Introduction and context

The teachers from the Erasmus Plus 'GO-PRINCE' project come from across Europe and all work within teacher or social educator education. For all of us the theme of inclusion is an important aspect of the work we do with emerging professionals in the early years field. We are all influenced by the common thinking, in terms of research and European conventions, that underpins the practices associated with inclusion in each of our countries. Collegiate learning and the sharing of best practice on the provision of support for children with SEN and those other children at risk from disadvantage and exclusion can be perceived to be lacking at the European level. A political consensus has emerged on the importance of inclusive education, reflected in part by a general trend towards placement of children with SEN in mainstream education, and away from special schooling. Many European Member States have made good progress in developing coherent, localised and inclusive early intervention strategies, which provide for consultation with affected families. Information on the support mechanisms available to parents of children at risk of exclusion from mainstream schooling incomplete, although some examples of good practice exist for replication.

Our Erasmus GOPRINCE project is a response to this call for a best practice approach and aims to make a contribution to the sharing of knowledge, understanding and best practice in inclusive education. It is important then that we give some detailed consideration to a range of definitions of inclusion from an international perspective. If we accept the ideology of inclusive education, then we have to believe that all children and young people, no matter where they are located in the world, should have access to high quality education (Hodkinson (2016)). UNESCO (2005) suggests inclusion emphasizes providing opportunities for equal participation of persons with disabilities (physical, social and/or emotional) whenever possible into general education, but leaves open the possibility of personal choice and options for special assistance and facilities for those who need it. In particular, four key elements have tended to feature strongly in the conceptualisation of inclusion.

Inclusion is a process. That is to say, inclusion has to be seen as a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity. It is about learning how to live with difference and learning how to learn from difference. In this way differences come to be seen more positively as a stimulus for fostering learning, amongst children and adults.

Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers. Consequently, it involves collecting, collating and evaluating information from a wide variety of sources in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice. It is about using evidence of various kinds to stimulate creativity and problem-solving.

Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all pupils. Here "presence" is concerned with where children are educated, and how reliably and punctually they attend; "participation" relates to the quality of their experiences whilst they are there and, therefore, must incorporate the views of the learners themselves; and "achievement" is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not merely test or examination results.

Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure that those groups that are statistically most "at risk" are carefully monitored, and that, where necessary, steps are taken to ensure their presence, participation and achievement in the education system.

Definitions of inclusion in education from the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow 2011, 3rd edition) suggest that inclusion in education involves:

- Valuing all pupils and staff equally.
- Increasing the participation of pupils 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 pupils in the locality.
- Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all pupils, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as `having special educational needs'.
- Learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular pupils to make changes for the benefit of pupils more widely.
- Viewing the difference between pupils as resources to support learning, rather than as problems to be overcome.
- Acknowledging the right of pupils to an education in their locality.
- Emphasising the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement.
- Recognising that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.

"The concept and practice of inclusive education have gained importance in recent years. Internationally, the term is increasingly understood more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners. Inclusive education is a process that involves the transformation of schools and other centres of learning to cater for all children – including boys and girls, pupils from ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural populations, those affected by HIV and AIDS, and those with disabilities and difficulties in learning and to provide learning opportunities for all youth and adults as well. Its aim is to eliminate exclusion that is a consequence of negative attitudes and a lack of response to diversity in race, economic status, social class, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability. Education takes place in many contexts, both formal and non-formal, and within families and the wider community. Consequently, inclusive education is not a marginal issue but is central to the achievement of high quality education for all learners and the development of

more inclusive societies. Inclusive education is essential to achieve social equity and is a constituent element of lifelong learning" (UNESCO, Education page).

