INCLUSIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

A Tool for Self-Reflection on Policy and Practice

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

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With a view to greater accessibility, this report is available in 26 languages and in accessible electronic format on the Agency's website: www.european-agency.org

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INTRODUCTION

This self-reflection tool is an output of the Supporting Inclusive School Leadership (SISL) project by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency). The tool is based on the SISL policy framework, entitled *Inclusive School Leadership: A practical guide to developing and reviewing policy frameworks* (European Agency, 2020a). The policy framework sets out a vision, guiding principles, goals and objectives, as well as a framework of proposed standards and the corresponding policy measures to support inclusive school leadership.

The self-reflection tool builds on these two last issues: aspirational standards for inclusive school leadership and the supportive policy framework. It enables reflection and exchange among the different stakeholders to identify gaps that need to be addressed. The policy framework and self-reflection tool were developed through a collaborative iterative process between the Agency team and a country cluster team.

This self-reflection tool aims to stimulate professional dialogue and collaborative policy development within and across schools and at different policy levels. It is for:

- school leaders and leadership teams seeking guidance in adopting and developing inclusive leadership practices;
- policy-makers responsible for developing and implementing policies for inclusive education at national, regional and/or local levels.

Within this tool, **inclusive education** is understood in its widest sense. It means maximising learner participation, raising achievement, supporting well-being [1] and creating a sense of belonging for **all** learners, including those vulnerable to exclusion.

The tool builds on two main elements identified in the SISL policy framework: aspirational standards for school leaders and the policy measures needed to support school leaders in achieving those standards. Please see Annex 2 for information on how to adapt the tool to country contexts.

In this document, **school leader** refers to all those in leadership roles in schools and learning communities. The tool is based on research on leadership. Within this field, there is a distinction between leaders and leadership. As a rule, leadership is considered an organisational function that is shared or distributed among many persons. A legal view of leadership may assume a single leader. However, a research-based approach presupposes leadership as a collective phenomenon. This tool's premise is that every school leader should aim to be an **inclusive school leader** and practise **school leadership that promotes inclusion**.

Inclusive school leaders have the **vision** that 'all learners of any age' should receive 'meaningful, high-quality' education 'in their local community, alongside their friends and peers' (European Agency, 2015a, p. 1).

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[1] This document contains both external and internal links. The internal links lead to definitions of terms in the glossary or to related sections of the document.

Inclusive school leadership is not independent of the policies that affect it. **Supportive policy measures** should enable individual school leaders or leadership teams to work towards their vision.

Aim and use of the self-reflection tool

This tool helps school leaders and leadership teams and policy-makers to assess where they are on the journey to inclusive school leadership. It offers three options for self-reflection:

1. **Reflection for school leaders** on how to develop their own inclusive practice to achieve inclusive education. The tool invites **school leaders** to reflect on their own practices. The questions are based on aspirational standards that are considered indicators of inclusive school leadership and a means to achieve the wider goal of inclusive education for all.

2. **Reflection for policy-makers** on the policy measures needed to support inclusive school leaders in their practice.

3. **Joint reflection** **and dialogue of school leaders and policy-makers** on key issues in each area that need to be addressed. Guiding questions foster discussions on what actions need to be taken after identifying priorities.

Joint dialogue is the goal so, ideally, all three options for self-reflection should be used. However, the first two options can be used independently or together as a basis for joint reflection across levels by focusing on the individual core functions listed below or working with specific stakeholders.

Before completing the joint self-reflection, both the school leaders' self-reflection and the policy-makers' self-reflection should be completed. These may be completed in full, limited to the individual sections of setting direction, organisational development and human development, or focused on certain categories within the individual sections.

Questions at both practice and policy level provide guidance to answer the following:

- Where are we now?

- What are our main strengths, challenges and opportunities for further development?

- What are our priority areas to address?

