



FINE AT SCHOOL

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GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS' STUDY CIRCLES

WP4: EUROPEAN PEDAGOGICAL MODEL FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Project information

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1. Overview of the WP4 Activities and Study Circles Plan for Teachers' Training

In general, the activities of Work Package 4 builds up on the results of Work Package 3. According to the application, the teachers' training has to be realized through study circles and peer learning methodologies and aims at sharing experiences and opinions with reference to *European Pedagogical Model* developed by FAS partnership.

The **target groups** of the training are school masters, trainers, educators, teachers working with children in a direct and indirect way.

The study circles for teachers' training purpose is to involve school teachers and trainers in an educational path aimed at **sharing experiences, opinions and thoughts** with reference to **European Pedagogical Model**, its practices and tools developed by FAS partnership. The teachers will be asked to **adapt the practices and tools** to their school environment, **building new didactic paths** to be embedded in school curricula for improving pupils' emotional and social competences and create learning environment based on inclusive didactics.

This action is complementary to the non-formal training paths that will target parents (Task 4.3), giving them the opportunity to observe and follow the project activities, as well as to learn more about the reference didactic tools and how to propose them at home.

Finally, a learning community on-line will be created to allow participants to interact among themselves on a supportive and friendly platform. Teachers involved during the Teachers' Training will also be in charge of testing the methodology with the pupils.

1.1 Costs and dissemination

According to the application, the following costs are foreseen for the implementation of the activities:



- **Staff Cost:** staff costs for managers and researchers/trainers in order to develop the study circles and the training paths for parents and the related products and reports;
- **Travel and subsistence costs:** budget for the participants in study circles and training paths to realize local, regional, national work meetings and training activities;
- **Equipment Costs:** there are not specific costs attributable to this item;
- **Subcontracting costs:** there are not specific costs attributable to this item;
- **Other costs:** cost for the organization and logistics of study circles and training paths for parents.

All partners are responsible for disseminating the activities on a public level and the knowledge gained through the participation in Study Circles must be exploited and disseminated in schools at national level.

1.1 Study Circles Plan for Teachers' Training

1.1.1 Study Circles' target group

For the Study Circle it is recommended to involve about 8 - 12 persons, who are willing to attend the whole process of Study Circle with Peer Learning activity elements and the final workshop.

The **target group** is:

1. Primary school teachers
2. Secondary school teachers
3. Trainers and educators working with the identified target group of pupils
4. Teachers working directly and indirectly with the identified target group of pupils.

1.1.2 Study Circles objectives

In this activity teachers and educators will learn to address and enhance diversity in the classrooms and to tackle inter-cultural conflicts and discrimination, resolve conflicts, transmit fundamental values, enhance active citizenship, create a tolerant school environment where nobody feels excluded through a participatory methodology.

The Study Circles **objectives** in reference to the Pedagogical Model are:

1. Sharing experiences, opinions and thoughts with reference to European Pedagogical Model
2. Adapt the practices and tools to the target group's specific school environment
3. Building new didactic paths to be embedded in schools' curriculums.

1.1.3 Study Circles methodology

The Study Circle activity will be combined with the methodology of blended learning and peer learning. The methodology of Study Circle means meeting multiple times and involving a number of participants that is not too high. Peer Learning implies that the same or similar target groups work together on a specific topic.

Each partner has to ensure a moderator/facilitator is present during the Study Circle to make sure the participants are using the peer learning method

- **The role of the Moderator/ facilitator**

A study circle is led by a facilitator who is impartial, who helps to manage the process, but is not an “expert” or “teacher” in the traditional sense. The study circle leader shall create and develop the learning processes that stimulates and encourages the participants to actively look for knowledge. At the same time, the Study Circle leader is one of the members in the Study Circle, is accepted by the participants themselves and works according to the agreements with the participants. The Study Circle leader should never act in an authoritarian manner. The Study Circle leader should:

- put the participants own development in focus and ask the right questions;



- emphasize the development of dialogue between the participants and encourage the participants to discuss solutions and ask questions among each other;
- develop the team spirit so the participants feel secure;
- strengthen the participants self-confidence;
- apply a common view on the process of knowledge which enable the participants to apply what they have learnt in everyday situations;
- make various options clear;
- encourage co-operation among the participants and prevent competition.

