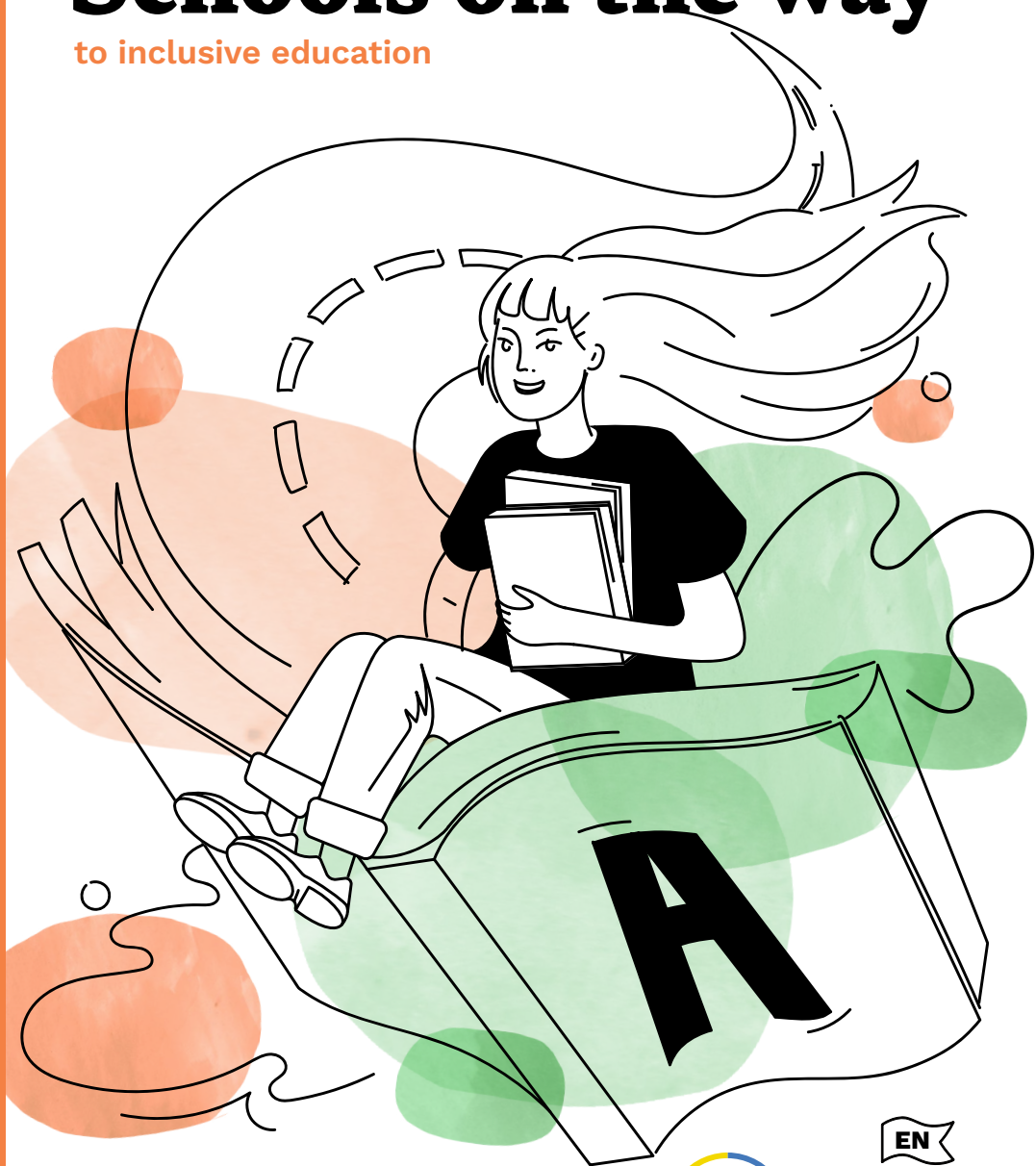


Schools on the way

to inclusive education



EN

Inkluentrum

**The courage
to explore, to fail,
to laugh, to create.
To be.**

Introduction

You are holding a short guide to inclusive education, created based on experience of state schools where people met who believed that acceptance, openness, support and cooperation help all children grow, regardless of whether they are doing well in school or are having problems with learning, whether they were born with good hearing or need a hearing aid, whether they have loving parents or never met their parents, whether they are currently struggling with mathematics or relationships in classroom. The conclusion is that not only children, but also adults — teachers and parents — need to be accepted and supported. This bulletin shows the way to a school where people feel welcome, where it is easy for children to learn and parents are partners.

