An **"Index of Inclusion"** was prepared as a resource to support the inclusive development of schools. It is a comprehensive document that can help everyone to find their own next steps in developing their setting.

"Inclusion in education involves:

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

("Index for inclusion - developing learning and participation in schools",
Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow, editing and production for CSIE, p. 7)

Based on the **"Index of Inclusion"** of *Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow, a* **structure of indicators of inclusion** following three dimensions (culture, strategy, practice) is presented in the work of Romanian researchers when analyzing inclusive schools:

Dimension 1: Culture – It is about developing inclusive cultures

1.1. School is welcoming for everybody.

1.2. School actively seek to develop its relationship with the local community.

1.3. Pupils diversity is seen as a valuable resource.

1.4. The teacher know and value her/his pupils.

1.5. Pupils are equally valued.

1.6. Parents are equally valued.

1.7. Teachers are equally valued.

1.8. Pupils know what to do when they have a problem.

1.9. Pupils support each other.

1.10. Teachers support each other in problem solving.

1.11. Teachers implicate themselves in decision making.

1.12. People address each other in ways that confirm their individual value.

1.13. Teacher collaborate with parents.

Dimension 2: Strategy – It is about developing inclusive policies

2.1. School tries to include all pupils from the local community.

2.2. There is an efficient integration program for all new pupils.

2.3. Pupils have the right to study any discipline and participate to all activities.

2.4. School has an efficient policy to reduce pupils' absenteeism.

2.5. School has an efficient strategy to reduce expels on disciplinary reasons.

2.6. School has an efficient strategy to diminish bullying on and between pupils.

2.7. School is trying to adapt the building so it becomes accessible to everyone.

2.8. The strategy of curriculum elaboration takes into account the diversity among pupils (cultural, lingual, gender, achievements and impairments).

2.9. In-service training programs support the teachers in their efforts to respond to pupils' diversity.

2.10. The results of all pupils are adequately appreciated through the evaluation system.

2.11. Support policies are globally coordinated.

2.12. Policies for children with special needs aim at stimulating participation in regular activities in the classroom.

2.13. Support policies for children speaking also another language encourage participation in regular activities in the classroom.

2.14. Policies concerning behavioral difficulties are related to policies supporting learning activities.

2.15. Distribution of school resources is made openly and fairly.

2.16. The school has a strategy to encourage teachers to become partners in their children' learning.

2.17. Support services (e.g. those ensured by the psychologists, speech therapists, advisors and medical staff) ensure the increase of pupils' participation.

2.18. All teachers are encouraged to implicate and participate at the school' management.

Dimension 3: Practice – It is about developing inclusive practices

3.1. All pupils are taken into account when planning lessons.

3.2. Lessons are developing understanding and respect for differences.

3.3. Pupils are encouraged to assume responsibility for their own learning.

3.4. Teachers' explanations help the pupils to understand and to learn the lesson in the classroom.

3.5. Teachers use a great variety of styles and strategies to teach and learn.

3.6. Pupils are encourage to work together during lessons.

3.7. Pupils are encouraged to talk about the way they learn during class activities.

3.8. Teachers adapt their lessons based on pupils' reactions.

3.9. School staff positively react to pupils' difficulties.

3.10. Pupils register success in the learning process.

3.11. Pupils support each other during lessons.

3.12. Teachers help pupils to revise their own learning process.

3.13. Learning difficulties are seen as opportunities to develop practices.

3.14. All teachers in the school participate at the planning of the preparation activity.

(Source: "Educaţia incluzivă în grădiniţă: dimensiuni, provocări, soluţii", pp. 62 - 64

To be inclusive, a school needs to identify and address **barriers to inclusiveness and equality** that may arise for staff and pupils and to develop practices and procedures to deal with the relevant issues. Such an exercise could usefully involve consulting groups that represent those who experience inequality and could involve a commitment to "equality proofing" all aspects of the School Plan. Below there is a list of questions to be answered by the schools in their desire to become inclusive, together with a summary of main issues and approaches identified:

"A. Equality in School Plans and Administration:
- *Who should be involved in drafting policies and plans? What challenges does their involvement present and how can these challenges be met?*
- *How can we ensure that policies and the components of school plans are equality proofed?*
- *What training, resources and support materials are required for schools and school leaders in the area of ensuring equality is central to school planning and administration?*
- *How can a school promote equal opportunity, eliminate discrimination and accommodate diversity among staff and pupils?*
- *Are there differences in the way administrative practices are carried out and can they be justified? Examples might be in publicizing enrolment arrangements, the calling of the roll according to gender, lining up, organizing of sporting events, allocation of classes. Are there other examples we should look at?*
- *What other challenges are there to inclusion and equality across the nine grounds[1]?*