The moderator is essential in facilitating the discussion. He/she should be neutral to the comments and answers of the group. Ideal is an assistant who takes notes for the reporting. In particular, the facilitator will:

- welcome the participants and make them feel comfortable;
 - explain them the purpose of the group and set or agree with the group on the rules for discussion;
 - start with some first questions;
 - be responsible to get all the participants to talk;
 - should summarize extensive and complex comments to make sure that everyone is able to follow the discussion.
- **The role of the participants of the study circles**
Participants in a study circle must be actively involved in all the work of the study circle. It is important that they are small groups and include a Study Circle leader/facilitator. As opposed to conventional education that is based on a hierarchical model, in which the teacher disseminates knowledge from the top down, a study circle involves interaction in which all participants contribute.

The participants should meet for a couple of hours every week over several weeks. The Study Circle is led by a trained, neutral facilitator. It should ideally begin with discussion



materials that allow participants to see the issue from different points of view and to offer their personal experiences and ideas. It does not begin with a particular solution in mind, but instead allows participants to develop their own approach in a collaborative way.

Within the Study Circles participants are asked to talk about the questions the moderator is asking them, but also to get them involved in the discussion by rising up questions by themselves. It is essential to get everybody talking to enrich the discussion, have different points of view and ensure nobody is left out in the discussion. The work in the Study Circle is built around the participants' search for knowledge. There should be an inquiring and searching approach. All participants as individuals have responsibility to contribute and work actively in the group. This means that all participants share the responsibility for the end result of the studies. For further explanation please refer to *The study circle method*, by C. Kindstrom and *Study Circles*, by Carrie Boron of the Everyday Democracy.

- **Thematization of the Study Circles according to the results of the FAS Educational Model**

The topics and themes of the Study Circles are chosen by the partners on the basis of the FAS Educational Model with the aim to foster a learning process for teachers, to stimulate the discussion about the role of teachers in overcoming the obstacles and difficulties identified as well as how to adapt the FAS Educational Model into their school environment.