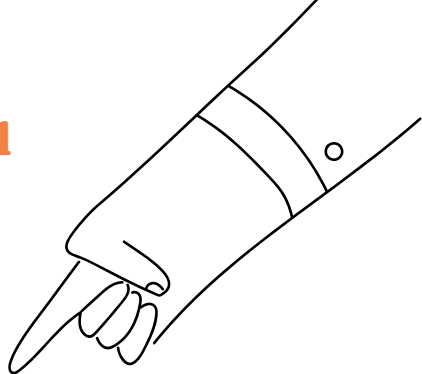
The bulletin is created based on years of study and education, experience and testing new approaches with students and colleagues, hours of conversation, exceptional cooperation, but also slip-ups, burnouts, falls and mistakes. The following pages offer inspiring principles and tips on what is already working in practice and what is useful and supportive for our schools to join on the way to inclusive education.

If you are reading the bulletin as a teacher, you can see pupils', classroom activities, and also the fulfilment of your own needs as a person through new eyes. If you are reading the bulletin as a head teacher, it gives you an insight into the concept of a school where everyone is important and tips on how to implement this concept. If you are reading the bulletin as a parent, rest assured that your child also has the right to a supportive environment and you can spread such ideas both at school and among parents or in the wider community. However, this journey is based on the inner belief that everyone — teachers, children and parents — deserve to have quality schools on the way...

Zuzana Krnáčová a Viktor Križo

Pillars of the school

Interconnected
areas of activities



Opportunity

Creating space for curricular changes

Offer a variety of activities according to the teacher's personality and the pupils' needs

A variety of work forms, teaching from traditional class to group work or project learning

Ordinary life with conflicts

Growth

Reflection

Mediation of conflicts through non-violent communication

Facilitative and reflective learning

Morning circles

Mentoring and supervision

Relationship

Intergenerational networking — peer learning, tutoring, concentration, connecting younger and older

Democracy, subsidiarity and participation

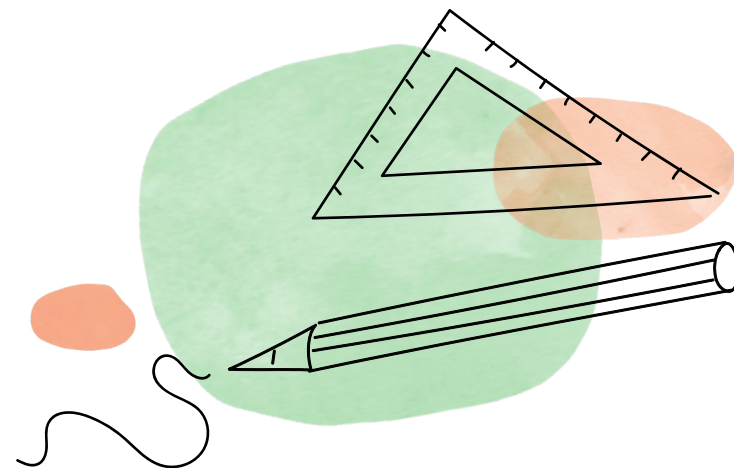
Inclusive school principles

'If I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other will discover the capacity within themselves to use that relationship for growth.'

— C. R. Rogers

- Creating **opportunities** for all to assert themselves where they feel strong and learning in different situations through experience and self-experience.
- Capacity to **reflect** or stop, think and talk, discover their own resources and potential.
- Build **relationships** among people to feel safe. A relationship drives people to develop, be open-minded and perceive others, feel joy but also concerns.