Three **core functions** of **inclusive school leadership** frame the reflection on these questions:

- **Setting direction**: Leadership is important for giving direction, with a focus on the values underpinning inclusive practice and on discourse that supports inclusive practice.

- **Organisational development**: Leaders and leadership teams play a critical role in implementing inclusive policy and developing school practice that is equitable and inclusive. They are responsible for creating an organisational environment that supports school practice and fosters school improvement towards inclusive

education. They are also responsible for maintaining a school culture that is collegial, interactive and focused on supporting teachers and learners throughout the educational process. Fulfilling these functions enables school leaders to create an inclusive school with a focus on the learning environment, where every learner is a valuable participant expected to achieve through quality education.

- **Human development**: Leadership is one of the main drivers of teaching quality, which is the most important school-level influence on learner achievement. Human development involves building and developing the capacity of school leaders themselves, teachers and staff in schools. Supporting, monitoring and evaluating teaching practice is central to this strategic role.

Within each function, the questions have been grouped into specific categories or aspects of leadership that promote inclusion. School leaders do not need to answer all the questions at once. Rather, they may use the tool to reflect on specific categories and aspects.

The focus groups for the joint reflection consist of the stakeholders involved in the preliminary reflections for school leaders and policy-makers.

If formalised structures that enable exchanges between school leaders and leadership teams and policy-makers already exist, these might make it easier to establish focus groups for the joint reflection. However, they are not a precondition for the joint reflection. The focus groups can be organised as individual meetings for stakeholder exchange.

This document contains three annexes to support use of the self-reflection tool:

Annex 1: Guidance for using the self-reflection tool. This gives an example of how to prepare and guide the use of the SISL self-reflection tool.

Annex 2: Adapting the self-reflection tool to country contexts. This explains the steps to take in adapting the tool to different national contexts.

Annex 3: A glossary of terms.

A SELF-REFLECTION FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

This section of the self-reflection tool is addressed to school leaders and leadership teams. It allows them to reflect on their inclusive school leadership practice, independent of the settings where they work.

School leaders and leadership teams include (but are not limited to) principals, senior, middle and teacher leaders, support staff, specialist community and support services, members of school boards, and system stakeholders involved in leadership support.

The questions in the tables are based on aspirational **standards for inclusive school leadership practice**.

Instructions for school leaders and leadership teams

The self-reflection tool invites **school leaders** to reflect on their own practices. The reflection can support in:

Step 1: Identifying what practice currently achieves and its main strengths and challenges.

Step 2: Prioritising issues that need addressing to achieve inclusive practice.

Step 3: Identifying what policy supports are in place or are needed to support inclusive practice.

When using the self-reflection tool, school leaders may decide to only complete Step 1 or to proceed to Step 2 and/or Step 3.

The tables in this section are organised into the three core functions of inclusive school leadership. Each table contains groups of questions that focus on one aspect of leadership that promotes inclusive school practice. When using the self-reflection tool, school leaders may choose to focus on one group of questions within each core function:

1. Setting direction covers Creating and communicating school vision, Focus on learners, and Policy influence.

2. Organisational development covers School management, Collaboration, and Monitoring and data collection.

3. Human development covers School leader capacity building, Staff professional learning and development, and Supporting, monitoring and evaluating practice.

This tool's premise is that the listed standards are required to build inclusive school leadership practice.

Step 1: Identifying what practice currently achieves and its main strengths and challenges

Each table has seven columns.

- Column 1 lists questions directed at inclusive school leaders that are based on standards for inclusive school leadership. The questions use 'we' as, ideally, an

inclusive school leader does not work in isolation, but in a team of staff members and with other stakeholders in and beyond the school.

- The next four columns offer space to indicate to what extent the question from column 1 is:
    - Something to consider (column 2): this is a practice that has not yet been considered, but should be.
    - Emerging (column 3): the practice is being considered and planning for implementation is underway.
    - In progress (column 4): the practice is partially in place with steps being taken to implement it more widely.
    - Sustainable practice (column 5): this practice is sustainable as an integral part of the total school organisation and culture.
- Column 6 is relevant for step 3.
- Column 7 provides space for comments or notes about each question.