Inclusive education involves embracing human diversity and welcoming all children and adults as equal members of an educational community. This involves valuing and supporting the full participation of all people together within mainstream educational settings. Inclusive education requires recognising and upholding the rights of all children and adults and understanding human diversity as a rich resource and an everyday part of all human environments and interactions. Inclusive education is an approach to education free from discriminatory beliefs, attitudes and practices, including free from ableism. Inclusive education requires putting inclusive values into action to ensure all children and adults belong, participate and flourish. *(Cologon undated)*

Finally it is important to remind ourselves that having all children learning together teaches children to value diversity, builds social capital and lays the foundation for inclusive communities**.**

The history of our project

Our work began with our first work package which aimed to capture the current picture of inclusion in each of our countries. It is more than 20 years since the World Conference and the Salamanca Declaration each of our countries was at a different starting point then and the developments in each country reflect these diverse starting points. We wanted to be able to consider the similarities and differences in the approaches that had been adopted in each country as a starting point on our journey to identify and share good practices. You may have looked at our **overview documents already**, but if you haven't these can be found **in this specific area of our website**. Each country has a document of its own and a summary document is also provided. At our meeting in Esbjerg, Denmark in March 2015 we began to share our national overviews, to share the big picture from our individual countries. We wanted to move from the 'big picture' towards a more detailed consideration of how inclusion is being implemented in each country.   We left with the task of bringing examples of good practice from our country to the next meeting. We felt that these examples would help to bring the 'big pictures' to life, to help us to understand how inclusion was being experienced by young children and their families in the countries that are part of our project.

At our meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania in May 2015 we shared with each other examples of good practice that illustrated how inclusion was being implemented in our countries. Again these examples of good practice can be found in **in the following folder on or website.** As we listen to the contributions we were intrigued by their variety but also by some of the similarities. We began to identify the common themes and concerns, noting that since the aim of each government was the same then our concerns would inevitably be similar. Our next task was to really unpick what these similarities and common approaches were, and to do this we needed a means of analysing each of the contributions.

We chose an interactive means of analysis. After presenting our models to the group we all created a small wall display covering our main points. Working in trans-national groups of two and three we examined each display in turn and using post-it notes we wrote down the aspects that seemed to us to be an underpinning principle or the most important to aspect of each of the models. We were challenged to write these on a post-it note and stick it on the wall beside the display. This method enabled us to really start to discuss each of the models, to ask questions, clarify our understanding and begin to draw meaningful comparisons between them and the models from out own country. Deciding on the most important aspects of each model to write on our post-it note required reflection, discussion, negotiation and sometimes compromise!
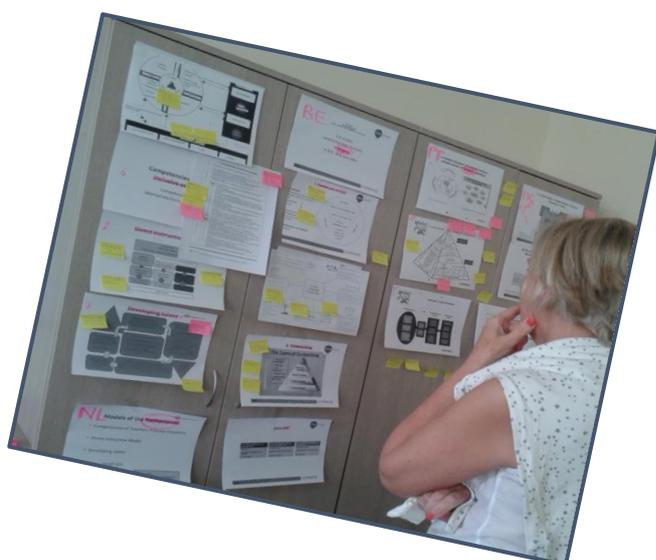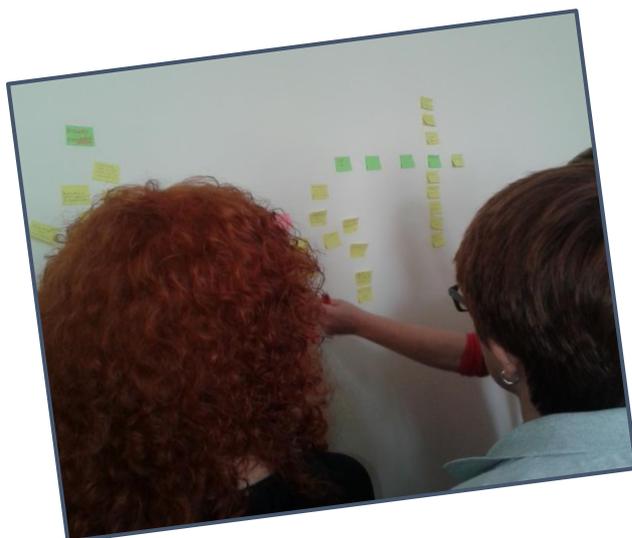
At the end of this process and when each small trans-national group had had the opportunity to review each of the national models we gathered all of the post-it notes together this was our data and we needed to use it to consider the most appropriate themes to reflect out work so far. So we began to look closely at our words and sort them into piles of similar themes. This method of analysis was referred to as "working from heaps to sets" by Whalley et al (2004:36). It represents an approach to analysing data that is easily adapted to a group situation and a collaborative approach. It actively engages the co-researchers in discussion and debate about how the sets are created, encouraging them to consider and combine, to sort and sort again. Using post-it notes and a large wall space we were able to work together to sort and re-sort, merge sets and divide others until we were satisfied with the groupings we had established. This was a surprisingly lengthy process but one that would be central to the next stage of our project so again we chose to invest time in reflection, discussion, clarification, negotiation and again some compromise!

