

# **HAND in HAND recommendations for mainstreaming social, emotional, intercultural/transcultural learning in European national educational policies and practices**

**Urška Štremfel, Ana Kozina, Iris Marušić, Magnus Oskarsson, Katinka Gøtzsche, Albert Denk, Svetlana Jurko, Mojca Rožman, Aleš Ojsteršek**

January, 2020



## INTRODUCTION

### About the HAND in HAND project

HAND in HAND: *Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies (A Whole School Approach)* is a **European policy experimentation project** that brings together eight institutions from five countries (Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Slovenia, Sweden), which have each added their professional expertise and practical insights to help realise positive changes in our classrooms, schools and societies. We have established<sup>i</sup> that positive change towards more inclusive societies can be triggered by **fostering the social, emotional and intercultural/transcultural (SEI) competencies of students and school staff through use of a whole-school approach.**

To realise our goal, several tasks were undertaken as part of the project over the last 3 years (2017–2019), including six key tasks:

- **conceptualisation** of the SEI competencies, considering an innovative cross-section of social and emotional competencies on one hand, and intercultural/transcultural competencies on the other<sup>ii</sup>;
- **in-depth analyses** of state-of-the-art SEI competencies assessment<sup>iii</sup> and SEI programmes for students<sup>iv</sup> and school staff<sup>v</sup>;
- development and implementation of the theoretically well-grounded and contextualised HAND in HAND interventions, namely, two interconnected **programmes for students<sup>vi</sup> and school staff** (teachers<sup>vii</sup>, principals and school counsellors<sup>viii</sup>) in four participating countries (Croatia, Denmark, Slovenia, Sweden);
- developing a multimethod (qualitative and quantitative) SEI and classroom climate assessment that includes the programmes' summative and formative external **evaluation**<sup>ix, x, xi</sup>;
- ensuring the monitoring and **quality assurance** of all project activities, with a special focus on the programmes' implementation<sup>xii</sup>; and
- analysing the national and EU policy contexts and providing **recommendations** on how the development of SEI competencies in these contexts can become a driver of the envisaged positive changes<sup>xiii, xiv</sup>.

## About the HAND in HAND recommendations

As an EU policy experimentation project, HAND in HAND identifies good practices and lessons on 'what works' and 'what does not work' when it comes to developing SEI competencies across European countries. It gives evidence-based results for reforms holding the potential for a large systemic impact.<sup>xv, xvi</sup> It elaborates on the **conditions needed for the scalability, transferability and thus sustainability of the HAND in HAND outcomes and the broader area of developing SEI competencies.**

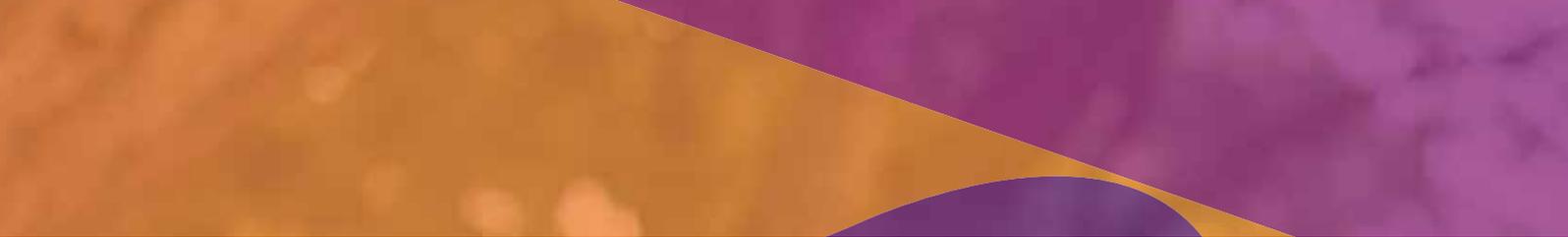
This document sets out the main recommendations flowing from the HAND in HAND project and are especially based on: a) a contextualisation of the existing EU and national policies of the participating countries in the field<sup>xiii</sup>; b) the inconclusive qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the outcomes of HAND in HAND project<sup>x, xi</sup>; and c) discussions with stakeholders in the participating countries on further policy development of the field.

This document has two parts. Part 1 provides general recommendations we believe are the most crucial while continuing to develop EU and national policies and practices in this area:

1. **To formulate distinct European and national definitions of and approaches to SEI learning**
2. **To clearly state the political and policy goals of SEI learning**
3. **To develop theoretically well-grounded and locally adaptive SEI learning programmes**
4. **To foster the development of students' SEI competencies within national curricula**
5. **To support teachers and school staff to develop their own and their students' SEI competencies**
6. **To enhance a whole-school approach**
7. **To apply a multi-method approach to the evaluation of SEI learning**

These recommendations should be considered together. The order in which they are listed does not suggest a particular priority, but may be seen as giving meaningful direction while undertaking the actions in order for SEI learning in the EU to reach its full potential.