Main issues and approaches:
1. *School planning should be an inclusive process, involving all interested parties (including children where possible) in working groups. Problems of time and resources in assembling such groups were recognized.*
2. *Policies should be checked against the nine grounds in the equality legislation, and schools need clear directions on equality proofing.*
3. *Whole school training modules on equality and planning are needed. This should include all staff, including special needs assistants.*
4. *Appointment procedures for teachers and other staff should be reviewed, with criteria equality-proofed against the nine grounds.*
5. *Many embedded administrative practices tend to divide children – for example, the separation by gender in roll books and roll calling. These need to be challenged.*
6. *Schools face many challenges, and do not exist in isolation from the rest of society. Additional facilities and resources are needed for the inclusion of pupils with certain disabilities.*

B. Equality, the Primary Curriculum and Classroom Practice:
- *How do we ensure that all pupils have access to all aspects of the curriculum on an equal basis?*
- *How do we include children with disabilities in the curriculum? (PE time is often seen as a challenge, but what other aspects of the curriculum are also challenging?)*

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[1] The nine grounds on which discrimination is prohibited are gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveler community.

- *How can learning support be organized in an inclusive way? When children are withdrawn for learning support or other activities, are there patterns that can act against inclusivity? For example, does withdrawal always happen disproportionately when one subject is being taught in the classroom? Are Traveler children withdrawn together? What alternative models might we use?*
- *How is the culture of a child of a minority ethnic group integrated into the curriculum of the classroom?*
- *How can/do schools use the curriculum to teach about difference and diversity, and to develop age-appropriate understanding of inequality and its causes?*
- *On which of the nine grounds do schools face the greatest challenge to providing full curricular and classroom equality? How can this challenge be met?*

Main issues and approaches:
1. *Acknowledging diversity in our classroom is a central part of inclusivity.*
2. *Including pupils with special needs requires careful planning and pooling of teacher resources. It was felt that using resource teachers within the mainstream class would be beneficial. In-class support has possibilities in terms of inclusion, but can also highlight difference.*
3. *Boards of Management need to take the lead on policy discussions in relation to inclusion. The Board and parents need to be actively involved in addressing the challenges.*
4. *Programs such as SPHE, SESE and "Alive-O" were complimented for highlighting and addressing issues of difference, diversity and equality.*
5. *Pupils with disability are part of the school community, and teachers need to be proactive in inclusion in areas such as PE and games, and may need community support in this work.*
6. *Equalizing opportunities and outcomes across the curriculum needs to be done carefully, and in a planned manner. It can be difficult to integrate alongside highlighting difference positively, so approaches need to be varied depending on the number of pupils with special needs. Many children with disabilities push out their own limits.*
7. *The greatest challenge to equal access to courses, facilities or benefits is large class size.*

C. School Admissions, Participation, Sanctions and Equality
- *Is your school's enrolment policy clearly based on principles of inclusion – how does it accommodate diversity?*
- *How welcoming are schools to the diversity of parents and of children, and how can schools be made more welcoming places?*
- *How do we ensure admission to schools is made a reality for as many students as possible? What are the challenges and how do we overcome them?*
- *How do we ensure that sanctions are equally applied to all students within the school – are the same standards of discipline/homework expected from boys and girls, Travelers and non-Travelers, asylum seekers and long-time residents, for example?*
- *When differences in the ways pupils are treated are appropriate, how do we ensure they are not applied in ways that give rise to inequalities?*
- *In the specific case of ADHD, are the same standards of behavior expected of these pupils as of others? How can we combine the need to accommodate their needs with the need to manage the classroom?*
- *On admissions and enrolment, what positive action measures can a school use to encourage under-represented groups to enroll?*

Main issues and approaches:

1. *Most schools' enrolment policies have a denominational element. The system may in that sense operate against inclusion. There is an issue emerging where schools which make particular efforts to be inclusive are by-passed by other parents and become seen as the school for students with special needs/Travelers etc. There is a serious challenge, in which the DES must play a central part, of how to guard against this.*
2. *It was felt that generally schools are welcoming to diversity, but there is a need for schools to reflect on their practices around this.*
3. *The rights of all the children have to be taken into account, not just children with special needs. There is a need for smaller classes.*
4. *There is debate and action required regarding challenging behavior. Certain students regularly present serious challenges in the classroom, and resources and supports are not forthcoming to meet these.*
5. *There is also a question about applying the same standard to and having the same expectations of all students. There is a fine balancing act needed here as applying the same standard to all can drive away children who are at risk of not participating.*
6. *There are also inconsistencies in diagnosing special needs depending on the psychologist. The special needs of Travelers are often difficult to identify; only some of these are educational needs.*
7. *Schools can benefit greatly from inclusion. There is a need to ensure that additional resourcing has an effect on outcomes.*

