



Read about the European Leaders Network

School leaders learn from each other

SuperCyberKids

Learn about this new Erasmus+ research project



LEADERSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Equality and equity in education



EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR MICROCREDENTIALS

An opportunity to gain relevant knowledge



DIALOGIC GATHERINGS

A Successful Educational Action



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Meeting, Connecting, Exchanging

INGELA PERSSON, EVI EFTYCHIOU,
CLARE REES, LINY DEMANDT

Roermond mini-conference May 2023

European Leaders Network with Montessori School,
Roermond pupil Council



Every two years ESHA gathers hundreds of school leaders from all over Europe and sometimes even further afield, in a three-day conference. Much of the conference is spent listening to educationalists across every phase, disseminating a vast array of ideas and research,

with plenty of opportunities to ask questions and make connections. Alongside this are cultural tours, setting the historical, political and economic context, followed by school visits, which offer a fascinating insight into educational systems in the host country.

Although there is a huge amount to get involved in during the conference, one aspect which we want to focus on in this short 'think piece' are the

opportunities to meet new people, exchange ideas and built a network.

Motivated by the desire to share and learn from each other, we created our European Leaders Network with Evi from Cyprus, Clare from England, Liny from The Netherlands and Ingela from Sweden.

After the conference, our initial contact was by email and Teams meetings and then Liny decided to invite the group to a mini-conference in Roermond, in the Netherlands in May 2023.

We were introduced to the locality and its history, starting with a tour in the South of Limburg to visit some new schools. Here we saw how the community was well-established as part of school life, with some schools not only running community cafes, but also a full range of weekend sports facilities, including gymnastics classes, with world class facilities. It was evident that the three schools we saw were very carefully planned and constructed, so that they not only blended in well with their surroundings but let in plenty of natural light and were also eco-friendly with solar panels.

The theme for the school visits in Roermond was "Differences: different approaches in different schools." Over the next two days we visited four different schools in Roermond, all belonging to the Swalm & Roer-foundation of 23 primary schools.

We started at the 'Montessori School', where Liny is the director. The Montessori approach, which encourages children from a young age to use their creativity and problem-solving skills, was well-known to Liny, Evi and Ingela, but an eye-opener for Clare. We visited classes, explored materials, talked to teachers, and had a question-

and-answer session with the very articulate pupil Council.

Then we explored 'Het Synergie'. This aptly named, beautifully constructed elementary school, housed in the city centre in a renovated historical building, which marries old and ultra-modern architecture, has been meticulously designed to support the inclusive concept of the school. It successfully blends mainstream and special needs in a personalised but connected way, using some Montessori-based principles.

The next two schools we visited were operating in very different neighbourhoods, with very different challenges. The 'Vincent van Gogh School' has a population of mostly migrant families from countries such as Syria, Somali and more recently Ukraine. This school did not use the Montessori principles, as the urgent need to support pupils to settle who arrive mid-year meant there was more of a





focus on core subjects and personal, social education. The school's namesake was highly visible, in paintings and art books displays across the school.

The final school was 'The Stapsteen' or 'Stepping Stone' school, which is a very big school in a fast-growing village near Roermond, with a population of almost 100% Dutch children, serving an affluent area with a high percentage of professional families. This school was also not a Montessori school, although there was still an emphasis on building autonomy and using creativity and problem-solving. The social skills programme 'Rock and Water' linked to the Stepping Stones, was evident across the school. As the school was over-subscribed, space was used creatively to maximise learning and play opportunities for pupils.

All the schools placed a high emphasis on connecting their teams, with huge refectory style tables and homely touches in staffrooms to encourage staff at every level and across every phase to communicate. This led to staff connecting with all of us with ease, opening up conversations about our visit. This created a relaxed and friendly approach in all the schools.

The different approaches of these schools were very interesting and led to intensive conversations and debate, where the merits and challenges of our national approaches were compared. It made us reflect on what we took for granted and has sent us back to our respective schools with a richer toolkit of ideas and possibilities. All this began with ESHA in Limassol, and we hope to build on this in October in Dubrovnik, with another mini-conference scheduled for May 2024 in Sweden.