'I liked it a lot when we went to a retirement home and when we were preparing a Christmas dinner because we all worked together, although it wasn't the best, but that was the point - to learn from our mistakes.'
— a pupil, Class 7



Inclusive school mission

Creating various educational opportunities to build relationships that are continuously reflected on the way to human growth. It gradually changes from:

- control, evaluation and power over others to power with others;
- directive approach and structure to self-management, participation and democracy;
- incorrect understanding of freedom without responsibilities as anarchy;
- producing a plethora of activities to enabling activities that staff and pupils are interested in;
- imposing methods, forms, styles and resources learning about choice, opportunity and reflection;
- focus on performance and knowledge to relationships, development and learning;
- perceiving differences to self-acceptance and others.

BASIC EXPERT GROUNDS: People-centred approach (PCA), non-violent communication (NVC), transparency, participation and democracy, neuropsychology, multi-disciplinary approach.

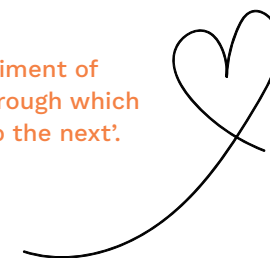
Basic information and principles in relation to inclusive education can also be found in our videos: [youtube/Inklucentrum](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCklucentrum)



Supporting school staff

‘A teacher is a person, not a faceless embodiment of a curricular requirement or a sterile pipe through which knowledge is passed from one generation to the next’

— C. R. Rogers



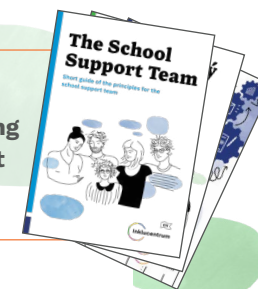
STAFF ARE AS IMPORTANT AS ANY CHILD AT SCHOOL.

- Creating a voluntary space for regular employee training that supports teambuilding, mentoring and an inclusive philosophy.
- Supporting relationship building by creating shared time and experience opportunities. Creating a safe environment.
- Creating a school support team at the school, their cooperation in comprehensive support for pupils, parents and staff. Supporting teachers so that the teacher is able to work with the individual needs of pupils and the diversity and dynamics of the classroom.
- Creating an environment and culture where all employees feel equally important.

‘When I found out as a class teacher that my pupil was self-harming on a daily basis and what she was going through, I was extremely happy that I was not alone and had a support team at school who knew what to do.’

— učitel’

You can find more information on this topic in our bulletins **School Support Team, Teaching Assistant and Coordination of School Support Teams**: inklucentrum.sk/publikacie/



Teacher profile

'A teacher can be a real person in their relationship with their students. They can be enthusiastic, they can be bored, they can be angry, they can be sensitive.'

— C. R. Rogers

- Naming and accepting different feelings and needs in yourself and others, learning self-regulation, knowing and accepting your resources and limits.
- Learning to accept yourself and the pupil as they are, and to empathically perceive feelings of fear, expectation and distrust of anything new.
- Recognising your talent and being able to use it when working with pupils.
- Reflecting on your growth process and the growth process of pupils.
- Supporting the development of a relationship between yourself and your pupils.
- Recognising the needs of yourself or your pupils' in a timely manner and taking effective support measures.
- Gradually offering choices (freedom) according to the pupil's stage of development and allowing them to take responsibility.
- Gradually transferring the locus of control and evaluation from yourself to the pupils.
- Creating opportunities and offering diverse learning resources for pupils, enabling them to engage with real-world problems and be ready to respond to change.
- Perceiving and working with group dynamics and with what is topical in the group.
- Working with other colleagues and developing relationships.
- Actively using the language of non-violent communication.
- Using feedback and reflective practices towards others and yourself.

'I receive great freedom and support in using the forms of learning that I consider appropriate at the moment. I don't feel like a failure if the form I choose doesn't work.'

— a teacher

Graduate profile

- Naming and accepting different feelings and needs in yourself and others, learning to regulate your behaviour, knowing and accepting your resources and limits.
- Recognising your talent and idea of your career path.
- Forming your requests according to the non-violent communication concept.
- Having experience with volunteering.
- Being able to organise your study and leisure time.
- Receiving and giving feedback.
- Making decisions and mistakes and taking responsibility for them.
- Responding to changes, problems, challenges and managing your time.
- Moving the locus of control from the outside in.

