



8. To what extent

are we a democratic and inclusive school community?

DESCRIPTION

The school community (teachers, administration, students, parents) assess to what extent they are ready to welcome and include refugee students. The activity is based on the exploration through a questionnaire of the school's culture and the actions it has taken so far in relation to inclusion. The questionnaire is based on the theory of the Whole School Approach and the Council of Europe's Framework for Reference on Competences for Democratic Culture (2018). The aim is for members of the school community to answer the questionnaire together as a working group, so that each answer results from a meaningful and honest discussion in which all voices are heard. Upon completion they immediately process the results and, based on the indicators in need improvement, they decide what actions need to be taken in which areas to achieve the inclusion of refugee children. The indicators and their reference to specific issues and ideas are very helpful in planning activities for an inclusive school community.



OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the activity are for the participants to:

1. explore to what extent the school community has developed actions for the inclusion of refugees and operates in a democratic context,
2. explore the students' perceptions of their school atmosphere in relation to inclusion,
3. highlight needs and issues that require decisions for change or improvement,
4. reflect together (teachers, administration, students, parents) on the potential for the school to develop into a democratic and inclusive community,
5. identify issues and needs that the school has to be welcoming and inclusive for refugee children,
6. identify issues and needs that the school has to be welcoming and inclusive for refugee children,
7. work together to upgrade the school and community operations to be inclusive of refugee children.

EXPECTED OUTCOME (EO)



Upon completion of the activity, participants are expected to:

1. evaluate their actions and activities in relation to the inclusion of refugee children,
2. organize joint actions to improve the school in relation to inclusion and democratic culture,
3. cooperate in order to welcome and include refugee children in the school,
4. consult each other and make joint decisions,
5. feel secure in evaluating their actions and activities within the group,
6. acting together to achieve a common goal,
7. adopt new ideas and proposals when it comes to improving the functioning of the school and the school community.





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VALUES

ATTITUDES

Respect

27 Gives space to others to express themselves

B

Civic-mindedness

33 Expresses a willingness to co-operate and work with others

B

34 Collaborates with other people for common interest causes

B

36 Discusses what can be done to help make the community a better place

I

Responsibility

39 Shows that he/she accepts responsibility for his/her actions

B

Self-efficacy

45 Expresses a belief that he/she can carry out the activities that he/she has planned

B

46 Expresses a belief in his/her ability to navigate obstacles when pursuing a goal

M

Tolerance of ambiguity

50 Engages well with other people who have a variety of different points of view

B

COMPETENCES FOR A DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

Skills of listening and observing

70 Listens carefully to differing opinions

B

71 Listens attentively to other people

B

Flexibility and adaptability

82 Modifies his/her opinions if he/she is shown through rational argument that this is required

B

83 Can change the decisions he/she has made if the consequences of those decisions show that this is required

B

Co-operation skills

95 When working as member of a group, does his/her share of the group's work

B

97 When working as a member of a group, keeps others informed about any relevant or useful information

I

SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE & CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING





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Activity steps

01

Set up a coordination group of 5-7 people, including the administration (1), teachers (2), students (1-2) and parents (1-2). The representative of the administration will be the coordinator. It is advisable to start with an open invitation stating the purpose of the group: to assess to what extent our community works democratically and inclusively to welcome refugee children. It is important to include representatives of all groups in the school community

02

The group is formed and sets a day to meet to work together. It is made clear to everyone that the administration has a coordinating role, while the others are equal participants.

03

A group workshop is organized. It is suggested to give a short introduction to the questionnaire and the theories on which it is based: the Whole School Approach and the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (2018). When the participants have completed the questionnaire, they discuss it together and proceed to agree on the indicators one by one. It is important that everyone's answers are heard first, in order to share different perspectives and exchange information. A climate of cooperation and respect in the group is essential.