At the end of our analysis session we were left with words and phrases that fell into six categories, after further debate we named our categories:

Collaboration

Reflective practice

Holistic view

Shared ethos

Adaptations

Communication

Appendix A, below, captures some of the post-it note contributions that were part of the final categories. Before leaving Vilnius each country chose to take one of the categories and explore it in more depth. At our meeting in Newcastle in November 2015 we shared the development of these overarching categories and again these individual documents can be found in XXXXX. In summary the categories were developed in the following ways.

Collaboration

Our colleagues from Portugal considered the complex nature of collaboration, considering first the notion of professional collaboration which can be described as multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary (Briggs 1991, 1997, Hernandez 2013). They go on to look at models of collaborative teaching, identified as one of the most promising factors in facilitating inclusion, the collaborative approach to teaching results in the teaming of general and special educators in an inclusionary classroom setting but can also apply to teaming other professionals, such as speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, and counselors (Rainforth & England, 1997 as cited in Hernandez, 2013). Finally they consider the notion of collaborative learning and the impact that this can have on the successful integration of children with SEN into mainstream classrooms.

Reflective practice

This category was considered by our colleagues from Denmark and they begin to encourage us to think about reflection in terms of its potential to enable us the challenge and change our think and our actions. They capture the complexity of working with young children and especially those with special educational needs through the use of a didactical model of relations was first formulated by Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978) who explore the interconnected nature of different aspects of our work with children. This section highlights the complex nature of reflection and its importance in developing effective practice.

Holistic View

Our colleagues from Belgium looked at the category we had labeled developing a '*Holistic view'* view of the child. Drawing on the work of Laevers et al (2005) this piece demonstrated how his theories have been used to focus on the child, their well-being and their involvement in their surroundings and with their care givers. This view sees the child and the process of inclusion in a positive way, seeing all aspects of development as equally important and asking questions that focus on the child's strengths rather than their areas of weakness. The work of Laevers and his colleagues is influential beyond Belgium, currently those working in early years in the UK will recognise the influences of his work with

the 'Curriculum Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2007) and beyond into current assessment frameworks for the youngest children in our school.

Shared ethos

Our colleagues from Lithuenia have explored the category of 'ethos'. In this section they consider the need for inclusive practice to be developed from a value-based committment by teachers. The Profile of Inclusive Teachers (EADSNE 2012) highlights the essential core values and areas of competence necessary for preparing teachers to work in inclusive education considering all forms of diversity. Written from a clutural diversity perspective, this section explores the essential values that create an ethos that ensures all learners have access to an inclusive eduction

Adaptations

Our Turkish colleagues considered the notion of adaptations and the range of forms these can take. These adaptations are designed to lessen the impact of the child's special educational need and thus promote their successful integration into mainstream school. Adaptations to the learning environment, the use of specific aids, changes to teaching approaches or instructional materials as well as the consideration of how scaffolding can be used are all considered within this section. In the UK government policy and guidance such as Removing Barriers to Achievement (DfES 2004) have supported the drive to make adaptations at a classroom and school level that can have a positive impact on children's inclusion and achievement. In many cases the adaptation has been in the form of additional adult support in the classroom. There is a particular focus on shifting the emphasis for removing barriers to ensuring barriers are not unintentionally constructed. In doing so the principles of Universal Design for Early Childhood Education (UDECE), are explored, this approach addresses and redresses the primary barrier to making expert learners of all pupils: inflexible, one-size-fits-all curricula that raise barriers to learning.