'My son has worked hard on himself. I was grateful for every encouragement from the school and quarterly self-assessment. Activities with first-year pupils, camps, morning circles, all this contributed to the fact that today he has a personality.'

— the mother of pupil from Class 9.A

You can also find more information on this topic in our bulletins **Nonviolent Communication** and **On the Road to Understanding:**
inklucentrum.sk/publikacie/



Cooperation with parents

Providing information

We use an electronic information system at school. Parents have transparent access to information shared from class and school life (curriculum of individual subjects, tasks, School Council minutes, annual school reports, feedback on the child's development and more).

Opening the school door

We communicate the school's vision and values with parents and offer them to experience what we live. We offer parents the chance to experience school lessons and activities, we are open in our teaching methods, we collect feedback from parents.

Involving parents

We build open relationships with parents through regular meetings with class teachers, management or school support team. Together we are looking for ways of supporting and developing the potential of every child. We encourage the foundation of communities of parents and their involvement in school life. We organise a variety of events for parents to support school and mutual relationships (non-formal education for parents and teachers, presentation of occupations, etc.).

‘The way and manner of working with children and adults, which this school is trying to follow, gives me hope, that after many years there can be humanity, friendly and correct relationships even in a standard school...’


— a teacher

‘I'm glad that I don't have to “subsidise the school out of my own pocket”. From coffee to work aids, this is provided by the school.’
— a special educator

School management

The cooperation of management, staff and parents, which supports the joint preparation of important decisions, is based on **participatory and subsidiary management**. Turning from the model of management by head teacher to the model of coordination and management, division of responsibilities, decentralisation and open cooperation with the active use of staff council and school council tools, where responsibilities and tasks are clearly defined and power is reflected.

- **School council** — the highest authority of school direction and control, e.g. according to the open and transparent concept of the Slovak Chamber of Teachers;
- **Project manager** — this job helps school project development, networking, fundraising.
- **Democratic staffroom** — a democratic class stands on a democratic staffroom. The principles that we want to apply in classes must first be applied among adults so that pupils have someone to draw inspiration and learn from. If pupils are to express their opinion and take responsibility, this must first be experienced by the staff.
- **School support team** — provides comprehensive support to pupils and employees in fulfilling the school's vision, particularly in individual and group preventive and intervention activities, in identifying risks, supporting a pupil's career path, measuring the climate in classrooms, staffroom and between parents (SWOT analysis, 360° feedback), taking support measures and crisis intervention.

 You can find more information on how to incorporate inclusive principles into school documentation in our methodological portal: inklucentrum.sk/portal

You can also find more information on this topic in our bulletins **Individualised Education Programme, Therapeutic Groups and Crisis Intervention**: inklucentrum.sk/publikacie/



Innovative development activities

● Mentoring

– adaptation programme for beginning or incoming teachers, mentoring for teachers, coaching for school management and supervision for the school support team.

● Facilitative and reflective learning

– group work, reflection in classes, differentiated learning, work with group dynamics.

● Introducing new elements and subjects

– the principle of **non-violent communication** is applied at the school and both pupils and staff learn it as a ‘foreign’ language aimed at acquiring new communication competences and conflict mediation. According to Margret Rasfeld’s model, the introduction of the ‘**Responsibility**’ subject aimed at cultivating volunteering directly in classes according to the pupil’s preferences with tutoring (e.g. year-round help in a retirement home, children’s home, caring for a garden, tutoring a younger pupil, environmental activism, etc.), the ‘**Artephiletics**’ subject, elements of **Hejný mathematics and experiential pedagogy**, etc.

● Project-based learning

– teaching in blocks without a traditional schedule – implementing various projects, intergenerational activities and workshops in connecting subjects in the care of plants, small animals and culinary, physical or environmental projects.

‘I see it as an opportunity that children don’t just fill their free-time with a school trip, but they learn life skills together, take responsibility and even enjoy failures.’

— a teacher

● Assessment

– the marking concept is not abolished but weakened by shifting responsibility from teacher to pupil. Pupils are led to achieve their career potential, the emphasis is on self-assessment (quarterly) and individual growth of both teacher and pupil.

