



INTERNATIONAL
STEP by STEP
ASSOCIATION



EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITY

Program for adults working with and for children

Toolkit

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OVERVIEW OF THE TOOLKIT

Purpose of the Toolkit

This Toolkit was developed with multiple purposes:

- to provide **educators** and other adults working with children **with the guidelines and ideas for their everyday work** and help them make respect for diversity, Inclusion and values of democracy alive in their classrooms, schools and preschools.
- to provide **ECEC leaders/managers** with ideas on how to implement **a whole institution approach** and to create environments in which all children can thrive while learning to respect those who are different and exercise democratic practices.
- to provide **trainers of educators** or leaders/members of learning communities with training sessions and activities that support educators in the process of learning **how to deal with the issues of diversity and to reflect on their own biases, attitudes and practices** which are affecting children in many different ways.
- to provide a **contextual understanding of ISSA's approach** in regards to respecting diversity and inclusion of children who are in vulnerable situations.

The Toolkit provides a combination of the theory, activities, strategies, and materials educators, managers and trainers can use in their daily work in different capacities. The toolkit can be used in its entirety, but also some parts can be presented separately. **Part I** is concerned with a conceptual framework and activities for children can be used by educators; **Part II** is concerned with specific training sessions for educators can be used by trainers and leaders of professional learning communities. **Part III** can be used in professional learning communities by the leaders of those communities.

Structure of the Toolkit

The Toolkit has the following major sections.

- I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN** In this section, the conceptual and action frameworks are explained as well as the specificity of ISSA's approach in working with children on respect for diversity and anti-bias education. The backbone of the approach to creating a more welcoming, respectful and inclusive educational environments are *ISSA's Principles of Quality Pedagogy: Competent Educators of 21st Century* and other tools from the *ISSA Quality Resource Pack*. This part of the Toolkit, in addition to providing theoretical explanations of the work, contains detailed descriptions of possible activities for classrooms or for children. The activities are not meant to just be followed, but should inspire educators to create additional, more contextual activities for their own classrooms. This section is of utmost importance to practitioners because it provides them with a good balance of theory and practice.
- II. TRAINING MODULE FOR TRAINING OF EDUCATORS** In this section, the training for educators is presented. Specific training sessions for educators are explained, as well as how they should be combined with the training sessions from ISSA's other resource: *Embracing Diversity - Creating Equitable Societies through Personal Transformation, Program for adults*. It is strongly recommended to provide educators with the experience of both training sessions (*Embracing Diversity - Creating Equitable Societies through Personal Transformation, Program for adults* and *Education for Diversity training*). When is not possible to organize more than 10 days for the training, it is necessary to combine sessions from both programs in order to provide educators with understanding of the main concepts and create the conditions for them to critically explore and reflect on their practices. Several ideas for how to combine two training programs are described in this section. It is also important to use theoretical explanations from the *Embracing Diversity - Creating Equitable Societies through Personal Transformation, Program for adults*, to strengthen reflection and transformation

processes during the training of educators. The main target group of this section of the Toolkit are trainers.

III. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES – GOING BEYOND TRAINING In this section, focus is on an innovative approach to continuous professional development – Professional learning communities (PLCs). The guidelines for establishing and functioning of PLCs are presented and illustrated with examples from the practice. The target groups of this section are practitioners, trainers and managers/school principals or methodologists.

IV. REFERENCES AND RESOURCES In this section, we list different materials and additional resources, including video clips that could be used in the classroom, at the level of teams and the educational institution.

Target groups of the toolkit

Children – Activities and approaches described in the toolkit target children aged between 3 and 10. Some of them are tailored for younger children, some for older ones, and some can be adapted for different age groups by introducing additional tasks or by putting a greater emphasis on child-led and self-guided activities.

Educators – It is envisioned that this toolkit will meet the needs of preschool and primary school educators working with children aged between 3 and 10. Activities and approaches described in the toolkit are easiest to understand and apply for educators who are familiar with, or who are implementing child- and family-centered approaches in their daily practice and who have experience of applying integrated approaches to learning and teaching and work in child- and family-centered classrooms. However, all educators can use ideas from the training and the toolkit as an entry point for transforming their practice, with the understanding that the implementation of activities presented in this Toolkit is just the first step in a process that helps children understand, accept and appreciate diversity; understand the values of civil society; and acquire the skills needed for participation in democratic processes. Both this Toolkit's and the *ISSA Principles of Quality Pedagogy's* goals are to have practitioners engage in greater reflection on their practice to help themselves and children become agents of change to create societies where every child has a voice and can thrive.