Communication

The concept of communication was explored by our colleague from the Netherlands. In this section the complex nature of the process of communication is highlighted as well as   models which aim to shed light on the nature of effective communication. Leary's Rose (1957) demonstrates the impact of the interplay between the behaviour and the perspective of participants in conversation and can be used as a frame for anayling and influencing the positive outcome of conversations. Likewise the model of Emotional Intellegence (Goleman 1996) draws attention to the need to understand ourselves and our behaviours as well as the motives and motivations of others. The skills needed for effective communication with parents, children and other professionals are all explored.

Choosing a metaphor for our findings

The next stage of our projects is to develop materials that can be used to support teacher educators when working to develop the knowledge and understanding of trainee teachers and social pedagogues about inclusion. During our meeting in Newcastle we also realised that we needed some kind on metaphor to bring some coherence to the development of the next part of our project. Our logo was

designed by a colleague with the ribbons representing the inter-twinning of needs, skills, services and perspectives that contribute to inclusive education and we wondered how this could be built upon for our metaphor. Our efforts didn't manage to come up with a strong enough image, so moved away from this image and let our thoughts run. After much creative thought and debate we settled on the notion of inclusion as a means to **unlock children's potential**, with collaboration, reflective practice, a holistic view, shared ethos, adaptations and communication being somoe of the important **the keys** which would help to unlock that potential. The doodle below was made by one participant in meeting
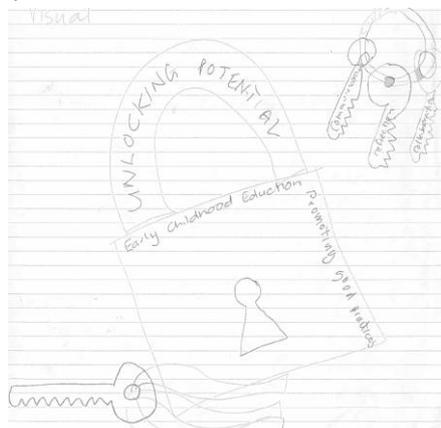
as we explored the possibilities.

The notion of unlocking potential is central to inclusive practice. Throughout the materials that we develop in the next part of our project we will refer to *'the keys'* both collectively and individually, our materials will consist of case studies from all of the participating countries which demonstrate aspects of good inclusive practice, within each of these there will be a focus on the contribution the each of *the keys* has made to a successful out come for the child or children involved. We will also consider the significance of each of *the keys* from the perspective of the children, their parents, the educational setting they attend and the different professionals involved in their education.

We hope you will enjoy looking at the overviews of *the keys* and that you will find our materials, when they are produce towards the end of 2016, informative and supportive in reflecting upon and developing your inclusive practice.

Developing the 'Keys' into open access online materials to support teacher-educators across Europe

The notion of unlocking potential is central to inclusive practice. Throughout the materials that we developed in the next part of our project we refer to *'the keys'* both collectively and individually. Our materials will consist of case studies from all of the participating countries which demonstrate aspects of good inclusive practice, within each of these there will be a focus on the contribution the each of *the keys* has made to a successful outcome for the child or children involved.

Ceating the case study materials was the most significant piece of work we had to undertake as part of the project. Each country took its 'key' and sought to find an example of good practice form their country to form the basis of a case study which could later be used as materials to support pre and in-service teachers think about inclusive practice.