Part 2 presents specific recommendations for national implementation plans for mainstreaming the development of SEI competencies in participating countries (Croatia, Denmark, Slovenia, Sweden).



# General recommendations for EU and national educational policies and practices

## 1. To formulate distinct European and national definitions of and approaches to SEI learning

### Findings and outcomes

The HAND in HAND research reveals the current lack and future need of a distinct European approach to SEI learning and a definition of what it means.<sup>xiii, xiv</sup> In this framework, the US-based CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) definition was adapted to the European context within the project.<sup>ii</sup> With the growing social and cultural diversity of EU society in mind, the HAND in HAND project has theoretically and practically contributed to the understanding that, **on top of social and emotional competencies (including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making), it is important to develop intercultural/transcultural competencies.** Particular attention is also paid to the development of relational competencies of school staff.

Taking account of the structural and cultural differences seen in national educational contexts within the EU and the non-binding character of EU cooperation in the education field, HAND in HAND shows that **EU members** (including Croatia, Slovenia, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, HAND in HAND project participants) **have developed quite different (not yet systematic) approaches** (national definitions and goals, system-/school-/classroom-level measures) **to develop SEI learning in their schools.**<sup>xiii, xiv</sup>

The HAND in HAND programmes greatly emphasise the importance of their quality implementation and adaptation to suit different national, local and school contexts.

### Recommendations

The findings and outcomes of HAND in HAND reveal the need to carefully consider the particularities of both the EU and distinct national contexts while attempting to mainstream SEI learning.<sup>vi, vii, viii</sup>

**At the EU level,** special attention should be paid to developing **a commonly agreed holistic expert definition of SEI learning** that is centred on children and young people's needs, and their own and others' well-being.

**It should be possible to make national adaptations** of the common EU approach and definition of SEI learning, for at least two reasons: First, there are important structural and cultural differences between national contexts. Second, EU countries are still the decision-makers regarding their national education systems (including the curriculum) while EU institutions only have a formally supporting role to play in the development of national educational policies and practices. This shows the need for a flexible, non-prescriptive and user-involved approach to SEI learning in the EU context.<sup>xiv</sup>

## 2. To clearly state the political and policy goals of SEI learning

### Findings and outcomes

For policies to be effective, it is important that their goals are clearly stated. This sharpens the focus of different stakeholders in the pursuit of these goals, while also improving the chances that their achievement is properly measured. The HAND in HAND project recognises several different approaches, but **the lack of clear goals related to SEI learning at the EU and national levels** of the participating countries (Croatia, Denmark, Slovenia, Sweden).<sup>xiii, xiv</sup>

At the **EU level**, a review of the main policy documents in education (2000–2010) finds no explicit mention/definition of the goals of SEI learning. They are implicitly included and considered in related policy issues like well-being, personal development, mental health, bullying prevention, active citizenship, and school climate. The review makes it clear that the SEI competencies possessed by school staff and students are gaining attention in the EU's policy framework and activities (2010–2020), yet there is insufficient systematic support for their development.<sup>xiii, xiv</sup>

At the **national level**, the HAND in HAND research findings show no explicit goals of SEI learning are stated in the legislative and other official documents of these countries. These are understood as forming part of the general values of the education system (equal opportunities, acceptance of diversity, solidarity, etc.).<sup>xiii, xiv</sup>

### Recommendations

Theoretical and empirical considerations indicating the importance of SEI competencies for individuals, learning environments and the development of EU society make it imperative to include **SEI learning as a strategic priority of the new strategic framework on Education and Training 2030**. Realisation of this strategic (political) priority should be fully supported by all existing EU (policy) measures, for example:

- the inclusion of SEI as a distinct, critical area in the EU Framework of Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning;
- the qualitative and quantitative measurement of progress made;
- establishing a dedicated working group; and
- coordinating the research and sharing of good practices among EU countries.

Such a framework would not only demonstrate political will (**a top-down approach**), but actually support and enhance the possibilities of EU members and particular stakeholders to actively assist in achieving the EU political priority goal (**bottom-up approach**).

Clearly stating political goals, supported by appropriate policy measures at the national level of EU member states (e.g. national SEI learning strategies, quality assurance indicators), would further support the development of SEI competencies in schools. It would enhance EU member states' opportunities to compare and learn from each other's context-based national approaches.

### 3. To develop theoretically well-grounded and locally adaptive SEI learning programmes

#### Findings and outcomes

If **programmes** (including SEI programmes) are to be successful and effective, their content and implementation itself must be **well designed and the implementation tailored to suit the respective local context.**<sup>xviii</sup>

In this respect, it is crucial that the design of programme activities be informed by **a comprehensive theoretical background.** The extensive review of theoretical backgrounds and existing programmes was of great value while preparing the comprehensive and innovative HAND in HAND programmes for students and school staff. The use of various theoretical frameworks for different activities was recognised as valuable while designing the HAND in HAND programmes because the competencies and concepts entailed in an activity stem from different and very specific theoretical approaches.<sup>vi, viii, viii</sup>

Adaptation to the national and/or local school context can likewise be important for programme outcomes. The HAND in HAND manuals<sup>vi, vii, vii</sup> expressly state that a programme and its implementation should always be adapted to the local needs, while retaining a certain adherence to the 'active ingredients'.