After this, the participants decide what actions and activities they need to undertake as a school community for a democratic and inclusive school, taking into account the indicators they need to improve. In which of the three areas/pillars do they need to act, and to what extent, in order to achieve the inclusion of refugee children? It is useful to choose the desired degree of activation (moderate, high-priority, etc.) in each.





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Evaluation/Assessment

Reflective circle at the end of the workshop, with responses from all group members about:

- How did we feel as a group working together for the common purpose of welcoming and including refugee children?
- Did we feel safe to express our opinion and evaluate our actions and activities?
- Now that we know what we need to improve, can we together organize joint actions to upgrade the school in relation to inclusion and democratic culture?

(A suggestion is to proceed with Activity 20. Creation of an Action Plan).

The trainer creates a short questionnaire to evaluate the activity based on the expected learning outcomes, to be given to all at the end of the workshop.

Materials/sources

1. PowerPoint presentation of the questionnaire theory.
2. Computer.
3. Projector.
4. Questionnaire: copies for all team members and an additional one to be completed by the team.





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Indicators describing a democratic and inclusive school community for refugee children

To make our school more inclusive, let's consider to what extent our actions meet the following indicators:

1: Not at all, 2: A little, 3: Partially, 4: To a high degree

SECTION 1: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE - SCHOOL CULTURE

General indicators	Specific indicators	1	2	3	4
1.1. The school's governance is democratic and inclusive.	■ The teaching staff is involved in decision-making meetings related to the school and the inclusion of refugee children.				
	■ The administration regularly consults with students to formulate school policy on issues of concern to all students.				
	■ An active parents' association regularly convenes to discuss issues related to the school, including inclusion issues.				
	■ In the regulations and the documents expressing the school's policy, there are references to human rights and education for democratic citizenship.				
1.2. There is transparency and accessibility of information.	■ Documents expressing the school's policy are easily accessible to the public (on the school's website or other easily accessible source), including in the languages of refugee students.				
	■ Parents, including parents of refugee children, are informed by direct means of communication about school-related issues.				
	■ The accessibility of all school-related information is regularly assessed.				
	■ Explicit systems are in place for complaints from students, parents and staff to be submitted in confidence about any school-related issue.				





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General indicators	Specific indicators	1	2	3	4
1.3. The Student Council is actively involved in the operation of the school.	■ The school ensures that operating rules are established with the involvement of students, respecting human rights and the principles of democratic operation.				
	■ Information about the functioning of the student communities (such as student council) is regularly offered to students, either directly by members of the Teachers' Association or via other means (such as leaflets).				
	■ The Student Council is actively involved in the discussion of issues related to the governance of the school and the inclusion of refugee children.				
1.4. Equality and prevention of all forms of discrimination is a school priority.	■ Equal treatment and the prevention of discrimination and conflict are explicitly mentioned in the school's regulations.				
	■ Everyone in the school community (students, parents, teachers, other staff members), is actively encouraged to oppose any form of discrimination in the school.				
	■ Teachers, students, and school administration are actively engaged in documenting and addressing discrimination against refugee children.				
	■ Specific procedures are in place to prevent and address incidents of discrimination in the school.				





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General indicators	Specific indicators	1	2	3	4
>> 1.4. Equality and prevention of all forms of discrimination is a school priority.	■ Procedures are in place to allow members of the school community to confidentially report incidents of discrimination to specific staff members whom they can trust and who have the authority to address such issues.				
	■ Procedures are in place to enable, in a safe and confidential environment, for refugee children to report confidential incidents of discrimination in the school.				
1.5. Inclusion and diversity are actively supported.	■ The school's management policy states its commitment to welcoming people from all backgrounds and social groups (parents, staff and pupils) regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, race, or disability.				
	■ The school monitors and measures the progress of students from vulnerable or minority groups, particularly refugee children in relation to the progress of the majority of students.				
	■ School staff monitor student social interaction so as not to overlook evidence of exclusionary and discriminatory practices against particular individuals or groups, particularly in times of exceptional circumstances (e.g. Covid- 19).				