● Introduction of morning circles

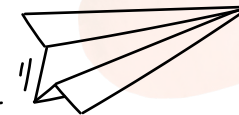
– at the beginning of lessons in all classes.

● Intergenerational friendships

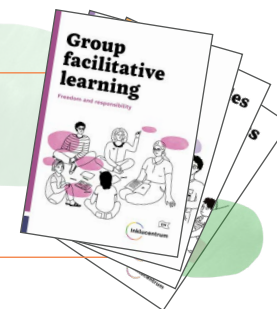
– connecting pupils between individual classes in age-mixed teaching or project learning, three-generation workshops with parents and seniors.

● Workshops

– experiential extra-curricular activities/trips of mixed-age groups in nature focused on learning soft skills, with preparation, participation and pupil’ responsibility, intergenerational networking, evening circles, reflection or conflict mediation being very important.



You can find more information on this topic in our bulletins **Group Facilitative Learning, Mixed-Grade Classrooms, Morning Circles** and **Artephiletics**: inklucentrum.sk/publikacie/



Can we do it?

If you're worried, you've probably embarked on a journey to change. The freedom and responsibility that inclusive education brings is always beneficial in the long run. Power and obedience have only short-term effects. *If the needs of staff are not met and inclusive education is only perceived as support for pupils, the staff may gradually become apathetic, angry, burned out, bored or change their job.*

- It is not necessary for everyone to have the same enthusiasm, the diversity of teachers is welcome, some sit in a circle, some sit behind a school desk, some grade more, some grade less.
- Try discussions and training on inclusive education topics, talk and share with other schools, with your colleagues, parents and pupils.
- School transformation is a long-term process and is provably considered nice when someone helps and supports you on this path (external mentor, coach, supervisor).
- The school partner is your CPC and your founder and they should jointly and actively support the school on this path.
- Find out where your starting line is – it will help the school when it knows its current state, using the SWOT analysis, for example.
- It is a good idea to take a friend when going on a challenging journey – find other schools that want to change from within, share achievements and support each other, network in the district, cooperate and do not compete.

'When about 30 teachers from different schools were sitting in a circle, I realised that we were all looking for a way of how to do it. No one had a patent for it...'
— a teacher and social worker

'Sometimes it seems that inclusive education is actually everything, the whole universe. But then I see how many blind alleys can be taken and be lost in them until I realise with self-reflection that this is not the right direction.'
— a teacher

'For the first time in a long time, we perceived at school that the founder supported our approach with specific steps. It gave us hope to continue.'
— a Deputy Headmaster

Classifieds

We are looking for a teacher who wants to be themselves.
Ref.: They know their price.

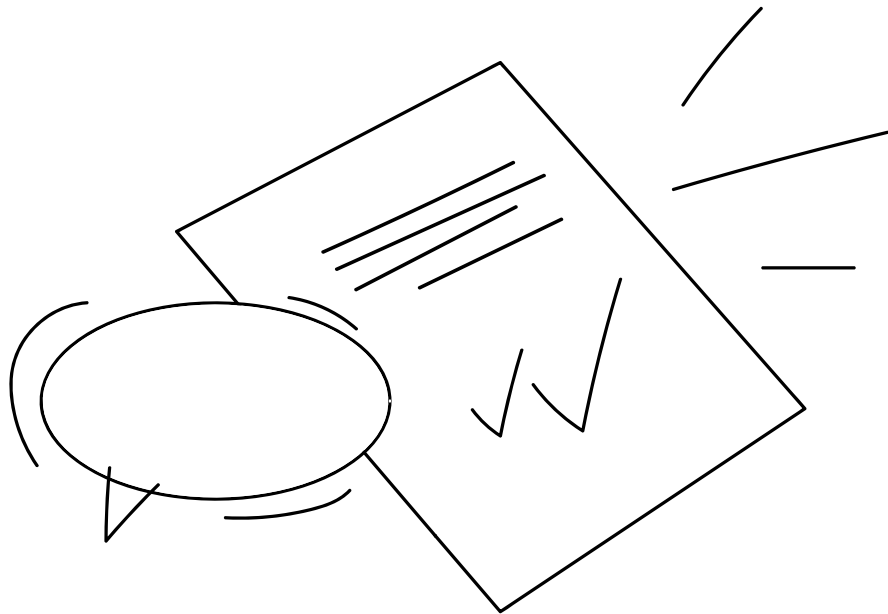
We are looking for a pupil who likes to have freedom of choice.
Ref.: Responsibility.

