



# Recommendations



## How to create a school that students would not want to leave?

**A key objective of the project team was to draw conclusions from the local pilot workshops – both from their processes and the stories gathered - that could feed reflection on how to create a better school. Our recommendations revolve around 5 axes:**

- **The goals and scope of the schools: what are the real objectives and success criteria of schools?**
- **The methodologies used in schools**
- **The training of teachers**
- **Power relations and autonomy**
- **Cultivating good practices, working in network**
- **Connecting schools with their social context, local communities**

## **The goals and scope of the school: what are the real objectives and success criteria of schools?**

- We'd propose a reflection on the objectives of the school and on how its success should be assessed. This should include revisiting the place of tests and exams). Research suggests these often make students focus on performance rather than acquisition of knowledge (memorisation of data), they reduce intrinsic motivation and induce less adaptive forms of learning.

- To what extent the school is capable of reducing starting inequalities could be part of the objectives. To do this, school should identify the existing inequalities and should be determined to act against them.

- We propose to revisit the scope of pedagogical objectives and competences the school focuses on, and to include competences such as social, relational skills, which seem to be highly relevant for the students – and also for social life.

- The schools are communities, and they should be the models for democratic community. Let schools become a training for democracy: teach skills needed for coexistence in a diverse society, for preventing all forms of discriminations and ensuring equal participation, establish dialogue that includes all voices.

- Build school on students' inherent curiosity, use the intrinsic motivation to discover, make learning a positive experience (which currently is not). Help students focus on their strengths, discover who they are and what their passions are.

- Make school more alive, connect it to pleasure, create the pleasure of learning, and the competence of learning to learn.

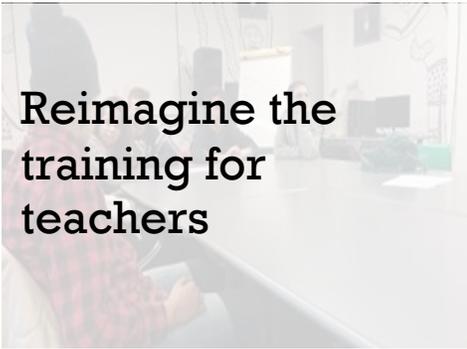
## **Methodologies used in school: how to make the process of learning better and enjoyable?**

- The methodologies we have used (i.e. community reporting, forum theatre) proved to be powerful methodologies that can capture representations, opinions, stories of students and also establish processes which help a better collaboration and facilitate mutual respect across cultural borders and divisions (overcome racism, gender inequalities and social differences).

- We have seen that students value methodologies that are interactive and creative as opposed to the ones based on passive reception, repetition and monotony. Collaborative methodologies help the peers to become a resource for each other in the learning process as opposed to competition, which tends to reduce the performance of youngsters coming from disadvantaged groups.

- The processes used in our workshops (community reporting and forum theatre) enhance a capacity of self-reflection and awareness that help students connect to each other and take care of their relationships.

- Stimulate reflection on the role of segregated and integrated approaches. In certain moments the establishment of groups of students with similar problems, issues can be a resource, a safe space for these students, but maintaining the separation can prevent learning skills of collaboration and coexistence, it can become a barrier to development and engagement in a heterogeneous community.



## Reimagine the training for teachers

- We have collected many stories of conflicts and incidents between students and teachers and between teachers. These illustrated that teachers don't necessarily have the skills to negotiate their own conflicts and facilitate those of the students. We recommend the inclusion of social relational skills into teachers training.

- Quite often students don't feel that the training / learning is practical enough. We propose including active and practical learning / teaching methods in teachers' training.



## Rethink power relations and autonomy

- Autonomy, control is a strong need for teachers as well as students. We have seen that they value being in a position of making decisions in questions that are important for them.

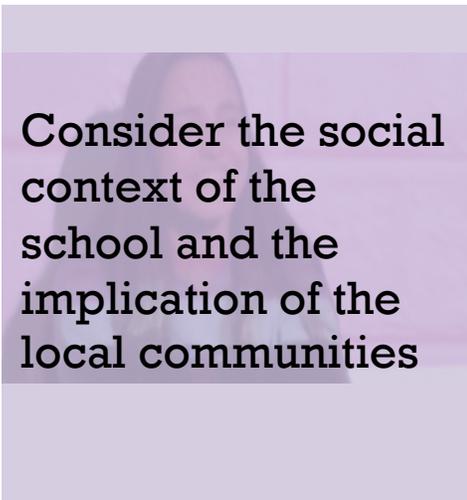
- We propose that teachers (and school managers) reflect on the impacts of hierarchy and their power position, not in view of eradicating all hierarchy but to be fully aware of its impacts. During our workshops students appreciated the responsibilities and decision-making they have been offered. We propose to give more occasions to experiment.



## Cultivate good practices, favour networking between teachers

Teachers should have the possibility to work in collaboration and create networks to exchange and maintain and further develop these innovations

The results of pilot projects similar to ours could be integrated into school life to ensure they are not just short passing experiences



## Consider the social context of the school and the implication of the local communities

One of the reasons for early school leaving may stem from family responsibilities or conflicts and in general by the whole socio-cultural environment they live in. The school could benefit from a systemic approach which takes signs of early school leaving or failure as a symptom of a problem in the family or the social environment of the student, not necessarily a lack of skills or interest of the students themselves.

Schools should reflect on the social environment in which they are, creating bridges to the local communities. This would include using a systemic approach in defining goals and processes, involving the communities in the learning experience, involving associations, local institutions. School should contribute to empower its surroundings. Educating Community, putting forward a message that the educational responsibility is shared within the community.



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