Impressum

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The SuperCyberKids Project

Cybersecurity for children has become a rapidly growing topic due to the increased availability of the internet to children and their consequent exposure to various online risks. Children start going online at an early age and are doing so even more after the sudden rise in remote schooling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, it is crucial to provide teachers and their young pupils with a fun way to gain understanding of cybersecurity and adopt safe online practices. SuperCyberKids partners already offer two digital cybersecurity games free of charge: **Spoofy** [spoofy.ee/en], a multilingual online game, and Nabbovaldo, an Italian-language app available from **Google Play** and **Apple Stores** (more languages coming soon!).



**SUPER CYBER
KIDS**

And SuperCyberKids has much, much more in store. This Erasmus+ research project funded by the European Commission is working to provide children aged 8 to 13 and their teachers with a complete educational ecosystem, with a range of training, teaching, and learning content on cybersecurity, using a game-based approach to increase motivation and engagement. This will be delivered through a gamified platform that includes the Spoofy and Nabbovaldo cybersecurity games, with more to come. Overall, the project will produce two main outputs, the educational ecosystem and detailed guidelines for implementing it effectively.

SuperCyberKids involves eight partners from five countries, including two extensive Europe-wide umbrella organizations, one dealing specifically with cybersecurity (ECSO). ESHA's task is to ensure that stakeholders are constantly involved in project activities, through panel groups and small-scale enactment events. This is in addition to at least fifty school heads plus at least one-hundred teachers who will be directly participating in pilot uses cases.

The partnership will carry out **four pilots** in four different settings (Europe-wide in English and in local languages in Italy, Estonia, and Germany) to test these results. This will lead to developing a **Handbook of Good Practices on Cybersecurity Education in Schools for Children Aged 8–13**. This handbook will include recommendations for researchers, school heads and teachers, parents, and game and instructional designers, as well as **Recommendations** relevant for policymakers, regulatory bodies and institutions in cybersecurity education.

Follow our progress on the project website: [supercyberkids.eu] and through the **#SuperCyberKids** hashtag on social media channels.