In February 2016 we all gathered at Vives University in Belgium.
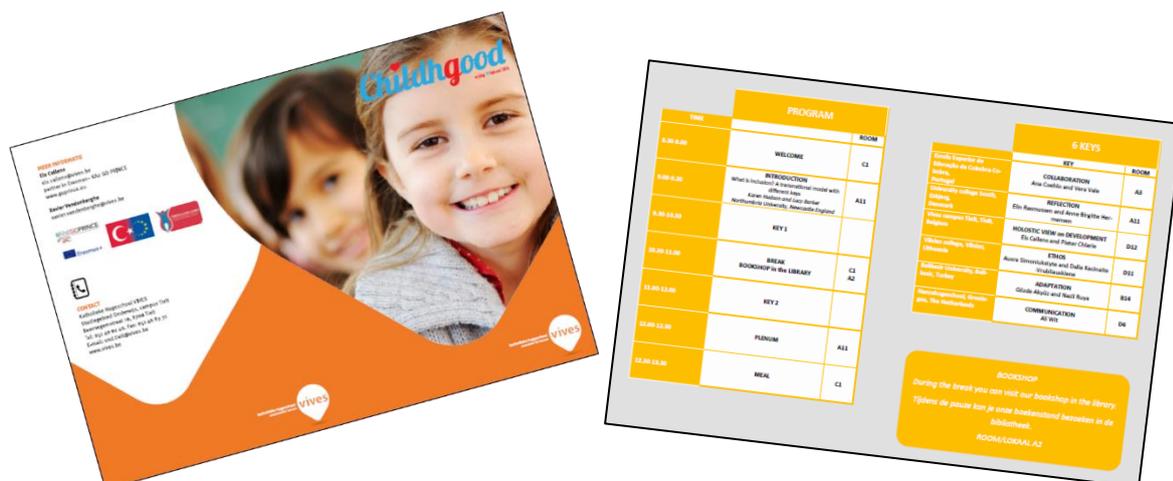
Our colleagues from Vives has organised a conference, inviting teachers and leaders from partnership schools and settings along with students from their Batchelor programmes to a series of workshops during which we would share our developing case studies and materials. The workshops were very successful and provided us with the opportunity to test out our materials and more importantly it enabled us to recieve feedback from the participants to support the refinement and development of our materials.

In May we met in Lithuania to begin to plan the Intensive Study Programme (ISP). During the ISP students from each of the seven participating countries would come together at Vilniaus Kolegija / University of Applied Sciences for two weeks to explore the concept of Inclusion. During the ISP the students will expereince

- the workshops based around the keys
- visits to local schools to expereince first hand inclusive practcies in Lithunatia
- take part in lectures and workshops from experts in the field
- take part in cultural and social activities

You can find out more about what happened during the ISP by looking at the Intensive Study programme from the menu bar on the home page.

For the project team the ISP was an important opportunity to deliver their refined workshops and to test out the activities and materials that had been developed. The workshops were delivered to student in trans-national groups of 14 (two students from each country) and each group of students evaluated the workshops at the end of each session. We were really grateful for the honest and constructive feedback that the students gave us.

It was during our preparations for the ISP that we began to think about how we could capture the concept of the keys in a way that the students would be able to remember each of the six keys individually. We felt that this would be an important aspect of the

Collaboration
Reflection
Holistic view
Ethos
Adaptation
Communication

Reflection
Ethos
Adaptations
Collaboration
Communication
Holistic view

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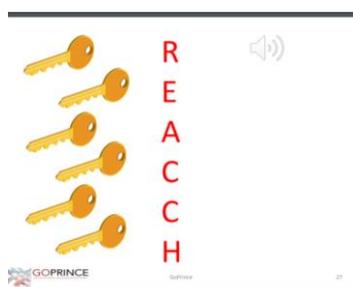
With a little bit of reorganisation we were able to come up with the acronym

REACCH

We liked this because it we were able to make lots of positive associations with it and we all felt we could relate to the notion of reaching for inclusion

At the end of the ISP the staff continued to adapt and develop their materials in response to the feedback from the student teachers and social pedagogues. Examples of changes included

- providing more detailed definitions of key terms
- re-considering the length of time allocated to each practical activity
- re-wording worksheets or moovly text
- re-considering the pitch of the teacher imput

The challenge for the project team was to take the feedback from the ISP students and then use it to adapt their workshop meterials so that they can 'stand alone' and be used, by teacher-educators across Europe, independently to support student teachers or student social pedagogues in their understadning of inclusive practice. In order to have the maximum impact the materials need to be easy to access and easy to use. In the universities that are part of the project the materials will be integrated into the currcular for the appropriate Batchelor courses. But we also wanted the materials to be used beyond the project universities to other teacher educators in each country.