D. Equality of Participation – Tackling Harassment and Bullying

- *Do schools have policy in place on harassment and bullying? Who should be involved in drawing up such a policy, and who should have copies of it? How might it be evaluated?*
- *What should be included in a school's policy statement on harassment and bullying, and who should the policy impact on?*
- *What staff training is given, received, or needs to be given in this area of tackling harassment and bullying?*
- *Is adult-to-adult harassment and bullying dealt with in school policies? How might this be addressed?*
- *What must be done to prevent harassment and bullying taking place? What can be done? What is the best practice? What supports are needed for these purposes or goals?*
- *Can you recommend any effective and/or innovative strategies (a) to build a school anti-bullying culture, and (b) to tackle incidences of bullying or harassment?*
- *How should a teacher/a school react to an instance of name-calling or harassment which is racist or homophobic? How should harassment on any of the other seven grounds be dealt with?*

Main issues and approaches:

1. *Clear anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies are needed in schools for both adults and children. Adult harassment or bullying are often not addressed, nor is the question of pupils who may harass or bully teachers.*
2. *There is a need for an inclusive policy; all members of the school community should be involved. A copy of this policy should be available to all including parents, and it should be signed and acknowledged by parents.*
3. *The definitions of bullying and harassment are important. Again, all staff members, including non-teaching staff, should be included. A safe and protected environment is important within school; the policy impacts on all members of the school community.*

4. *Awareness training is needed. At present no training is in place. The Trinity College Anti-Bullying Course was cited as a possible training resource. There is a need for culture change and greater communication on this issue.*
5. *Adult bullying and harassment should be mentioned in the school health and safety statement. It is important to foster an atmosphere of support, respect and openness, and to define harassment and bullying and the relationships within which it can happen.*
6. *A charter of rights would be useful, which could be drawn up between the I.N.T.O. and the Equality Authority. The booklet "Working Together", agreed between the I.N.T.O. and the Managerial Authorities, was thought to be valuable but further training is essential regarding procedures.*

E. Equality and the Hidden Curriculum (Extra-curricular activities, roles and make-up of staff)

- *What can be done to ensure that there is greater diversity across the nine grounds and gender balance in all areas of primary teaching, and in all school staffing (including caretaker/secretarial staff, special needs assistants, etc.)?*
- *How can more women teachers be encouraged to take up leadership positions in schools?*
- *How can those with roles in recruitment and promotion – principals, members of interview boards, patrons and their nominees – be encouraged to promote equal opportunity for job applicants across the nine grounds (for example, non-nationals, lesbian or gay people, a teacher of a denomination not of the school's, an older person applying after time away from the work force, a pregnant woman, a person who is HIV-positive, a person who has a disability)?*
- *What extra-curricular activities are promoted? How do we take account of cost and gender factors (for example, is football only available to males, are activities other than sport provided so that varied talents of children can be accommodated, what children are excluded due to gender, cost, disability, etc.)? How can such activities accommodate diversity and promote equality?*
- *How does the inclusive school celebrate cultural and religious festivals, team successes and family occasions? What celebrations can be used to make a school inclusive across the nine grounds?*
- *The hidden curriculum is, by definition, hidden. What efforts can we make to identify and uncover the messages about equality and diversity that are seen by pupils but that we may not always notice? How do we seek to identify new elements of the "hidden curriculum" that arise because of the rapidly changing nature of our world?*
- *Are diversity and gender balance in the job of primary teaching – and tackling growing gender imbalance – important aims? If so, why is this?*

Main issues and approaches:

1. *The lack of support for teachers with lesbian, gay or bisexual sexual orientation was seen as a barrier to be overcome in ensuring greater diversity across the nine grounds in teaching.*
2. *It was also felt that the nature of the salary scale was a factor in the gender imbalance in primary teaching.*
3. *To encourage more women into leadership positions, it was felt that childcare barriers needed to be removed. Family friendly policies and initiatives should be in place.*
4. *Training is the key need for selection boards in the process of interviewing and selecting teachers for positions. Proper application of procedures is necessary to ensure that people are appointed on the basis of their ability/experience.*
5. *Less time in teaching denominational religion would facilitate accommodation of children who are not of the school's religion.*

6. *There should be an effort made to celebrate all cultures, whether or not children of that particular culture are in the school. We live in a multi-cultural society and intercultural education should be the norm across all schools.*
7. *There is work to be done to change the mindset of traditional teachers who continue to organize very gender-specific activities for children.*
8. *It is important for children, schools and the teaching profession to have a diverse and balanced intake into teaching.”*

(“The Inclusive School – Proceedings of the Joint Conference of the Irish National Teachers’ Organization and the Equality Authority”, Limerick, 2004
http://www.into.ie/ROI/Publications/InclusiveSchool.pdf - pp. 54-63)