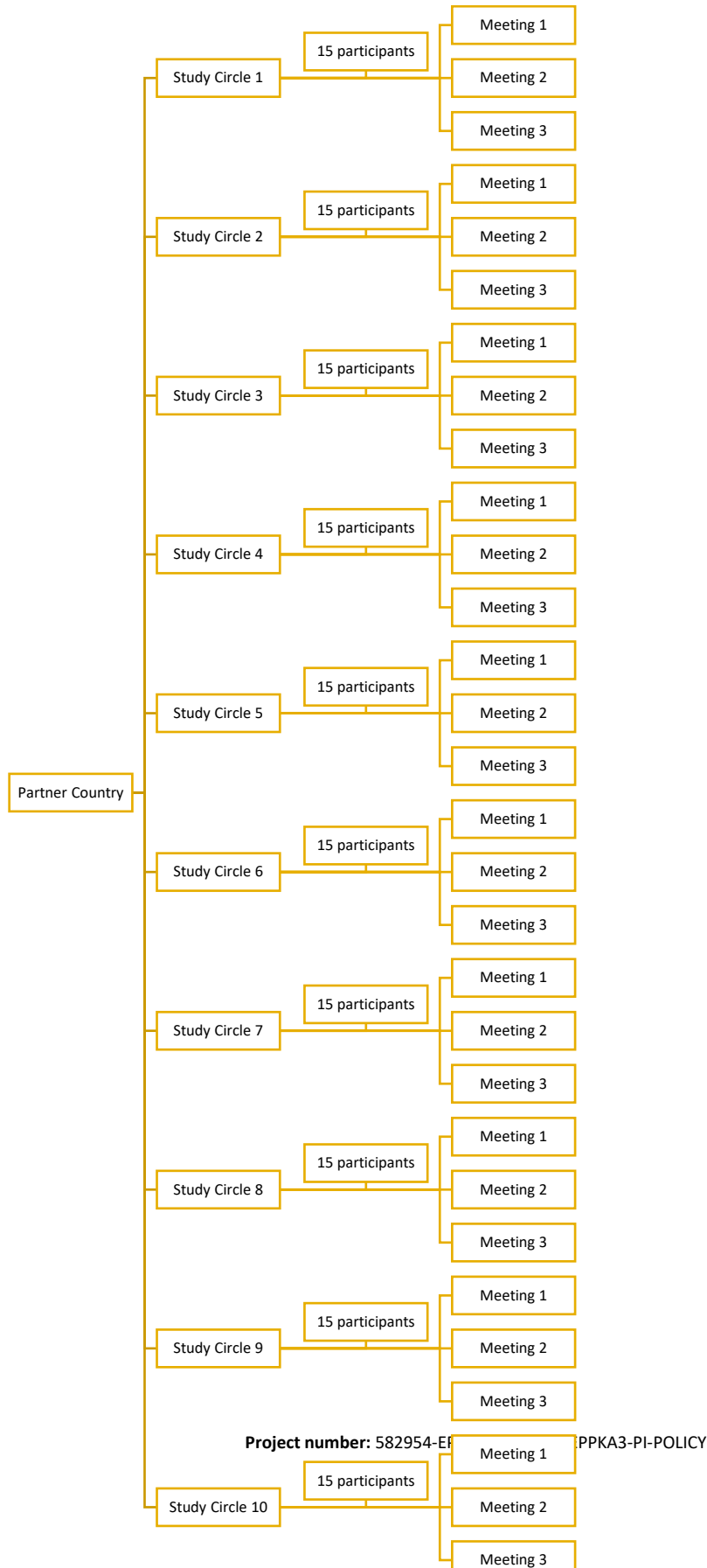
- **Discussing practices**

The FAS Educational Model collects best practices of the partner countries. It is not specified in here which best practices each partner should tackle in their Study Circles. We invite the partners to present as many best practices as possible to 10 different groups. The purpose is to foster a debate within the target group about both, the overall Pedagogical Model, as well as the activities there contained.



- **Duration and frequency of the Study Circles**

For each country involved in this project activity, the application foresees the realization of 10 specific Study Circle activities providing 3 meetings each, realized in person or through Skype, involving at least 15 teachers of primary and secondary junior schools. Each Study Circle will have a total duration between 6 to 9 hours, divided in 3 meetings of 2 to 3 hours each. In total, 150 teachers are to be involved in the activity in each partner country.





- **Study Circles' Outputs**

The Study Circles outputs, gathered through the reporting forms, will be collected at transnational level and embedded in the preliminary version of the experimentation protocol – REV.01

1.1.4 Study Circles' session's outlines

Study Circle 1 – Self awareness and development/Life skills

Duration

3 hours

Aims

- To provide a space for mutual learning among teachers with regard to the topic of self-awareness and development/Life skills through experiential learning.
- To invite teachers to a meta-reflection on selected activities about this topic in the FAS Educational Model.
- To foster the exchange of opinions and ideas regarding how the selected activities from the Educational Model can contribute effectively to the development of self-awareness among pupils as well as their Life skills.
- To provide a space for reflection and feedback on the role of teachers when working on these topics with their pupils.
- To give teachers the opportunity to express their concerns and difficulties when having to adapt the activities from the FAS Educational Model into their contexts and realities.

Main contents

1. General overview of the 8 activities that exist in the manual about the topic on **Self awareness and development/Life skills**:



The facilitator of the study circle will introduce in general what are the activities in the FAS Educational Model that address this topic. S/he will explain in general how each activity is dealing with the topic and what are the different aims and characteristics of each activity.

2. Testing and realization of FAS Educational Model activities dealing with **Self awareness and development/Life skills**:

The facilitator will select 4 activities from the manual and will implement them (in a brief way) with the teachers following the technique of a simulation exercise, where teachers will play the role of pupils in order to understand how this activities really work.

The activities to be implemented this way will be:

- a. *Me & my context.*
- b. *Painting my emotions.*
- c. *A priceless camera.*
- d. *Train compartment.*

3. Meta-reflection on selected activities from FAS Educational Model:

Once the activities have been experienced by the teachers, the facilitator will split the group in 5 small groups of three that will work through meta-reflection about 3 activities in each group. The idea with this meta-reflection consists in finding out how the selected activities effectively contribute to the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes within the topic of Self awareness and development/Life skills.

4. Elaboration of recommendations about what is needed in order to adapt the selected FAS Educational Model activities to teachers school realities:

Once the meta-reflection is done the groups will keep working on a list of recommendations stating what changes, adaptations and/or improvements they feel are necessary to effectively adapt the activities of the Manual to their school contexts.

Methods:

Plenary Presentations.