#### Recommendations

For the quality implementation of the SEI programmes, **it is vital to maintain the key components, the 'active ingredients', of a given programme,** but also that the teachers or trainers who are implementing the programme possess the professional competence, self-efficacy and motivation to adapt the programme activities to particular students, at a specific school, teaching certain content in a given context. **Adaptation allows for school staff and student needs to be addressed,** but also facilitates ownership of the programme.<sup>xviii</sup> This is additionally important for students at a time when the importance of their voices for ensuring quality education is being emphasised.<sup>xix</sup>

#### 4. To foster the development of students' SEI competencies within national curricula

##### Findings and outcomes

The HAND in HAND results are aligned with existing research findings<sup>xix</sup> that show the importance of including SEI learning in curricula.

Qualitative evaluation of the HAND in HAND programme confirms the lack of a systematic curricular approach can become an obstacle to the effective implementation of SEI learning. While teachers and other school staff found the HAND in HAND programme interesting and important, when considering its features (including the length of the programme) they warned it would be hard to implement it within the existing curricula frameworks.<sup>xi</sup>

A review of the existing curricula in the HAND in HAND participating countries reveals **the lack of a systematic (distinct curricula or cross-curricular) approach to SEI learning**. SEI learning content is partly found in different subjects.<sup>xiii</sup>

##### Recommendations

**Future national curricular reforms** should have in mind the positive effects of SEI learning and the importance of its **coherent and systematic integration into all levels of the education system**. Its implementation as early as at the preschool level would improve the chances of SEI learning being accepted positively by students.

Curricular commitment to SEI learning needs to provide systemic support for teachers so that they can improve their own SEI competencies. This would require imparting these background relational competencies during pre-service and in-service teacher education.

## 5. To support teachers and school staff in the development of their own and their students' SEI competencies

### Findings and outcomes

The analysis of the policy contexts of the participating countries reveals **the current lack of systemic support to teachers and school staff for SEI competencies development in both initial and continuous professional development.**<sup>xiii</sup>

The qualitative evaluation of the HAND in HAND programmes shows that the participating teachers and other school staff (school counsellors, principals) appreciated the opportunities for personal development and self-empowerment, although they expressed concerns as to how to implement the programme exercises in their everyday practice and in the classroom.<sup>xi</sup> It was identified that **a complex process (including continuous expert support) is needed for the school staff to become able to successfully and effectively implement the HAND in HAND programmes in practice.**<sup>vii,viii,xviii</sup>

### Recommendations

Systematic support for teachers and school staff in the form of initial and continuous professional development and professional supervision is crucial for the development of their own and their students' SEI competencies.

To ensure the sustainability of the SEI programmes, **it is important that school staff and especially teachers possess the professional competence, self-efficacy and motivation to run the SEI programmes for students**, including adapting programme activities to certain students at a specific school while teaching particular content in a set context. This would require **increases in the competencies and professional agency of school staff and long-term external supervisors to support a whole-school process** at the same time.<sup>xviii</sup>

## 6. To enhance a whole-school approach

### Findings and outcomes

The whole-school approach engages the entire school community as part of a cohesive, collective and collaborative effort. Different studies<sup>xix</sup> indicate that a **whole-school approach has a positive impact on SEI learning**. In HAND in HAND, the students of a single class, four to six teachers of that class, school counsellors, and the principals, were involved in the project. Qualitative evaluation of the HAND in HAND programmes adds weight to the value of the whole-school approach for SEI learning since both groups (the teachers and school leaders participating in the programme) show that, for the HAND in HAND programme to be truly effective in educational practice, **the involvement of all school staff** (or at least of all teachers of the school in the HAND in HAND programme) **is crucial**.<sup>xi</sup> Quantitative evaluation of the HAND in HAND programme reveals the most efficient intervention in this regard depends on the (national) setting in which the intervention takes place.<sup>x</sup>

### Recommendations

For SEI learning to reach its full potential, the whole-school approach (principal, all teachers, school counsellors and all other supporting staff) is needed. A whole-school approach not only enables new exercises to be introduced in classrooms, but for changes to occur in a multifaceted and system-wide manner. This includes **changing the dominant orientations to social interactions and actual interaction practices in the school (i.e. the school culture)**. The involvement of SEI learning in school development programmes would provide greater added value and imply stronger institutional support for implementing the SEI programmes.<sup>ii, xi</sup>

