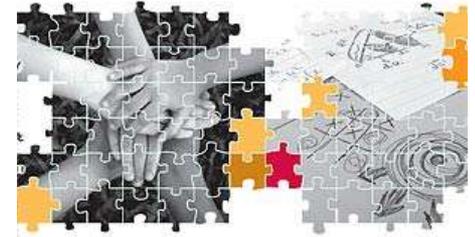


# Exploring Successful Actions for Inclusion in Irish Education



- From the personal to the professional
- Dr. Carmel Mulcahy
- Dublin City University
- School of Education Studies



- Access to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level Education
- Legacy of Donagh O'Malley
- Free/grant aided 3<sup>rd</sup> Level
- Education as a Right
- Teaching Career
- 3<sup>rd</sup> level: DCU and non-traditional students
- Centre for Pluralism
- Educate Together



# Includ-ED: Exploring successful actions for educational and social inclusion in Europe. 2006-2011

## School of Education Studies, DCU



# Research background

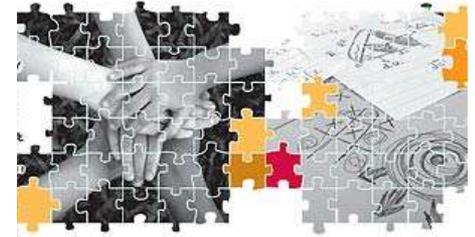
EU wide research conducted by 14 partner institutions

€3.5 million in funding from EU

Biggest single piece of educational research to be conducted by 13 individual countries

The goal of INCLUD-ED is to allow the “ scientific community” to dialogue with theory and practice in order to influence EU policy

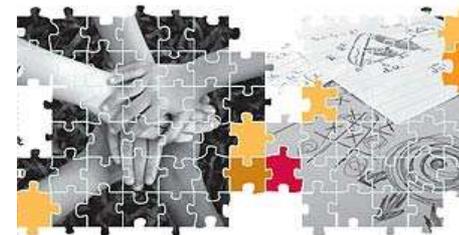
# Research background



Can we achieve the Lisbon objective of Europe becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society if we continue to exclude, both socially and educationally, many EU citizens and their communities?

Can we identify successful actions that contribute to school success and social inclusion?

# Focus of Research



- Identify successful actions that contribute to school success and social inclusion at the level of compulsory education. (6-16)
- Particular emphasis on 5 vulnerable groups: women, youth, migrants, cultural groups such as Roma and people with disabilities

# Further objectives



How school failure or success influences *other areas of society* such as employment opportunities, access to housing and health and participation in public spaces for members of the vulnerable groups targeted and for all members of society in general.

Benefits civic organisations, schools, governments and policy makers by providing knowledge and recommendations to identify those strategies that lead to social inclusion or social exclusion from education.



# Research Rationale

- The School is seen as a social entity acting as both a *reproductive* agent and a *transformative* agent
- The research will build on good practices and advocate innovative strategies in the area

***Recording*** element and a ***practical*** element

- Findings as they happened fed directly into policy at EU level

# Methodology: Critical Communicative Theory



*Knowledge created through intersubjective dialogue*  
Researchers in a dialogue with social actors to reach consensus of meaning.

*Inclusion of traditionally silenced voices*  
Active involvement of the people whose reality is studied throughout the entire research process.

*Exclusionary and Transformative*  
Scientific analysis to identify strategies that lead to social inclusion (transformative) and exclusion (exclusionary).



# Findings from initial stages

- 
- *Acquisition of “language of instruction”*
- *Diversity recognition*
- *Differentiation*
- *Family and Community*

# Language acquisition



The use of the *native* language as a vehicle in the school encourages the learning of the *instrumental* material

*Incorporation* of the language and culture of minority pupils contributes towards their cultures being valued and this encourages the empowerment of the pupils

Multilingual approaches seen to be beneficial.



# Language acquisition

Countries with relatively small performance differences between immigrant and native students tend to have *well-established language support programmes* (OECD, 2006c: 3)

One factor which increases the risk of failure at school for the immigrant population is the scarcity of support programmes for language learning



# Diversity recognition

Participation of members of cultural minorities in the classroom promotes their recognition and benefits all pupils

Invisibility of cultural minorities in the *curriculum* does not reflect current societal realities

OECD (2002-2005) reveals that countries which achieve the best school results are those in which there is a higher level of diversity

# Diversity and the Curriculum



Educational centres should not identify themselves with any specific religious tradition but should allow diversity to exist amongst pupils

The secularisation of the space allows expression of diverse religious traditions and identities to occur

Adverse consequences of an ethnocentric perspective

# Latest findings



The project has identified a number of practices and strategies in European classrooms with regard to grouping of students and parental involvement

*Mixture, Streaming and Inclusion*

*Family and community involvement*



# Mixture, Streaming and Inclusion

*Mixture:* educating students with different abilities together (does not guarantee an efficient response to the diversity of the students).