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General indicators	Specific indicators	1	2	3	4
1.6. The ethos of the school supports conflict management and peaceful conflict resolution.	■ Programs in the school promote inclusion and the right to diversity as a form of violence prevention.				
	■ There is a specific policy on reporting and handling cases of bullying and conflict, particularly in relation to refugee children.				
	■ Mediation services are available and offered by trained members of the school community as required.				
	■ There are students or teachers who are educated/trained and engaged in peace education, mediation, and conflict management.				





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SECTION 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING

General indicators	Specific indicators	1	2	3	4
2.1. Education on democratic citizenship and/or human rights is a component of the curriculum	■ There are clear references to elements of democratic citizenship education and/or human rights education in the lesson plans or programs.				
	■ There is a strategy and planning for the inclusion of elements of democratic citizenship and/or human rights education in the teaching of courses - with examples, case studies and references to the inclusion of refugee children (teaching about democracy, for democracy and through democracy).				
	■ Teachers make explicit references to the elements of democratic citizenship and/or human rights education in their lessons.				
	■ Teachers use interactive and student-centered methods in their classrooms on a regular basis, in which they include refugee children in various ways.				
2.2. Programs and extracurricular activities aimed at promoting democratic principles and respect for human rights are organized at the school.	■ There is at least one activity or group dealing with issues related to democratic citizenship and/or human rights education or refugee education.				
	■ At least one whole school awareness-raising event is held each year to promote education for democratic citizenship and/or human rights with reference to the inclusion of refugee children.				





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SECTION 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING

General indicators	Specific indicators	1	2	3	4
>> 2.2. Programs and extracurricular activities aimed at promoting democratic principles and respect for human rights are organized at the school.	■ Students carry out projects related to democratic citizenship education and/or human rights education and inclusion in the school community.				
	■ Organizations dealing with issues related to the inclusion of refugees, democratic citizenship and/or human rights education are regularly invited to the school, to provide information, present their work or organize extracurricular activities.				

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SECTION 3: COOPERATION WITH THE COMMUNITY (PARENTS - SCHOOLS - ORGANIZATIONS)

General indicators	Specific indicators	1	2	3	4
3.1. The school cooperates with all parents (both local and refugee) and other organizations in the community.	■ The school cooperates with local authorities, parents, NGOs, public and private institutions and organizations.				
	■ Organizations from the local community regularly use the school facilities to organize events aimed at solving community problems and supporting community interests.				
	■ Organizations that care for refugee children work with the school to include refugee children.				
	■ Organizations involved in refugee inclusion are regularly invited to the school to organize joint events.				





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General indicators	Specific indicators	1	2	3	4
3.2. The school works together with other schools.	■ The school organizes partnerships and joint activities with other schools in the country for democratic citizenship education and/or human rights education and the inclusion of refugee children.				
	■ Joint school events are organized with the participation of children and/or parents or guardians of refugee children.				
	■ Visits between schools on issues concerning refugee children are organized.				





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Actions and operations we need to undertake as a school community for a democratic and inclusive school

Considering the indicators we need to improve, in which areas do we need to act and to what extent, to achieve the inclusion of refugee children? Select the desired level of activism (e.g., moderate, high) in each area where you are facing the biggest issues and have not been as active as you could be.

Sectors-Actions	Moderate 1	Enough 2	A lot 3
1. Actions and activities for refugee children			
2. Actions and activities for refugee children in cooperation with local institutions and organizations caring [for refugee children or working for their inclusion in school.			
3. Actions and activities for guardians of refugee children.			
4. Actions and activities for students, including refugee children, and parents in the school to actively contribute to the inclusion of refugee children.			
5. Actions and activities for the teachers of our school to actively contribute to the inclusion of refugee children.			

Which indicators are involved in the actions and activities we will design?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