We are looking for a mayor who believes in repairing the roofs of children's souls. **Ref.: Employee support.**

We are looking for a head teacher who does not want to manage others. **Ref.: They have time for themselves.**

We are looking for a parent who likes to replace marks with personality development.
Ref.: Cooperation.





This bulletin builds on our publications *Guide to an Inclusive School* (2019) and *School with an Inclusive Centre* (2021).

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Our Publications:

We prepare these bulletins in cooperation with a team of experts on inclusive education. Use them as a useful guide in your work or explaining the inclusive education principle to the general public.

There are useful videos for you on our Inklucentrum YouTube channel, some of which are also available in other languages. We recommend registering for the training that we organise to learn in detail about the topics.



Our Publications:
inklucentrum.sk/publikacie

Our Courses:
inklucentrum.sk/kurzy

Webinars and Videos:
youtube.com/Inklucentrum

Concept

through the eyes of experts

Inclusive education is the collective education of children with diverse potential to ensure equal opportunities. Each school should be open to all children in the location and prepared to enable them to fulfil their fundamental right to a quality education. An inclusive environment is natural and creates opportunities for everyone to participate.

Diversity is an opportunity beneficial to the whole. Inclusive education is supported by a dynamic system of educational and specialised services flexibly responding to the needs of a child, family and teacher. It is a process, not a state. Comprehensive support (cooperation, identification of needs and appropriate interventions, therapy) is offered as close as possible to the child, their family and the teacher at **3 levels**: at the level of a child, family and teacher; at the level of the class as a learning community; and at the level of the school, CPC, school district and the wider community. The key areas and objectives are:

- Moving from **diagnosis** (from understanding the problem) **to identifying the needs** of every individual: child, teacher, parent, class, school, community.
- **Protecting the rights** of children/families/teachers in schools and school facilities, meeting their need for respect, belonging and creating learning opportunities, including identifying and mitigating obstacles.



- The **teacher** is the bearer of a change in approach, a **key relational person** for the pupils and their development. The teacher is actively supported in their work by the team of experts and the school management.
- The **learning community** creates an environment that encourages mutual learning and creates conditions for personal growth and preparation for life. A child who cannot fully participate in learning for any reason is identified and receives effective help. **Prevention and therapy are integrated** into the school's educational activities (facilitation, reflection, support of communication of emotions and needs, self-expression, etc.)
- Subsidiarity and decentralisation of support at different levels means that children should do what they can do, the teacher should do what they can support, the support team should carry out its responsibility, the head teacher should do what they can manage, etc. Support is the result of teamwork. In the spirit of the freedom and responsibility principles, competences are brought as close as possible to those involved and do not accumulate higher unless necessary. Powers are decentralised to those levels where their exercise is most effective in terms of meaningful and effective learning.

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We cover Inclusive education

Inkluentrum – The Centre for Inclusive Education is an advocacy, educational, consulting expert organization on a national level, working in the field of support to inclusive education. It is dedicated to supporting quality and humanistic education in the school environment for the benefit of development of potential for all children, families and the school staff. It provides support, consulting and education in accredited programs and workshops, especially for pedagogical and professional employees.

INKLUENTRUM — The Centre for Inclusive Education

Hattalova 12, 831 03 Bratislava
www.inkluentrum.sk
facebook.com/inkluentrum

INFO: info@inkluentrum.sk
COURSES: vzdelavanie@inkluentrum.sk
COUNSELLING: poradenstvo@inkluentrum.sk
ONLINE: inkluentrum.sk/publikacie
inkluentrum.sk/kurzy



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Authors of the publication: Mgr. Zuzana Krnáčová
a PaedDr. Mgr. et Mgr. Viktor Križo, PhD.

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