## 7. To apply a multi-method approach to the evaluation of SEI learning

### Findings and outcomes

Analysis of the HAND in HAND participating states' policy contexts shows that the realisation of national SEI learning goals is not systematically measured. The lack of indicators, which would support their measurement, was identified.<sup>xiii</sup>

Despite several (system, school, classroom) initiatives concerning SEI learning in the HAND in HAND participating countries having been taken, they have not been systematically evaluated and researched.<sup>xiii</sup>

With its assessment catalogue<sup>iii</sup> and innovative assessment of the SEI competencies held by both school staff and students, the HAND in HAND project importantly contributes to developing the field of the measurement of SEI competencies in education. The HAND in HAND evaluation is a good illustration of the merits of combining different epistemologies and evaluation strategies – quantitative and qualitative, summative and formative. It demonstrates the value of applying a multi-method approach that brings together self-reports, others' reports, a sociometric measure, vignettes, and interviews to measure the possible effects of the SEI learning programmes (summative evaluation), to establish how the participants experienced the training and to find levers to improve the programmes (formative evaluation). Moreover, the HAND in HAND evaluation protocol demonstrates the considerable importance and complexity of selecting appropriate measurement scales.<sup>ix, x, xi</sup>

### Recommendations

The multi-method approach and combination of different epistemologies and evaluation strategies enabled the evaluation of the HAND in HAND programmes to expose that schools are complex systems and that triggering change in such systems may depend on several contextual factors. In this way HAND in HAND evaluation can be seen as a learning experience in planning large-scale evaluation research in this field.<sup>x</sup>

The advantages of large-scale evaluation research are seen in the currently missing evidence-based support for education policies and practices in the field, as well as in enhancing the chances of international comparability and mutual learning from different national systems.

# Recommendations for national implementation plans

CROATIA



### Current state

Croatia has no overarching document outlining a comprehensive policy on social, emotional and/or intercultural learning. **The policy is fragmented** and elements of SEI competencies may be found in several documents, ranging from mental-health promotion<sup>xx</sup> to the strategy to promote reading<sup>xxi</sup>. The Strategy on education, science and technology<sup>xxii</sup> that provides developmental goals for elementary, secondary and tertiary education in Croatia stresses the promotion of children's emotional and social development as a fundamental goal of education as a whole. The strategy states that school curricula, i.e. school-level policy documents, should incorporate programmes for the development of metacognitive, social and emotional skills as a tool to promote learning.

Elements of SEI learning may be found in the new curricula for personal and social development, health, civic education, and learning how to learn.<sup>xxiii</sup> Other measures promoting SEI learning at the school level are a platform for the exchange of good practices, specialist support, partnership with non-governmental organisations, parental involvement, and the school's self-evaluation. **The growing number of different projects, programmes and initiatives that aim to foster SEI competencies, improve school climate, prevent aggressive behaviour and reduce the risk of behavioural and mental health issues are key indicators of the perceived importance of SEI learning and competencies in Croatia.**

**SEI learning goals in Croatia are not systematically measured**, some individual research studies, such as curriculum evaluations on health and civic education, revealed inadequate student outcomes in intercultural dimensions.<sup>xxiv</sup> In addition, research points to insufficient teacher competencies as a factor hindering SEI learning, which may be explained by the recognised lack of support to school staff both intended through the documents and provided in the action.<sup>xxiv</sup> Finally, financial resources are seen as a major stumbling block for the stipulation and realisation of quality SEI programmes.

## Recommendations

- 1. The policy framework should be adjusted** – current documents and strategies relevant to SEI learning should be updated (e.g. Action plan for the prevention of violence in schools), and new documents and strategies should be adopted (e.g. Strategy on mental health, Strategy on child psychiatry). These updates should clearly include measures to promote and support the development of SEI competencies. Revisions of the relevant strategies should reflect the accumulated evidence on the importance of SEI competencies in the promotion of the positive outcomes and well-being of children. They should also recognise schools as a crucial environment for SEI learning.
2. The current efforts to promote SEI learning in Croatia are quite isolated and fragmented (neither standardised nor conducted systematically) and there is **a need for a systematic approach and more networking between both the users and the providers of the programmes.**
  - In order to overcome the fragmentation of the existing initiatives and activities, **a national network should be established** aimed at connecting experts (researchers and practitioners) in the field of SEI learning.
  - Certain **mapping of the programmes should be created** in order to make the choice easier of a programme ideal for specific school needs, e.g. the programmes' theoretical backgrounds should be outlined, the target age should be stated, the status of evaluation should be evident, etc.
  - **Examples of good practice should be outlined** (successful programmes, resources, etc.) to facilitate SEI learning of new users.
3. The current **projects** are not underway on all levels of the education system and a need for them to be **implemented as early as at the preschool level** has been identified. Such early implementation would enhance the chances of SEI learning being accepted positively by students.
4. **Teachers** need to be **supported** in the development of the skills they need to realise SEI learning **through their pre-service education and in-service training.**
  - **Legal restrictions on teacher professional development** (e.g. teachers cannot attend education sessions on teaching days) **should be amended** in order to remove the barriers to effective in-service education (participation in the workshop and other activities).
5. **Multi-sectoral cooperation should be improved** to strengthen the effectiveness of SEI competencies development.
  - **More coordinated efforts** (e.g. of the public health sector and educational sector) **should be made** to promote the so far similar but not aligned goals related to SEI competencies and their development.