After the tables, there is space for additional relevant information that the tables have not addressed.

Step 2: Prioritising issues that need addressing to achieve inclusive practice

Answering the questions – whether within a certain category or in all the tables – will create an overall perceived profile of strengths and challenges in the inclusive school leadership process.

After the tables, there are a few questions to assist with reflecting on the findings. These questions invite respondents to look for areas of strength and areas to improve, and to prioritise actions for inclusive school leadership.

Step 3: Identifying what policy supports are in place or are needed to support inclusive practice

Space is provided to list the policy measures needed to support inclusive school leadership that are missing in the national/regional policy. This information can be used in dialogue with policy-makers looking to improve policy that supports inclusive school leadership.

Column 6 asks to what extent policy supports school leaders to work effectively on each aspect. It lists the corresponding policy measure. Column 7 provides space for comments or notes. This allows users to give information on the sources of their assessments, as well as clarifications or evaluative comments relating to specific items. Recording such information can serve as the basis for discussion on the evidence for areas to be built upon and areas for development.

1. Inclusive school leaders' role in setting direction

Setting direction is a core function of inclusive school leadership. It is important for giving strategic direction, with a focus on the values underpinning inclusive practice and on discourse that supports inclusive practice.

The questions about this function are in three categories: Creating and communicating school vision, Focus on learners, and Policy influence.

Table 1. Creating and communicating school vision

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
1.1 Have we identified and clearly stated a vision of inclusive education built on children's rights and equity, in collaboration with the school community?					See policy measures A.1, A.11	
1.2. Do we communicate the school's guiding vision of inclusion and encourage teacher and staff commitment to it?					See policy measures A.5, A.8, A.12	
1.3 Do we guide and influence school organisation and resources according to principles of equity?					See policy measures A.6, A.9	
1.4 Do we promote a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and collaboration to develop teaching, learning and assessment?					See policy measures A.2, A.11	

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
1.5 Do we align school self-evaluation with the vision of inclusion?					See policy measure A.7	

Table 2. Focus on learners

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
1.6 Do we set high expectations for all learners' well-being and achievement?					See policy measure A.1	
1.7 Do we facilitate and empower learner-centred practice?					See policy measure A.3	
1.8 Do we establish a school-wide ethos that enables learners to offer their views to inform all phases of education?					See policy measure A.3	
1.9 Do we take learners' views seriously, consider them and act upon them?					See policy measure A.3	

Table 3. Policy influence

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
1.10 Can we translate and implement policies in ways appropriate to our school context and values?					See policy measures A.1, A.10, A.11	
1.11 Can we influence the development of national policy on equity and inclusive education through consultation and communication, taking a rights-based approach?					See policy measures A.1, A.4, A.11	

Is there additional information to consider that the questions above have not addressed?

Reflecting on our replies about setting direction:

1. How inclusive is our school leadership practice in setting direction for our school?

2. What are our strengths in that regard?

3. What areas do we need to improve/further develop?

4. What are our three priority issues?

5. In what areas are policies needed to support our practice?

6. What issues would we prioritise to discuss with policy-makers?

2. Inclusive school leaders' role in organisational development

Organisational development is a core function of inclusive school leadership. Leaders and leadership teams play a critical role in implementing inclusive policy and developing school practice that is equitable and inclusive. They are responsible for creating an organisational environment that supports practice and fosters school improvement towards inclusive education. They are also responsible for maintaining a school culture that is collegial, interactive and focused on supporting teachers and learners throughout the educational process. Fulfilling these functions enables school leaders to create an inclusive school with a focus on the learning environment, where every learner is a valuable participant expected to achieve through quality education.