Leadership for inclusive education

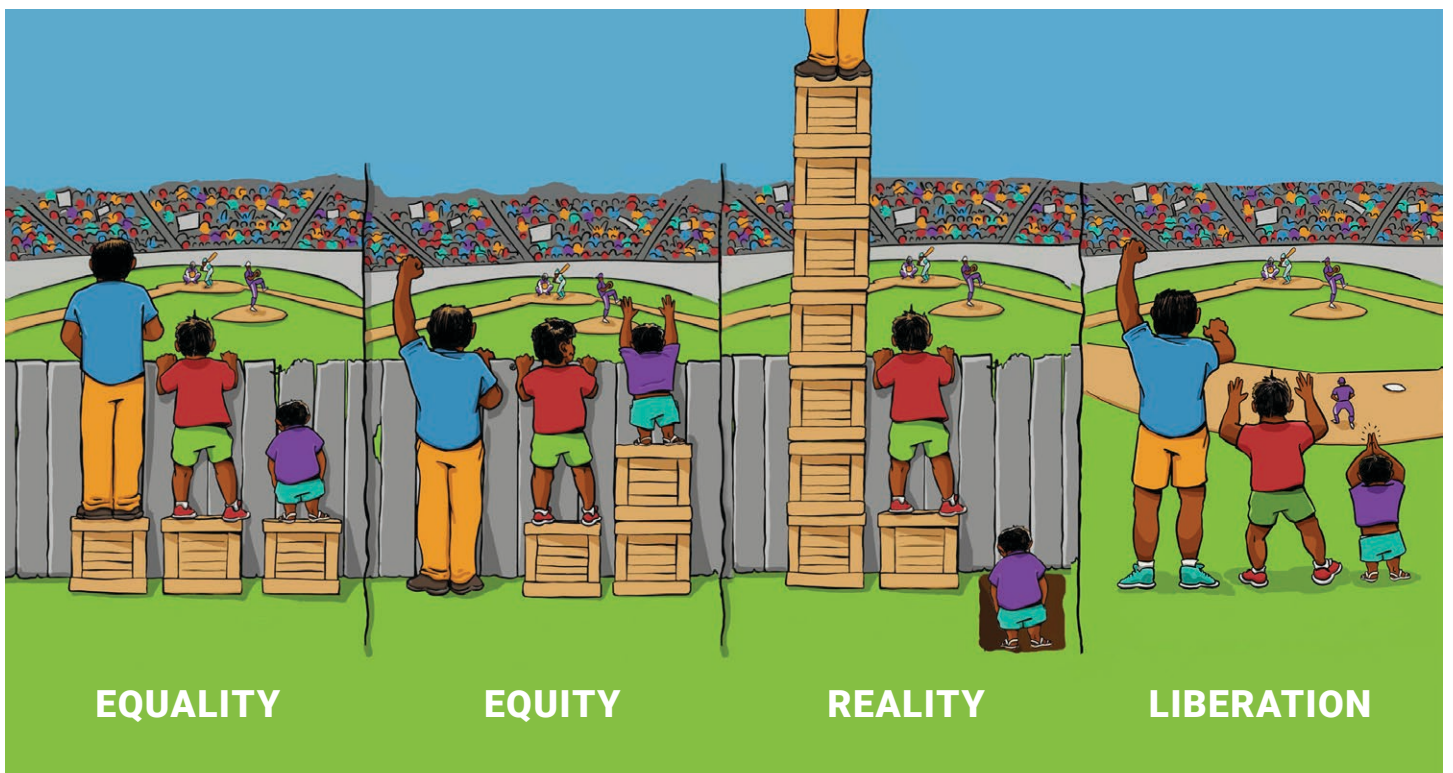


LOES VAN WESSUM (PhD)

Educational researcher Teachers and Teacher Educators in Inclusive Learning Environments at Windesheim, University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. She is co-author of the book *Leading a learning school. Which questions have you asked today?*

Realizing equity in education is elusive, not all students get the same opportunities. Where you were born is still a strong predictor for school

success. Students from parents with a lower social economic status and students with special educational needs don't always get the same resources or opportunities compared to students with parents with higher social economic status. Socio-economic status has a large influence on students' performance in science, reading and mathematics. For example, on average across OECD countries the mean science score in PISA among disadvantaged students was 88 points lower than the mean score among advantaged students. This gap is equivalent to about three full years of schooling. However, we must note that Pisa is culturally biased as it does not take into account less measurable or immeasurable educational objectives like physical, moral, civic and artistic development.



The good news is that helping disadvantaged students is possible. By transforming the entire national school system, it is possible to promote equity in school education. Especially investing in early childhood education benefits the overall development and academic performance of students. A higher public expenditure per student can reduce the student achievement differences between schools.

Providing every student with equal opportunities is not enough. Besides equality, systems and schools should also work on equity. Equality means that each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach the best possible outcome. Equity does not mean that all students obtain equal education outcomes, but rather that differences in students' outcomes are unrelated to their background or to economic and social circumstances over which students have no control.

Institutional changes can also make a big difference in students' lives. Children from wealthier families will find many open doors to a successful life. But children from poor families often have just one chance in life, and that is a good school that gives them an opportunity to develop their potential. The quality of teaching plays a prominent role in achieving high and equitable educational results. Realizing equity is complicated and asks a lot from teachers (see HEADstart #9 on improving equity in schools by teaming up with the educational consultant). They need to develop their capacity to identify students' needs and to manage diversity in classrooms, to build strong links with parents, and to encourage parents to be more involved in their child's education. Teachers can create a positive learning environment for all students

(see HEADstart # 3 on ensuring children's agency in school).

Teachers cannot provide equity on their own – a community approach is needed. It takes a village to raise a child, as the proverb says. "The most powerful set of practices that equity-oriented school leaders enact is to create authentic partnerships among schools, families, and communities aimed at ensuring student success" (Leithwood, 2021 ; see HEADstart # 6 on collaborating with parents).

Leadership practices enhancing equity in education

School leaders play a pivotal role in providing learning success and wellbeing for all students. There is growing consensus among international researchers about the leadership practices that foster improvement in instruction and student learning. Successful school leaders can use five leadership practices which contribute to greater equity within schools (Leithwood, 2021). The five domains of leadership practices include 22 specific practices:

1. Setting Directions includes Building a shared vision

Identifying specific, shared, short-term goals; creating high-performance expectations; and communicating the vision and goals.

2. Building Relationships and Developing People

Stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff; providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members; modelling the school's values and practices; building trusting relationships with and among staff, students, and parents, and establishing productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives.



Leadership for Diversity | leadershipfordiversity.eu

3. Designing the Organization to Support Desired Practices

Building collaborative cultures and distributing leadership; structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration; building productive relationships with families and communities; connecting the school to its wider environment; maintaining a safe and healthy school environment and allocating resources in support of the school's vision and goals.