## Current state

SEI learning and competencies in Danish legislative and other official documents are understood as part of a more general umbrella concept of **'multi-sided and well-rounded development'**.

**No specific goals relating to SEI learning are stated in the legislative and other official documents.** SEI learning in Denmark is placed alongside the acquisition of cognitive skills. It is stated that "All students must develop emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially, ethnically and aesthetically" and that "Confidence and wellbeing in elementary school should be strengthened, inter alia through respect for professional knowledge and practice".<sup>xxv</sup>

**SEI aspects of learning are integrated into several subjects** (including Danish, English, German, Christian studies, Social studies, Visual arts, Sport, Food literacy, Music, Health- and sexual teaching and family education). In 2014, as part of a school reform, "Supporting teaching" learning activities were introduced, aimed at strengthening students' learning readiness, social skills, versatile development, motivation, and well-being.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Students' well-being was measured in the Welfare study (2017) and students' **SEI learning performance is implicitly evaluated through an assessment of mandatory competence goals.**

As factors that hinder SEI learning in Denmark, the research points to **the lack of a clear understanding of SEI competencies among educators.**<sup>xxvii</sup> The following initiatives in particular target the need to educate trained professionals for work on SEI learning at schools.

- At certain higher education institutions, particular attention is devoted to the pre-service and in-service education of teachers and pedagogues in the field of SEI learning. For example, the Danish HAND in HAND team has many years of experience working with **relational competence**, i.e. Helle Jensen's work both in Denmark and internationally.<sup>xxviii</sup> A previous initiative that inspired the initiation of the HAND in HAND programme was "The Relational Competence Project"<sup>xxix, xxx</sup> initiated by the Danish Society for the Promotion of Life Wisdom in Children in collaboration with the VIA University College and several local schools.
- Currently, starting in 2019, the VIA University College is offering a 10 ECTS module for student teachers in which they work actively on **mindfulness-based stress reduction, and social-emotional and relationship competencies**. The programme's implementation is monitored closely by quantitative and qualitative research in cooperation with VIA University College and Aarhus University.<sup>xxxi</sup>
- Further, a 22-day course for (skilled) professionals, who will later be able to disseminate the intervention to others who wish to teach the teachers and the pedagogues, is being planned at VIA University College in cooperation with experts from Norway. The course is to be built on the knowledge gained from the HAND in HAND programme, combined with the experiences from the Relational competence project for student teachers<sup>xxix, xxx</sup> and the training of 'multipliers' in the new German intervention-project "Empathie macht Schule".

## Recommendations

1. **Whole-school implementation of SEI learning** at schools in Denmark is still quite **isolated and fragmented** (neither standardised nor conducted systematically). Consolidating and spreading the existing well-recognised practices for educating teachers and pedagogues is considered determinant for improving existing practices of SEI learning at schools.
2. To ensure the quality implementation of SEI programmes, it is important to:
  - **qualify the pre-service education** of the (future) teachers so they are prepared to address the area of SEI competencies as future teachers;
  - **provide in-service education**, including educating facilitators who can become consultants for whole-school initiatives (e.g. using the open-access HAND in HAND materials).
3. **The further development, consolidation and spreading of new initiatives** (e.g. those currently being initiated at VIA University College) should be further supported, not only by national, but also by EU (financial and other) resources.
4. Many decisions about the specific content of especially in-service teacher education in Denmark are made at a decentralised level (referring to the existing legislative framework). Hence, **initiatives at a meso-level**, such as those mentioned, **are crucial**. Yet it is also crucial to influence the policy and practices at a macro/national level, for instance by continually sharing the experiences from initiatives like the HAND in HAND project, and by including systematic research as part of the new initiatives to provide more 'local' evidence, to be shared and discussed together with the international evidence.

## SLOVENIA



### Current state

SEI learning and competencies in national legislative and other official documents are understood as the more general umbrella concepts of **a safe and stimulating learning environment and optimal development of the individual**, irrespective of their background. SEI learning is found in national legislation alongside the acquisition of cognitive skills. It is stated that “A safe and encouraging learning environment should involve the well-coordinated cognitive, emotional and social development of students”<sup>xxxii</sup>

Like other partner countries in the HAND in HAND project, **Slovenia does not have a strategy for the development of SEI competencies**. SEI educational goals are indirectly/partly included in general legislative and sectoral strategies, such as the Guidance for the Integration of Immigrant Children at Kindergartens and Schools in Slovenia.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

SEI learning forms part of **pre-service and in-service teacher education** (several programmes in the Catalogue of continuing education and training programmes such as “Developing emotional intelligence and effective communication”)<sup>xxxiv</sup>, but these **do not involve a comprehensive approach to SEI learning** and are not provided at the same extent to teachers on different levels of the education system.

