 1,200 individuals.

The project aims to provide these forms of support to help vulnerable individuals overcome barriers and successfully transition into the labor market, ultimately reducing their reliance on guaranteed minimum assistance.

The program includes a combination of measures aimed at activating long-term unemployed individuals in the labor market, including financial and motivational incentives. One of the measures is a counseling and motivational program designed to encourage and assist recipients of guaranteed minimum assistance in participating in training and other active employment measures, thereby facilitating their integration into the labor market.

The diversity of our company is the perfect basis for a better understanding of the world around us

The CARE programme is based on three pillars, defined as follows: FOR THE BODY FOR THE SOUL FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE. The activities placed under each of the pillars address all employees regardless of their sex, age, education, race, national origin, religious convictions, sexual orientation or political affiliation. Project objective: We wanted employees to know how important they were to the company's business operations and to get the message in a different way, i.e. not just through words. We know that satisfied employees are also more committed to the work, feel an affiliation with the company, and are more innovative and productive.

We got the individual activities up and running in a short period of time, but nevertheless in a gradual fashion. We wanted employees to achieve a deeper understanding of the benefits, to think about the opportunities on offer, and to select them and become involved. The CARE programme activities for the body are: the establishment of staff sports clubs (running, volleyball, football, fitness and aerobics, badminton and cycling); sports focused weekends (competitions involving all such clubs from different countries); regular systematic health checks every two years for all employees; and breast and prostate examinations for employees aged over 40. The CARE programme activities for the soul are: a 'day of values' (charitable activities within the company and society at large); supplementary company donations and additional days of leave for charitable activities (the company matches a donation made to a charitable organisation by an employee, the employee receives an extra day of leave for their charitable activity). Creative Impulse (supporting creativity by organising in-company competitions for literary creation, visual arts, performing and other arts); opportunities for in-company education and training (workshops at which company specialists impart their

knowledge to employees); solidarity and support for employees who are going through difficulties (using a precisely defined set of rules on the method and amount of support and the cases in which it may be given). The CARE programme activities for work-life balance are: flexible working hours; possibility of working from home; day of leave for parents on their child's first day of school; company visits by employees' children; New Year's presents for employees' young children; tickets to sponsors' events; discounts on services provided by the company's business partners.

Conclusion

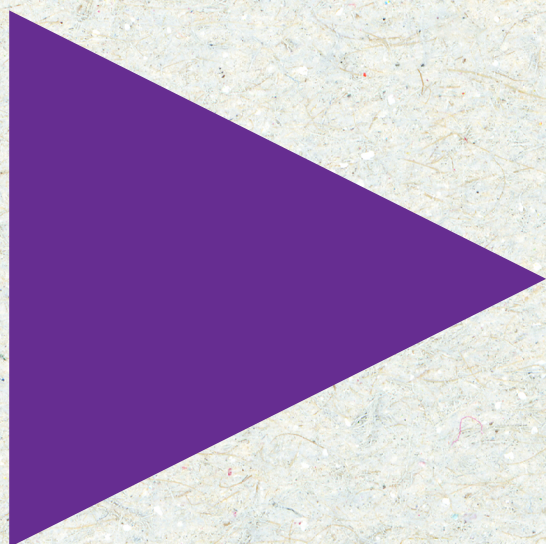
The main idea of this publication is to connect you to various projects, ideas, inspirations that will help you in your mission to bring diversity to life as an asset within your organisation/institutions. Understanding that our organisational functioning affects the way we implement diversity values into practice will enrich your work and provide your staff and young people you work with a more rich and fulfilling experience. We hope you managed to find examples that you can transfer to your functioning. If you are in need of assistance in planning your diversity revolution actions, we are at your disposal for support!

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**diversity
revolution**
FROM VALUE TO PRACTICE