On spot practice of specific activities (experiential learning approach)

Small Group work (meta-reflection and recommendations)

Study Circle 2 – Assertiveness and conflict management



Duration

3 hours

Aims

- To create a space for peer learning among teachers with regard to the topic of assertiveness and conflict management through experiential learning.
- To invite teachers to a meta-reflection process on selected activities about this topic coming from the FAS Educational Model.
- To foster the exchange of opinions and ideas regarding how assertiveness and conflict management skills can be beneficial for pupils in their school and to what extent the activities in the FAS Educational Model respond to that.
- To provide a space for reflection and feedback on the role of teachers as facilitators of such type of activities and topic with their pupils.
- To collect teachers' concerns and challenges when having to implement and adapt these activities to their contexts in the school.

Main contents

1. General overview of the 6 activities that exist in the manual about the topic on assertiveness and conflict management skills:

The facilitator of the study circle will introduce in general what are the activities in the FAS Educational Model that address this topic. S/he will explain in general how each activity is dealing with the topic and what are the different aims and characteristics of each activity.

2. Testing and realization of FAS Educational Model activities dealing with assertiveness and conflict management skills:

The facilitator will select 4 activities from the manual and will implement them (in a brief way) with the teachers following the technique of a simulation exercise, where teachers will play the role of pupils in order to understand how this activities really work.

The activities to be implemented this way will be:



- a. *Rash judgement.*
- b. *This is me.*
- c. *Wishes.*
- d. *Open a fist.*

3. Meta-reflection on selected activities from FAS Educational Model:

Once the activities have been experienced by the teachers, the facilitator will split the group in 3 small groups of five that will work through meta-reflection about 2 activities in each group. The idea with this meta-reflection consists in finding out how the selected activities effectively contribute to the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes within the topic of assertiveness and conflict management skills.

4. Elaboration of recommendations about what is needed in order to adapt the selected FAS Educational Model activities to teachers school realities:

Once the meta-reflection is done the groups will keep working on a list of recommendations stating what changes, adaptations and/or improvements they feel are necessary to effectively adapt the activities of the Manual to their school contexts.

Methods:

Plenary Presentations.

On spot practice of specific activities (experiential learning approach)

Small Group work (meta-reflection and recommendations)

Study Circle 3 – Empathy and management of emotions

Duration

3 hours

Aims

- To stimulate learning through the creation of a mutual learning situation for teachers with regard to the topic of empathy and management of emotions through experiential learning approaches.



- To invite teachers to a meta-reflection process on selected activities about this topic coming from the FAS Educational Model.
- To foster the exchange of opinions and ideas regarding how empathy and management of emotions can be beneficial for pupils in their school and to what extend the activities in the FAS Educational Model can respond to that.
- To provide a space for reflection and feedback on the role of teachers as facilitators of such type of activities and topic with their pupils.
- To collect teachers' concerns and challenges when having to implement and adapt these activities to their contexts in the school.

Main contents

1. General overview of the 9 activities that exist in the manual about the topic on empathy and management of emotions:

The facilitator of the study circle will introduce in general what are the activities in the FAS Educational Model that address this topic. S/he will explain in general how each activity is dealing with the topic and what are the different aims and characteristics of each activity.

2. Testing and realization of FAS Educational Model activities dealing with empathy and management of emotions:

The facilitator will select 4 activities from the manual and will implement them (in a brief way) with the teachers following the technique of a simulation exercise, where teachers will play the role of pupils in order to understand how these activities can work.

The activities to be implemented this way will be:

- a. *Heart Journal.*
- b. *Mirror of emotions.*
- c. *In your shoes.*
- d. *When I am angry.*

3. Meta-reflection on selected activities from FAS Educational Model:

Once the activities have been experienced by the teachers, the facilitator will split the group in 3 small groups of five people that will work through meta-reflection about 2 activities in each group. The idea with this meta-reflection consists in finding out how the selected



activities effectively contribute to the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes within the topic of empathy and management of emotions.

4. Elaboration of recommendations about what is needed in order to adapt the selected FAS Educational Model activities to teachers school realities:

Once the meta-reflection is done the groups will keep working on a list of recommendations stating what changes, adaptations and/or improvements they feel are necessary to effectively adapt the activities of the Manual to their school contexts.

Methods:

Plenary Presentations.

On spot practice of specific activities (experiential learning approach)

Small Group work (meta-reflection and recommendations)