Measures promoting SEI learning on the school level are a platform for the exchange of good practices, specialist support, partnership with non-governmental organisations, parental involvement, self-evaluation, and financial initiatives. Classroom measures include support programmes for low-achievers and individualised support programmes to combat discrimination and social exclusion.

**Several projects already underway** in Slovenia implicitly or more explicitly involve SEI learning by focusing on the education of minorities and migrants, violence in schools, and education for sustainable development. **A systematic review of their findings and outcomes is missing.**

### Recommendations

1. To **establish a multi-sectoral expert group**, including all relevant stakeholders, that among other tasks would:
  - **Review existing projects and initiatives** in the broader field of SEI learning and based on their findings and outcomes identify what works in Slovenia in the area of SEI learning.
  - **Provide inputs for the preparation of important new strategic documents** (e.g. White Paper on Education, White Paper on Career Development of School Staff, Guidelines for Designing the School Space), **adaption of existing strategic documents** (e.g. Guidelines for sustainable development) and other important policy documents (e.g. The concept of work to integrate immigrant children and students into the education system).
  - **Prepare comprehensive guidelines and an action plan for the implementation of SEI learning on all levels of education.**

2. To ensure more systematic, **long-term in-service education, including supervision** for the promotion of SEI in schools, encompassing the permanent education of whole-school teams in this field.
3. To guarantee the implementation of quality SEI programmes in schools:
  - The implementation of SEI learning should not be limited to the realisation of SEI learning programmes of external providers. To develop the SEI competencies of students, **a positive relationship with teachers and other school staff and a positive classroom/school climate are crucial**.
  - To safeguard the sustainability of particular (successful) initiatives, which should be not subject to short-term financing of particular (European or national) funding sources.
  - **To provide financial resources** for the development, piloting, implementation and evaluation of SEI learning programmes in the new EU multiannual financial framework (2021–2027).
4. To continue the implementation of a new framework for identifying and ensuring quality in the education field:
  - the HAND in HAND assessment tools can contribute positively to **the development of the compulsory monitoring of a safe and stimulating learning environment** for all (including a formative assessment of students and self-evaluation of schools).
5. To **enhance the whole-school approach**:
  - To consider opportunities for the meaningful **inclusion of SEI learning in School Education Plans** (Vzgojni načrt šole).
  - To **support principals and school development teams** in SEI learning.
  - To **relieve the school counselling service of administrative tasks** in order to for them to fully exploit their competencies in prevention and intervention activities of SEI learning and supporting teachers in the field.
6. To foster the development of SEI competencies by an **appropriate curricula framework**:

Although a positive school climate and learning environment cannot not be developed by the relevant curricula frameworks alone, they should be recognised as an important measure for consolidating SEI learning contents. Particular attention should thus be paid to:

- appropriate contents for **civic and citizenship education**, health education care
  - appropriate planning of **class times** (razredne ure)
  - quality contents of the **extended programme in schools** (razširjeni program).
7. To **stimulate** national and European expert, policy and political and **public discussion on the role of school in modern society**, including a discussion on integration/inclusiveness, cognitive/non-cognitive achievements:
    - including SEI learning as a priority of Slovenia's forthcoming presidency of the Council of the European Union (2021).

SWEDEN



### Current state

Although one can find **no particular definition** of SEI learning in the national legislative and other official documents, the development of well-being has a **long tradition** in Sweden. The Swedish curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class, and preschool very clearly states in the paragraph “Understanding and compassion for others”, that *“The school should promote understanding of other people and the ability to empathise. Concern for the well-being and development of the individual should permeate all school activity”*.<sup>xxxv</sup>

**Different institutions** (e.g. Discrimination Ombudsman<sup>xxxvi</sup>) are established in Sweden whose area of work **relates to SEI aspects of learning**. The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools<sup>xxxvii</sup> works to improve the learning environment in schools for all students, especially students in need of special support. The Swedish National Agency for Education<sup>xxxviii</sup> is tasked with ensuring that all children and students have access to the same high-quality standard of education and activities in secure environments. Their mission is to create the best conditions for the children’s development and learning and to help improve the students’ learning outcomes. It offers in-service courses focused on intercultural competencies, supporting students with trauma, equality, and supporting students’ influence in school.

**Various initiatives** (e.g. government grants for hiring teacher assistants at schools to relieve teachers by allowing other occupational groups to perform certain tasks) have recently been introduced, **enabling teachers to focus on quality teaching, including a quality learning environment and relationships with students**.