Educational managers and methodologists – This toolkit can promote a whole-school approach to creating inclusive, child- and family-centered, and welcoming educational environments that ensure that children and families are protected and elevated. It can also foster new ideas about self-organized and self-guided professional development processes in the institution.

Trainers of educators – As stated above, **trainers of educators should be trainers for both of the ISSA programs, *Embracing Diversity – Creating Equitable Societies through Personal Transformation, Program for Adults and Education for Diversity, Program for Children***. Additionally, **for the *Education for Diversity Program*, it is desirable that trainers have a deep understanding of process quality in ECEC including implementation of child- and family-centered programs and hands-on experience in preschool and/or primary school classrooms.**

General characteristics required of trainers/ facilitators can be found in the Training Manual, *Embracing Diversity – Creating Equitable Societies through Personal Transformation*, page 22.

Symbols used in the Toolkit

Throughout the Toolkit, different symbols are used.

Symbols for training sessions for educators



Activity flow/
process



Tips for
Trainers



Tips for
reflections



Connection with
other activities



Expected
Outcomes



Handout



Materials
Required



Suggested
Time/duration



Organization
of the room

Symbol for activities for children

Activities for children are labeled with the following symbols and sections are in orange.

Tips for educators are in blue.



Heart



Head



Hands

ISSA's 3 H Approach to education for diversity / Hearts – Heads – Hands

Those of us who work in early childhood development know the importance of the whole-child approach to development and learning and how cognitive, social-emotional and physical development are intertwined and dependent on each other. This is why the Education for Diversity Program for Young Children focuses on how practitioners can engage children's hearts, heads, and hands to develop respect for diversity, to be inclusive of others who may be different, and to uphold the values of democracy and civil society.

Children's hearts and heads are engaged when they learn about their own and others' identities, when they develop empathy, and when they think critically about unfairness. Their heads, hearts and hands are engaged when they take action, speak out and work against unfairness and discrimination.



3 H - HEART / HEAD / HANDS

- How I feel about myself, the others and the world – identity and belonging
- What I think about myself, the others and the world – reflection and critical thinking
- What I am doing and what I should do – transformation

These symbols were selected on purpose in order to make children better understand the concepts related to diversity, equity, antidiscrimination, inclusion, etc. They also help them to better understand what they can do and how to stand up against discrimination, appreciate themselves and celebrate those who are different.

These areas (Head, Heart and Hands) are also closely connected with areas of understanding – Naming, Voicing and Building Allies from the Embracing Diversity – Creating Equitable Societies through Personal Transformation, Program for adults (to refresh your knowledge please look at pg.33).

Suggested activity with children

ACTIVITY: WHEN I SEE INJUSTICE/WHEN SOMETHING IS NOT FAIR

Goals:

- Help children understand how they react to injustice in specific situations and in general
- Help children explore their feelings and needs as well as how to think outside the box and what to do when they want to make a change

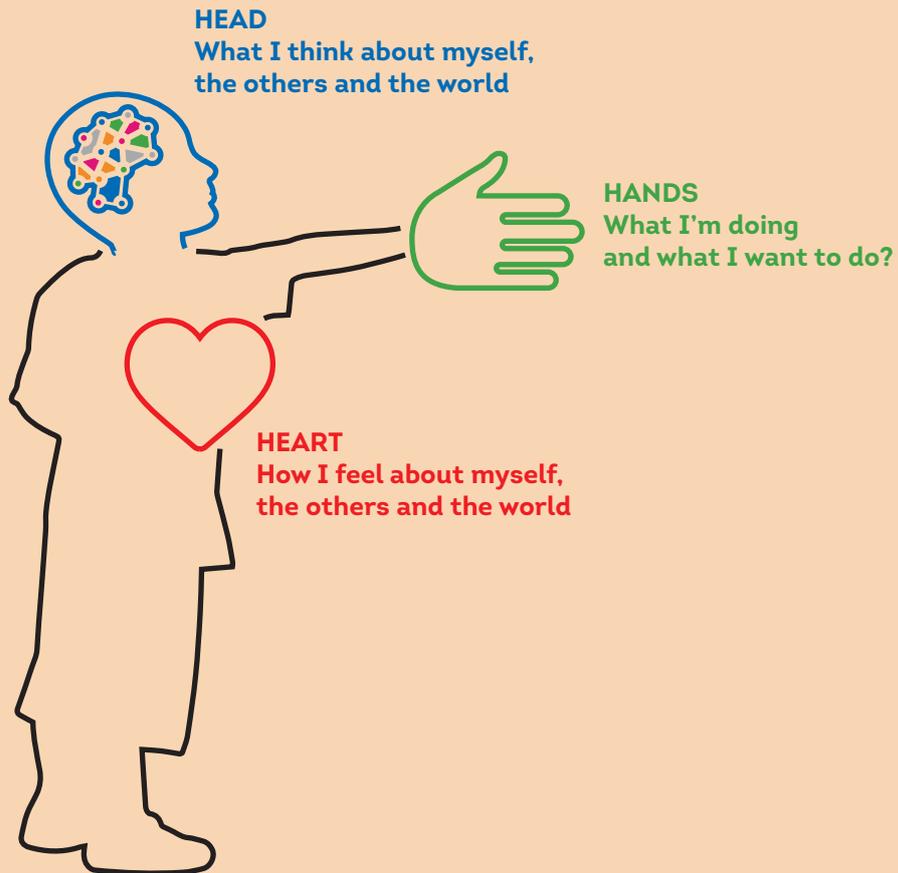
Description:

1. Talk with children about injustice and situations when they felt hurt or they have seen somebody else hurt because of the way how he/she has been treated. (Older children can work in small groups and write down a few examples; younger children can be guided by a teacher).
2. Tell children that you can have your class symbol which will represent the way you

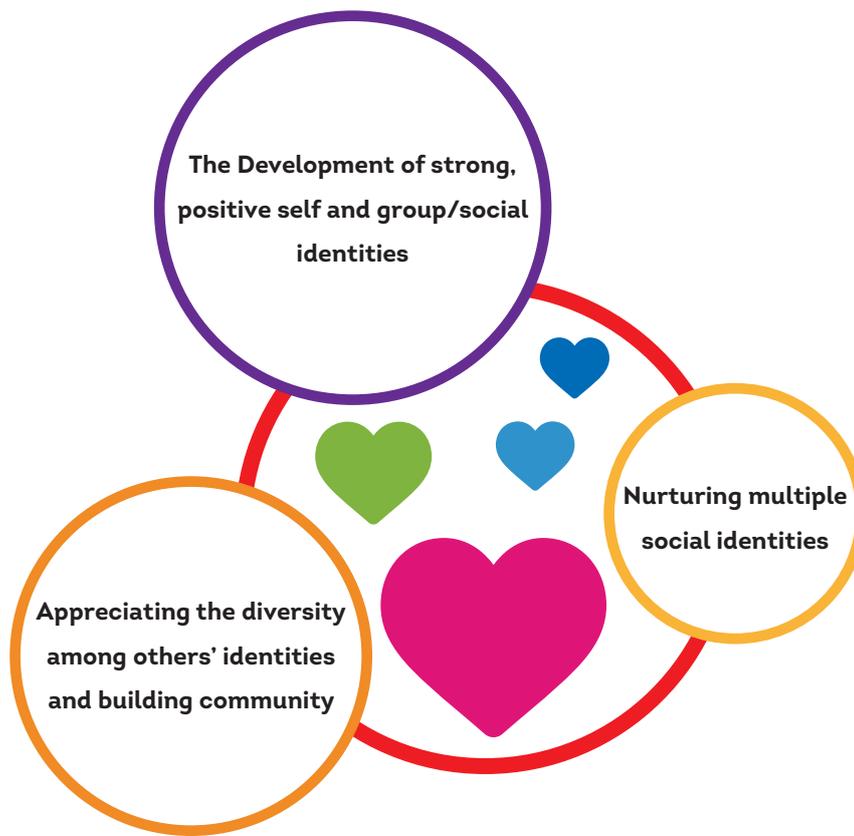
- are going to approach these situations and how in general you are going to talk and act in order to respect yourself and others and treat everybody in a respectful way
3. Together with children, draw on a flipchart a stick man and label parts and explain them to children.

NOTE:

You can also talk with children about how they feel towards those who are different. Do they fear them? Do they think that everybody should be treated in a respectful way? You can also use it to discuss some tangible situations with children.



Hearts (H1) - Building positive feelings in children about themselves and others



'Heart' in this program refers to facilitating children's social and emotional development to include developing positive feelings about themselves and others and how to best express feelings. Research is continuing to emerge on the importance of social emotional development in relation to children's overall well-being, as well as learning. Children who have strong social and emotional skills perform better in school, have more positive relationships with peers and adults, and have more positive emotional adjustment and mental health.

The core features of emotional development include the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behavior, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and maintain relationships⁵.