4. Improving the Instructional Program

Staffing the instructional program; providing instructional support; monitoring student learning and school improvement progress; buffering staff from distractions to their work; and participating with teachers in their professional learning activities.

5. Securing Accountability

Building staff members sense of internal accountability and meeting the demands for external accountability.

Leadership dispositions enhancing equity in education

There are four categories of dispositions, attributes, or personal leadership resources that help equity in schools.

1. Cognitive resources

These include problem-solving expertise; systems thinking; and several types of role-related and organizational improvement knowledge.

2. Social resources, largely encompassed in most accounts of "social appraisal skills" or "emotional intelligence".

These include the leaders' abilities to perceive the emotions of others, manage their own emotions, and act in emotionally appropriate ways.

3. Psychological resources

These include optimism and resilience, self-efficacy, and proactivity.

4. Values and ethics

Ethical leadership points to both personal and professional values influencing the leaders' success, such as fairness, honesty, and integrity.

Leadership for inclusive education

School leaders can make a great difference in students' lives. They can do so by their behaviour – using several leadership practices adapted to the context they are working in. But it's not only about leadership behaviour, it's also about being a leader. Successful school leaders will also use their dispositions to enhance equity in their schools. Fostering improvement in instruction and student learning is necessary for realizing equity in education and can contribute if school leaders are aware of their moral obligation and are ready to enhance equity.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING TOOL

If you wish to explore further and are interested in assessing your own strengths and the fields you need to develop as a leader, check out this tool.
<https://qr.page/g/1ZDfVmCzPs>



Dubrovnik

ESHA Biennial in Dubrovnik,
25–27 October 2023

esha2023dubrovnik.com



In Ukraine the new school year has started.

Our Ukrainian member, RGU need your sponsoring to visit the Biennial Conference in Dubrovnik. If you want to contribute, please register your contribution here: esha2023dubrovnik.com/sponsors

The principal leads the school towards a learning community

Our society is facing the extremely rapid development of digital and other technologies, the growing consequences of climate change, and the negative demographic pattern of teachers.

Unfortunately, the current system of professional development of school and kindergarten principals does not provide enough adequate competences to be able to respond flexibly to all of the above-mentioned challenges.

The required knowledge and skills in the field of digital, financial and sustainability literacy have changed significantly in recent years. In Slovenia, a record low percentage of employees are involved in lifelong learning.

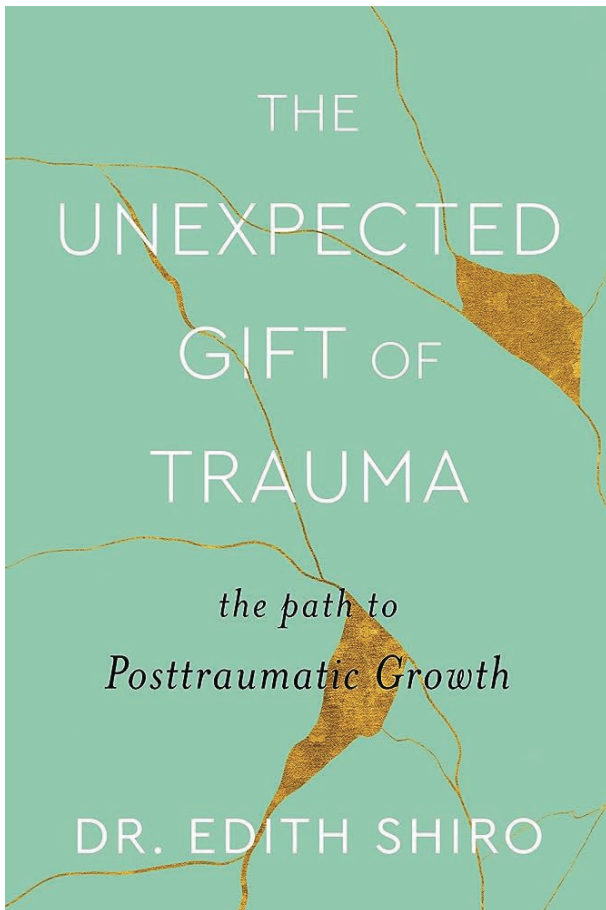
These two very persuasive reasons prove that we need to invest even more systematically in professional development in schools.