However, **the responsibility** for organising and running compulsory schools in Sweden lies on the main organisers (public or independent) and the initiatives for focusing on SEI competencies **depend to some extent on individual schools or municipalities**.

## Recommendations

1. To **appoint a commission**, e.g. at the Swedish National Agency for Education, to make **an inventory of ongoing SEI-activities** in Swedish schools. This commission should also produce **a strategy** on how to ensure all students have equal opportunities to develop SEI learning in school. This is highly important when looking at recent studies of Swedish students' well-being.<sup>xxxix</sup>
2. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate should specially focus on **assessing how schools are working according to the Swedish curriculum with regard to SEI competencies**.
3. To **ensure more systematic, long-term in-service teacher training, including supervision** for the promotion of SEI in schools, encompassing the permanent education of whole-school teams in this field. This could be organised in the same manner as the investment in in-service training in reading, science and mathematics areas in Sweden [Läsllyftet, Matematiklyftet, NO-lyftet].
4. To ensure that SEI learning is included and emphasised in all Swedish **teacher education**, i.e. pre-school, compulsory school, and upper secondary school.

<sup>i</sup> Kozina, A. (ed.). (2020). *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Kovač.

<sup>ii</sup> Kozina, A., Vidmar, M., & Veldin, M. (2020). Social, emotional and intercultural/transcultural learning in a European perspective: Core concepts of the HAND in HAND project. In A. Kozina (ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Kovač.

<sup>iii</sup> Denk, A., Müller, F., Lubaway, E., Sälzer, C., Kozina, A., Vidmar, M., Rasmunson, M., Marušić, I., Nielsen, B. L., Rozcen, N., Ojsteršek, A., & Jurko, L. (2017). Catalogue for the assessment of social, emotional, and intercultural competencies: Hand in Hand. Retrieved from: [http://handin-hand.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/D6\\_HAND\\_SEI-measures\\_CATA-LOGUE.pdf](http://handin-hand.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/D6_HAND_SEI-measures_CATA-LOGUE.pdf).

<sup>iv</sup> Marušić, I., Jugović, I., Puzić, S., Matić, J., Košutić, I., Kozina, A., Veldin, M., Sälzer, C., Eliasson, N., Nielsen, B. L., Vieluf, S., Ojsteršek, A., & Jurko, L. (2017). SEI programmes for students: A review catalogue: Hand in Hand. Retrieved from: [http://handinhand.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/D15\\_HAND\\_SEI-programmes-for-students\\_CATA-LOGUE.pdf](http://handinhand.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/D15_HAND_SEI-programmes-for-students_CATA-LOGUE.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> Nielsen, B. L., Andersen, L. R., Dyrborg, H. L., Kozina, A., Vršnik Perše, T., Sälzer, C., Oskarsson, M., Rozcen, N., Marušić, I., Ojsteršek, A., & Jurko, L. (2017). SEI programmes for school staff: A review catalogue: Hand in Hand. Retrieved from: [http://handinhand.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/D11\\_HAND\\_SEI-programmes-for-school-staff\\_CATA-LOGUE.pdf](http://handinhand.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/D11_HAND_SEI-programmes-for-school-staff_CATA-LOGUE.pdf).

<sup>vi</sup> Marušić, I., Puzić, S., Jugović, I., Košutić, I., Matić, J., Mornar, M., Nielsen, B. L., Gøtzsche, K., Jensen, H., Rasmusson, M., Oskarsson, M., Denk, A., Kozina, A., & Veldin, M. (2020). HAND in HAND programme for students, manual. Retrieved from: <http://handinhand.si/programme-for-students/>.

<sup>vii</sup> Jensen, H., Gøtzsche, K., Andersen Réol, L., Dyrborg Laursen, H., Nielsen, B. L., Denk, A., Kozina, A., Vršnik Perše, T., Marušić, I., Jugović, I., Rasmusson, M., & Oskarsson, M. (2020a). School Staff Training – Teachers. Retrieved from: <http://handinhand.si/programme-for-school-staff/>.

<sup>viii</sup> Jensen, H., Gøtzsche, K., Andersen Réol, L., Dyrborg Laursen, H., Nielsen, B. L., Denk, A., Kozina, A., Vršnik Perše, T., Marušić, I., Jugović, I., Rasmusson, M., & Oskarsson, M. (2020b). School Staff Training for school leaders and counsellors. Retrieved from: <http://handinhand.si/programme-for-school-staff/>.

<sup>ix</sup> Roczen, N., Wubamlak, E., Vieluf, S., & Rožman, M. (2020). Development of the assessment for use in evaluation of the HAND in HAND programme. In A. Kozina (ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Kovač.

<sup>x</sup> Rožman, M., Roczen, N., & Vieluf, S. (2020). Evaluation of the HAND in HAND programme: Results from questionnaire scales. In A. Kozina (ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Kovač.