*Streaming:* extra resources (e.g. support teachers) to help those students with more difficulties, but this accompanied by ability grouping or by different placements or separation .

*Inclusion:* consists of using the same resources that are used for segregated practices to educate all of the students together.

# Strategies to achieve this...



Types of inclusion identified throughout Europe:

**Heterogeneous ability classrooms** with reallocation of human resources in the regular classroom and **Extending learning time** through a longer school day, or a school year or activities that promote family support and education in the school or at home



When these actions are implemented in schools with predominantly immigrant and minority student populations located in disadvantaged areas, their educational results improve.

Inclusion actions should be promoted, especially for students from vulnerable groups in order to increase the school achievement of all students and improve inter-group relations in classrooms and schools.



Research indicates that separation into special programmes and schools, of students from ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma), second language learners (e.g. immigrants) and students with disabilities, increases dropout levels and racism.

# Family and community involvement



**The participation of families and community members becomes a significant potential resource to enhance educational and social inclusion.**

5 types of participation were identified: informative, consultative, evaluative, participation in decision making and educative.



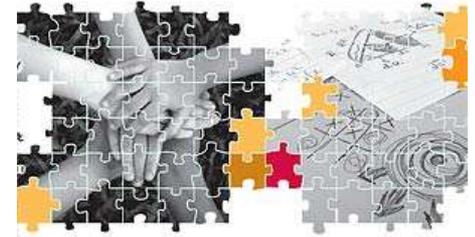
# Informative participation

Parents are informed about the school activities, school functioning, and the decisions which have already been made.

Parents do not take part in those school decisions.

Parents' meetings consist of informing families about these decisions.

# Consultative participation



Parents have a limited impact on decision making.

Participation is based on consultation with families.

They participate through the school's statutory bodies.



## Decisive participation

Community members participate in decision-making processes by becoming representatives in decision making bodies.

Family and community members monitor the school's accountability in relation to its educational results.



# Evaluative participation

Family and community members participate in students' learning processes through helping evaluate children's school progress.

Family and community members participate in the overall school evaluation.



# Educative participation

Family and community members participate in students' learning activities, both during regular school hours and after school.

Family and community members participate in educational programmes which respond to their needs and help to create interactions that have been shown to favour student's success

# Family



Among the five types of family and community participation, research shows that **Decisive, Evaluative, and Educative** are the ones which most positively influence students success. In these types of participation, families are involved in the school at a higher degree and have a greater influence on school decisions.

# Community



Promoting cultural and educational interactions between students and social agents, and more particularly with family members, enhance students' achievement.

Creating educational and cultural spaces where family and community members can actively learn, reinforces particular interactions that have been shown to favour student's success



Policies should be developed to create and/or increase the participation of families and communities in learning activities (with students or for themselves), curriculum development and evaluation, and school decision making and the research suggests that those types of participation have greater influence in students' learning than when they just participate in festivals or are just informed.



Participation of families from vulnerable groups (migrants, cultural minorities, students with disabilities) should be particularly encouraged as it relates to their children's academic success.

Policies should be developed to promote family education programmes in schools.

## Greater academic success found where:



Increased *family and community involvement* in decision making and classroom activities and promotion of role models from the community

Higher degrees of *interaction within classrooms*

Higher *recognition of diversity* benefits entire community and integration of strategies into the *curriculum* and *within classroom settings*

# Into the Future



- The Forum on Patronage
- Greater choice of schools
- Further research into why exclusion exists at all levels of Irish Education
- Greater compliance with ECHR
- Develop the concept of EfS and comply with the Earth Charter

# 5 Pillars of ESD



- Learning to Know
- Learning to Do
- Learning to live Together
- Learning to Be
- Learning to Live Sustainably

# THE EARTH CHARTER INITIATIVE



## Let ours be a time remembered

For the awakening of a new reverence for life

The firm resolve to achieve sustainability

The quickening of the struggle for justice and peace,

and **the joyful celebration of life**”\*

(\*Closing lines of the Earth Charter)