Furthermore, we must provide all employees with a motivating training process.

With high-quality training programs, we will adequately equip management staff and teachers in order to become guides of the learning person, help them discover their own potential and thus prepare them for the complex challenges of modern society, the environment, and the economy.

We need to encourage leaders to adopt a new way of managing, based on strategic planning with a clear view of the future, a common vision and active cooperation with relevant stakeholders. Innovative personalized approaches and sustainable professional development models should mobilize a learning community and inspire change.

NIVES POČKAR



Dr. Edith Shiro | THE UNEXPECTED GIFT OF TRAUMA – THE PATH FOR POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH

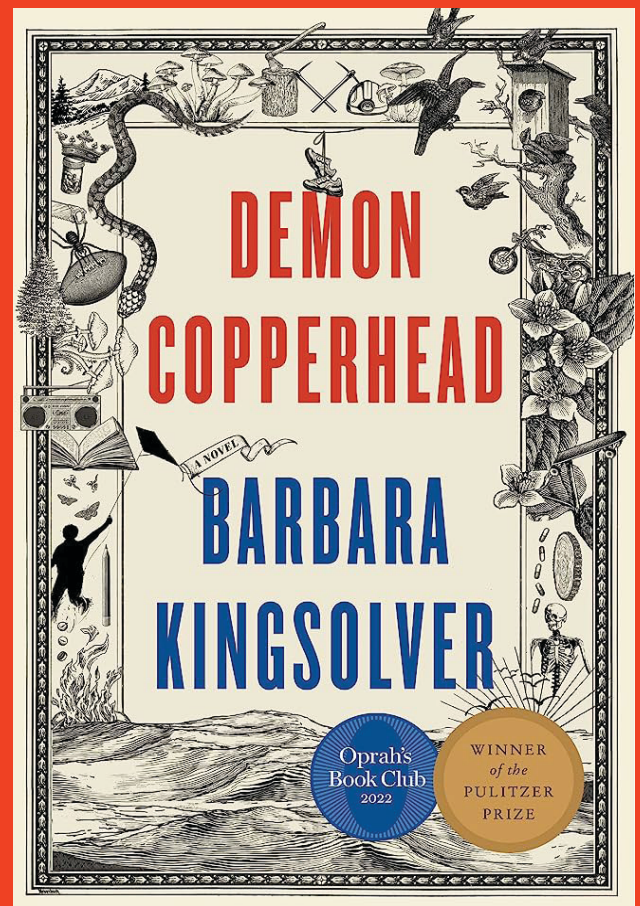
In a period when a high percentage of your students – as well as school staff - is struggling with the burden of trauma in a world that is shown to them as a more-than-ever dangerous place, this well-written book helps the reader to understand trauma in-depth and also get ideas to support their students in not only recovering, but also to use the traumatic experience to support their personal growth.

Books to read

Barbara Kingsolver DEMON COPPERHEAD

A modern day David Copperfield story set in rural USA, this novel has been the literary sensation of this year, and rightfully so. Accompanying Demon on his journey to grow up, we see how a faulty child protection system allows children to fall out of its broken net. Although in most European countries the system is better designed and financed, it is an interesting read from an educator's perspective, allowing you to reflect on the role and responsibility of education professionals for the life of a child in trouble. But first and foremost, it is a well-written novel that is difficult to put down.

–SE–



Official launch of the European Alliance for Microcredential

The Launch is part of the European Vocational Skills Week 2023

Hybrid event,
25 October 2023
4pm to 5 pm CEST

vocational-skills.ec.europa.eu/index_en

The European Alliance for Microcredentials is established with the mission of promoting the offer, uptake, and recognition of micro-credentials (certification of the learning outcomes of short-term learning experiences, for example a short course or training) across the European Union and beyond, in the public, for profit and non-profit sectors, with special focus on formal education and the labour market.