- <sup>xi</sup> Vieluf, S., Denk, A., Rožman, M., & Roczen, N. (2020). How do the participants evaluate the HAND in HAND programme? Results of semi-structured focus group interviews. In A. Kozina (ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Kovač.
- <sup>xii</sup> Rasmusson, M., Oskarsson, M., Eliasson, N., & Dahlström, H. (2020). Quality assurance in the HAND in HAND project. In A. Kozina (ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Kovač.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Štremfel, U. (2020). The embeddedness of social, emotional and intercultural/ transcultural learning in European and national educational policies and practices. In A. Kozina (ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Kovač.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Štremfel, U., Vršnik Perše T., & Mlekuž, A. (2020). Mainstreaming social, emotional, intercultural/transcultural learning in European national educational policies and practices: The way forward. In A. Kozina (ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Kovač.
- <sup>xv</sup> European Commission (2018a). Retrieved from: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines\\_policy\\_experimentations\\_0.pdf](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines_policy_experimentations_0.pdf).
- <sup>xvi</sup> European Commission (2018b). Retrieved from: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/annex\\_to\\_the\\_guidelines\\_0.pdf](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/annex_to_the_guidelines_0.pdf).
- <sup>xvii</sup> Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (2013). *The 2013 CASEL Guide: Effective social and emotional learning programs-pre-school and elementary school edition*. Chicago, IL: Author.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Nielsen, B. L. (2020). Implementing the HAND in HAND programme for school staff and students. In A. Kozina (ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr. Kovač.
- <sup>xix</sup> Cefai, C., Bartolo P. A., Cavioni, V., & Downes, P. (2018). *Strengthening social and emotional education as a core curricular area across the EU. A re-view of the international evidence, NESET II report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- <sup>xx</sup> Health Care Act (Official Gazette of Republic Croatia, No. 70/2012, No. 144/2012, No. 121/2003, No. 121/2003).
- <sup>xxi</sup> Nacionalna strategija za poticanje čitanja [National Strategy for the Promotion of Reading]. (2017) Zagreb: Ministarstvo kulture Republike Hrvatske.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Strategija obrazovanja, znanosti i tehnologije [Strategy on education, science and technology] (2014). Zagreb: Hrvatski Sabor.

- <sup>xxiii</sup> Nacionalni kurikulum za osnovnoškolski odgoj i obrazovanje: Prijedlog [National Curriculum for elementary school education: Proposal]. (2016). Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Spajić–Vrkaš, V., Rajković, M., & Rukavina, I. (2014). Eksperimentalna provedba Kurikuluma građanskog odgoja i obrazovanja. Zaključci i preporuke [Experimental Implementation of the Curriculum for Civic Education]. Zagreb: Mreža mladih Hrvatske.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Undervisningsministeriet (2009). Faghæfte 47. Elevernes alsidige udvikling. Retrieved from: <https://www.emu.dk/modul/elevernes-alsidige-udvikling>.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Bekendtgørelse af lov om folkeskolen [Announcement of law on elementary school section] (2017). Retrieved from: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lt/2017/1510>.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Undervisningsministeriet (2017). Trivsel hos eleverne i folkeskolen, Resumé. URL. Retrieved from: <https://www.emu.dk/sites/default/files/Notat%20-%20trivselsm%C3%A5ling%202017%20%281%29.pdf>.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Juul, J., & Jensen, H. (2017). Relational Competence. Towards a New Culture of Education. Windberg: Mathias Voelchert GmbH Verlag.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Jensen, E., Skibsted, E. B., & Christensen, M. V. (2015). Educating Teachers Focusing on the Development of Reflective and Relational Competencies. *Education Research Policy Practice* 14(3), 201–212.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Nielsen, B. L. (2016). Evaluation of the Relational Competence Project. VIA University College. Faculty of Education and Social Studies.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> <https://mindfulness.au.dk/forskning/projekter/stressfri-hverdag-for-laererstuderende/>.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja (ZOFVI) [Organisation and Financing of Education Act]. Retrieved from: <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO445>.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Smernice za vključevanje otrok priseljencev v vrtce in šole [Guidance for the Integration of Immigrant Children at Kindergartens and Schools in Slovenia]. Retrieved from: [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2015/programi/media/pdf/smernice/cistopis\\_Smernice\\_vkljucivanje\\_otrok\\_priseljencev.pdf](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2015/programi/media/pdf/smernice/cistopis_Smernice_vkljucivanje_otrok_priseljencev.pdf).
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> <https://paka3.mss.edus.si/Katis/Katalogi/KATALOG1920.pdf>.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Skolverket (2017) LGR11, Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and the recreation centre, 2011 Stockholm: Skolverket retrieved 20171019 <https://www.skolverket.se/>.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> <https://www.do.se/other-languages/english/complaints/places-you-can-contact/>.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> <https://www.spsm.se/om-oss/english/>.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> <https://www.skolverket.se/andra-sprak-other-languages/english-engelska>.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/the-public-health-agency-of-sweden/>.