During the workshops we also began to expereiment with using REACCH as an Audit Tool that students could use to support their reflections on the classrooms they visit and work in during their training,

and for practitioners to use to reflect on the provision in their setting. You will see the REACCH Audit throughout many of the materials.

Our deadline for the completion of our materials was our final project meeting in Denmark in May 2017. When we met for the final time we shared eachothers progress and also discussed how we would like the materials to be presented on the website.
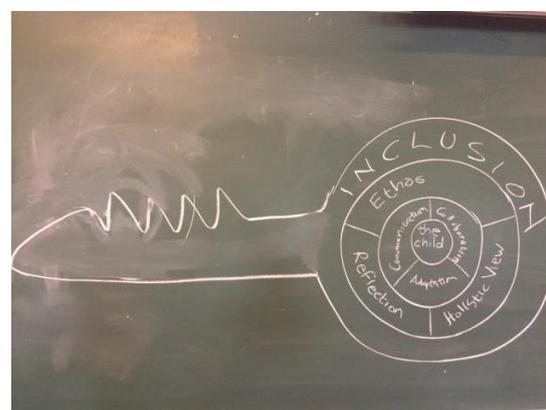
You will notice that the image on the blackboard is the one of the home page of the website!!

On our final evening in Denmark we gathered on the beach to watch the sun go down, this was an opportunity for us to spend some time together relaxing and enjoying the feelings of celebtation at our achievements but also sadness that our time together had come to an end.

Now that you have shared our story we hope you will enjoy looking at the keys and the materials we have produced, we hope you will find them useful.

If you would like to give us any feedback the project team's email addresses are on their staff profiles.

Thank you ☺

Appendix A

PT	• Partnership with other teachers and technician's
	• School level listen to the needs of the teachers
	• Parent – child – management team
	↓
	Peer – school – teacher
Collaboration	• Partnership with other professionals
	• Partnership with parents
	• Teachers are always looking for opportunities instead of problems
	• Uniform word for parents / care takers
	• Involve communication with parents
	• Context community
	• Cooperation, cooperative learning is the key
	• Teamwork learn skills from the others
	• Triangle: child teacher / parent
	• Common consent
DK	• Tool for reflection, (not as a checklist)
	• Is able to mutual
Reflective practice	• Skills professional
	• To be honest with yourself
	• Model for reflection for lifelong learning
	• Self-reflection teachers
	• Feed up - back and forward
BE	• Develop cognitive skills
	• Development
	• Child
	• Social emotional
	• Language and cognitive
	• Motorial and moral
Holistic view	• Sensorial
	• Well being
	• Follow the initiative of a child
	• "the helicopter principle" and "AI : Appreciative Inquiry
	• Self-steering
	• Capability
LT	• Engagement
	• Expectations
	• Children's right
	↓
Shared ethos	Democracy
	↓
	Participation
	• Trust
	• No excuses
	• Respect
	• Passion, trust and expectations
	• Positive looking to children and others
	• Acceptation

TK	
Adaptations	• Dynamic assessment • Adaptation and adaptation • Adapting "things" • Attitudes skills and knowledge • Academic and social skills • Strategies for teacher training • Different ways of looking (signs) • Differentiation • Differences • Participation • Scaffolding • Enrichment • Triangle of Cognitive / Psychology and Socially …… • More than only the class, classroom centred. To read more about • Build on the strength of the child • Early intervention • Also strength parents
NL	

Communication	• Dialogue
	• Communication
	• Strategies to communicate
	• Triangle: child teacher / parent
	• Parent – child – management team
	          ↓
	    Peer – school – teacher
	• Involve communication with parents