Making inclusive values attractive in secondary education: an international partnership

The project aims to empower teachers to foster inclusive attitudes and appreciation of diversity among late adolescents (ages 16–19). It involves a collaboration of partners from Latvia, Estonia, and Spain, including three universities, two schools, and one teacher training center.

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Project background

Inclusive education thrives when rooted in genuine inclusive values and their translation into daily actions (Galkienė, 2021; Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2020). Inclusive values such as equity, equality, and respect for diversity within the community acknowledge the intrinsic worth of each individual and emphasise the significance of equal opportunities for all (Kalyniuk, 2023; Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2020). Teachers who aim to develop inclusive practices must be aware of the underlying values of inclusive education and actively implement them in their teaching (Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2020).

In addition, students' acceptance of inclusive education plays a crucial role in its success (Bates et al., 2015). Educating young people in inclusive values is essential, as, for example, poor mental health can lower tolerance levels and promote non-inclusive attitudes (Kieling et al., 2024). Furthermore, adolescents' reliance on immediate gratification in the digital world can hinder the practice of inclusivity, which requires self-control (Burnell et al., 2023). Individuals often exhibit less inclusivity online than in real life (Nitschinsk et al., 2022), yet adolescents spend significant time in online environments, where they are rewarded with likes.

The school system is a natural and crucial space for promoting inclusive values and attitudes. Therefore, the project promotes inclusion as a fundamental educational value, aiming to empower teachers of late adolescents (16–19) to make inclusivity attractive and meaningful for their students.



Three specific objectives:

1. To promote teachers' and late adolescents' inclusive values and attitudes, strengthening social cohesion in the school education system and beyond.
2. To promote teachers' professional and personal development and creativity.
3. To promote partners' capacity for transnational cooperation through partnership work in existing and new networks, increasing the quality, relevance, and internationalization of their activities.

Expected results:

- A transnational research report
- Collaborative scientific publication
- Teacher training course
- Handbook for making inclusion values attractive for LA

Insights from transnational report:

STRENGTHS
- comprehensive legal frameworks (Spain)
- stakeholder engagement (Estonia)
- collaborative initiatives (Latvia)

WEAKNESSES
- socio-economic gaps and disparities (Spain)
- limited experience with inclusive values (Estonia)
- limited impact studies (Latvia)

SWOT Analysis

All countries:
- enhancing curriculum development
- increasing international collaboration
- strengthening vocational education
- further development of digital tools

OPPORTUNITIES

All countries:
- overloaded curricula
- home and media influences
- limited resources

THREATS

Figure 1. *SWOT analysis of the state of art of fostering inclusive values in Latvia, Spain, and Estonia*



Current practices of developing inclusive values

Key themes and adaptable practices based on project partners input include:

1. Experiential learning through simulation and role-playing
2. Structured dialogue and philosophical inquiry
3. Community engagement and service learning
4. Reflection and self-awareness
5. Theatrical immersion & gamification

Core concepts for teacher training:
- holistic competencies for teachers;
- meaningful dialogue and critical reflection;
- experiential learning and community engagement;
- contextual adaptation and cultural sensitivity;
- building a values-driven learning environment.



Next steps:

Research

SHAPING INCLUSIVE VALUES IN LATE ADOLESCENTS: TEACHERS' PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES

The aim is to identify how general and vocational upper secondary education teachers assess the importance of inclusive values and apply different methods to develop them with late adolescents (16–19) and to find out what the main challenges to developing inclusive values are.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
1. Which **inclusive values** do teachers consider important in the context of values education in late adolescence?
2. What **methods** do teachers use to develop inclusive values among late adolescents?
3. What do teachers consider to be the **main challenges** in developing inclusive values among late adolescents?

DATA COLLECTION: questionnaire (Berkowitz, 2011; Booth, 2011; Parder & Hirsnik, 2020; Thornberg, 2013)
SAMPLE: teachers from general and vocational education institutions in three countries
DATA ANALYSIS: parametric and non-parametric comparison tests

Handbook

EDUCATIORS MAKING INCLUSIVE VALUES ATTRACTIVE FOR LATE ADOLESCENTS

The handbook provides a theoretical and practical guide for teachers to promote inclusive values among late adolescents.

Structured in two parts—foundations and good practices—it addresses adolescent development, teachers' competences, pedagogical approaches, and practical classroom strategies.

Through diverse examples and adaptable activities, the manual aims to inspire educators to create equitable, empathetic, and participatory learning environments that promote long-term inclusion and social cohesion.

Training course

SPARKLING INCLUSION

Developed by 14 experts: educational researchers, program developers, schoolteachers, and headmasters.

FOR WHOM?
In-service teachers who work with late adolescents.

WHY?
The course helps teachers to:
- understand inclusive values;
- strengthen inclusive attitudes;
- design and adapt engaging classroom activities;
- foster students' inclusivity.

HOW?
- 12 hours of learning activities
- Three learning modules:
  - Moral competence in inclusion
  - Communicative and didactic competence
  - Mentoring competence
- Available in English, Spanish, Latvian and Estonian

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