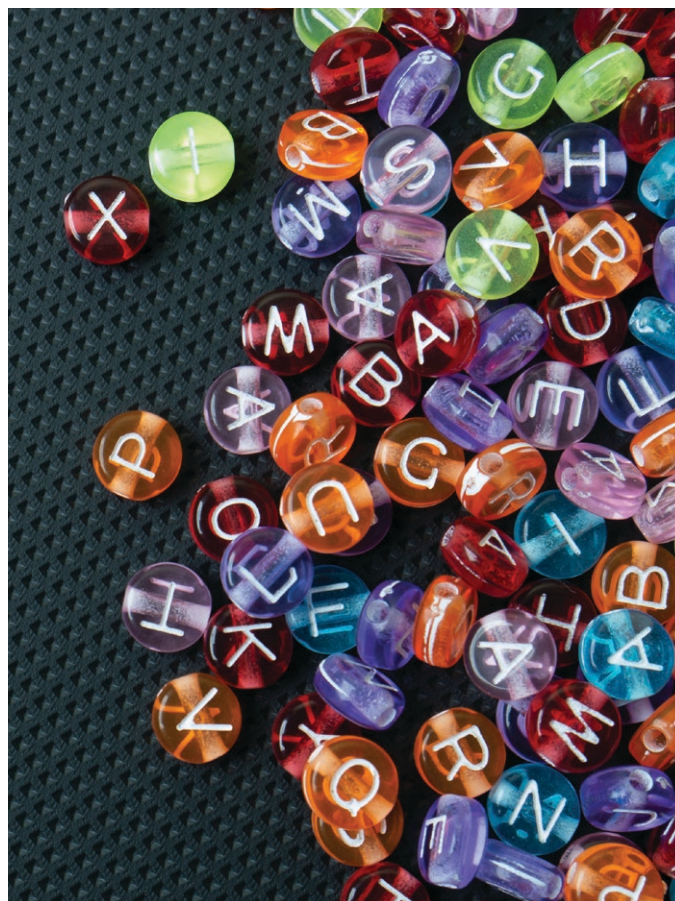
It is a transnational Alliance of relevant stakeholders that not only promotes the adoption of micro-credentials by training providers of any type, but it also supports its members in the development of high-quality results to increase overall impact and formalises a common framework of cooperation at a transnational level. Through the establishment of the European Alliance, the MicroVET partnership foresees to pave the way towards better permeability between education and training sectors and the labour market, allowing for increased employability and continuous reskilling and up-skilling to contribute to better opportunities both at professional and personal level. It includes opportunities for school leaders and their staff to acquire relevant, emerging specialist knowledge that is certified.

ESHA is hosting the official launch of the Alliance. In the event, the founding members of the Alliance will explain why it is a topical initiative, and there will be interventions from

EU policy level as well as VET providers.

It will be a hybrid event, the ESHA Team will be in Dubrovnik at the Biennial and will welcome any participants of the conference to join in person. Everybody else can join online, including most speakers on Zoom.

For the link, please contact *Eszter Salamon* eszter.salamon@esha.org



Dialogic Gathering

Dialogic literary gatherings are excellent examples of successful family education. Data reveal that there are substantial positive effects on the students' motivation and academic success.



Imagine this open space providing the scientific knowledge with evidence of social impact and the free available educative resources that you can use in your school to implement Dialogic Gatherings! In a time where

well-being is under pressure this approach is a refreshing and interesting, but most of all effective way of really making a difference towards motivation and a successful school career for young people.

These were the outcomes of research to be found in the INCLUD-ED Consortium Successful Educational Actions for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe Springer Briefs in Education (2015). According to international assessments education is failing to reduce inequalities associated with socio-economic status. But scientific research with social impact in education shows the possibility of reversing this trend. There are educational actions, with a solid scientific basis, that have been shown to improve achievement and basic skills in many different contexts for all learners, especially for disadvantaged learners. Dialogic Gatherings, a Successful Educational Action identified by INCLUD-ED research (FP6, 2006–2011) has proven excellent results when applied in Science, Mathematics, Literature, Art and Music subjects.

In this project a transnational network is created with didactic resources and a platform to enable the scaleup, sustainability, and political impact of the practice. Dialogic Gatherings can be used in the context of meaningful STEAM education. When bridging to the concept of storytelling and Creative Writing Labs [creamproject.eu], the engagement can get to the level of 'Deep Learning'.

ESHA is one of the consortium partners of the Dive-in-Dialogue project that promotes Dialogic Gatherings where people get together to discuss cultural and scientific knowledge.

It is up to school heads to enter pathways for innovation and development with the school teams that reflect chosen visions and have actual effects on reaching the goals that are set. But let's not forget that leading and learning should also be a path of joy, so explore what Europe has to offer in pointing out some new, successful and realistic approaches!

PETRA VAN HAREN