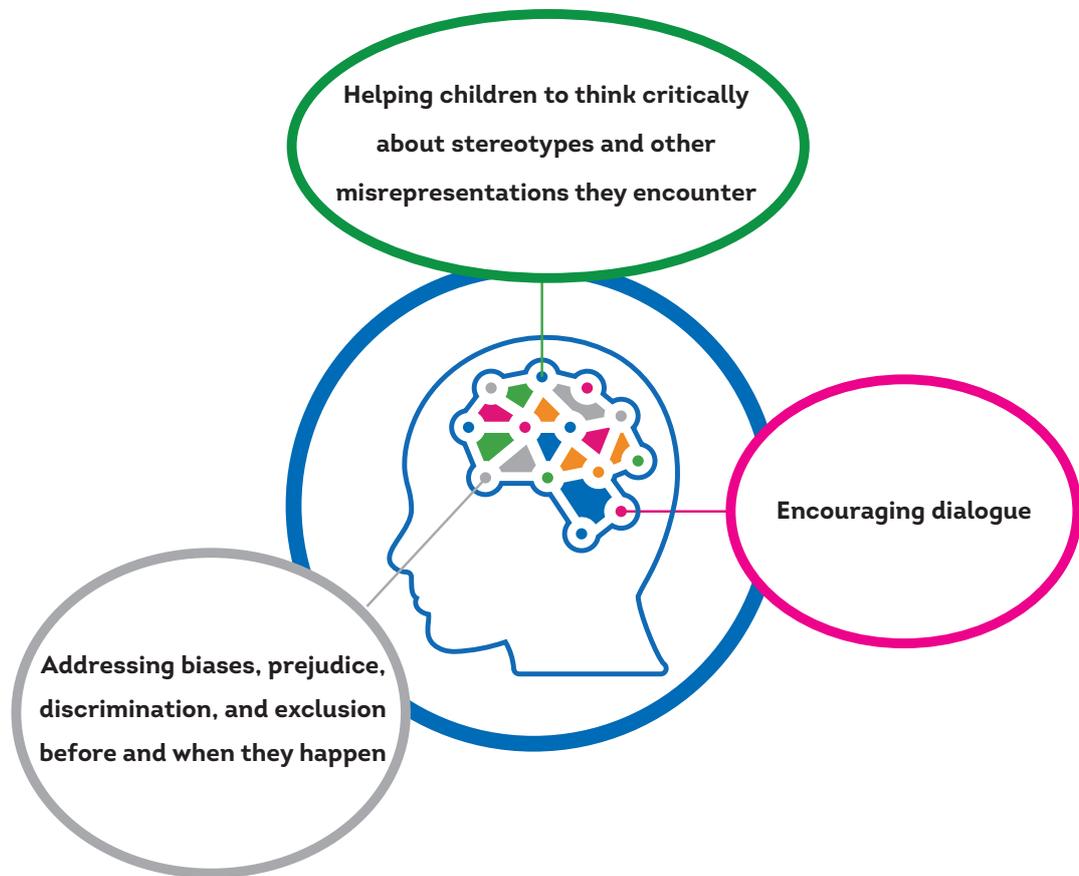
The development of strong positive feelings about oneself are necessary to the development of confidence, resiliency, and self-efficacy. A positive self-identity is also necessary to the development of strong, positive feelings about others and the foundation for being able to establish and maintain relationships with others.

Programs and educational approaches that facilitate children's social emotional development and especially empathy are also shown to be important in the fostering of tolerance, the appreciation of diversity, and social cohesion.

In the Educating for Diversity Program, children's social emotional development is fostered through:

- the development of strong, positive self and group/social identities and building community
- nurturing multiple social identities
- appreciating the diversity of others' identities

Head (H2) – Developing critical thinking and reflection about fairness and justice



Thinking critically means being able to understand the perspectives of everyone who lives in the society and how the decisions they make may affect others. The more people think critically about information gleaned in discussions, the more potential exists for understanding and meeting multiple perspectives and needs.

Those who have participated in the ISSA *Embracing Diversity - Creating Equitable Societies through Personal Transformation Program for Adults* learned how to follow the format of naming, voicing and building allies to address social injustices in their environments. Teaching children how to critically think about fairness and justice, uses the same processes. They also learn to identify injustices in their own realities through learning to identify stereotypes and misrepresentations about themselves and others, take action and create change.

Hands (H3) – Transformative practice: Encouraging interaction and action



It is not enough to talk with children about injustice, unfairness and the need for respect for diversity and equity. Children need to be empowered to take action and to believe that they can make a change. Even many adults, including educators do not like to take part in this kind of training, because they do not believe that they can make a change. The learned helplessness is something that we mentioned before and how devastating it can be both for dominant and non-dominant groups.

As we stated, just bringing children together and letting them to get to know each other is not enough. They need to do something together and they have to feel and experience in educational institution that they are respected, heard, seen and that they have a say. They also need to learn and understand that even small actions can result in a great and positive change.

In the Education for Diversity Program, interaction and action are promoted by:

- using active and interactive learning strategies
- developing responsibility in children and
- fighting all the forms of discrimination and oppression
- involving parents and families.