The questions about this function are in three categories: School management, Collaboration, and Monitoring and data collection.

Table 4. School management

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
2.1 Do we manage school-level change? For example, regarding: • curriculum and assessment frameworks; • professional learning and development; • funding and resource allocation; • quality assurance and accountability?					See policy measures B.5, B.15	

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
2.2 Do we manage financial resources to meet the needs of the whole school community (learners, families and all school staff)? Verwalten wir die finanziellen Ressourcen so, dass sie den Bedürfnissen der gesamten Schulgemeinschaft (Lernende, Familien und das gesamte Schulpersonal) entsprechen?					See policy measures B.8, B.10, B.14, B.19	
2.3 Do we ensure curriculum and assessment are fit for purpose and meet all learners' needs?					See policy measure B.4	
2.4 Do we encourage and support innovative and flexible pedagogy and practice that serve a diverse group of learners, and build on well-informed decisions?					See policy measures B.11, B.17	
2.5 Do we provide a wide range of opportunities and support to ensure learners can take responsibility for their own learning, successes and achievements?					See policy measure B.6	

Table 5. Collaboration

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
2.6 Do we develop a culture of collaboration – positive and trusting relationships? Entwickeln wir eine Kultur der Zusammenarbeit - positive und vertrauensvolle Beziehungen?					See policy measure B.1	
2.7 Do we ensure a continuum of support in the school community for all learners, families and staff?					See policy measures B.7, B.9, B.20	
2.8 Do we enable and build partnerships with: • support agencies; • other schools/institutions at other system levels; • businesses in the community to benefit learners?					See policy measures B.2, B.3	
2.9 Do we build school capacity for accommodating diverse learners through research engagement and collaborative professional learning and development activities, e.g. with universities?					See policy measure B.7	

Inclusive School Leadership

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
2.10 Do we organise an equitable continuum of support to ensure learner achievement and well-being?					See policy measure B.12	
2.11 Do we build structures/processes that support collaboration with families and actively engage them to promote learners' outcomes and well-being?					See policy measure B.13	

Table 6. Monitoring and data collection

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
2.12 Do we engage the learning community in self-review and reflect on data to inform on-going school improvement?					See policy measure B.16	
2.13 Do we monitor classroom practice, assuring high-quality education and well-being for all?					See policy measure B.18	

Is there additional information to consider that the questions above have not addressed?

Reflecting on our replies about organisational development:

1. How inclusive is our school leadership practice in ensuring our school's organisational development?

2. What are our strengths in that regard?

3. What areas do we need to improve/further develop?

4. What are our three priority issues?

5. In what areas are policies needed to support our practice?

6. What issues would we prioritise to discuss with policy-makers?

3. Inclusive school leaders' role in human development

Human development is a core function of inclusive school leadership. Leadership is one of the main drivers of teaching quality, which is the most important school-level influence on learner achievement, well-being and sense of belonging. Supporting, monitoring and evaluating teaching practice is central to this strategic role.

The questions about this function are in three categories: School leader capacity building, Staff professional learning and development, and Supporting, monitoring and evaluating practice.

Table 7. School leader capacity building

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
3.1 Do we engage in professional learning and development opportunities to enhance our own capabilities to support inclusive education practices and raise all learners' achievement and well-being?					See policy measures C.2, C.3, C.5	
3.2 Do we seek professional partnerships, critical friends and networking with other school leaders for support?					See policy measures C.4, C.7, C.11	

Table 8. Staff professional learning and development

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
3.3 Do we promote and facilitate collaborative opportunities for all staff: • in routine aspects of learning organisation; • through innovative approaches, including embracing new technologies?					See policy measure C.6	
3.4 Do we focus on improving teacher and staff motivation, capacities and working environments to raise achievement and learner well-being?					See policy measure C.8	
3.5 Do we ensure that expertise and experience are continually developed and shared within and across the school and beyond?					See policy measure C.12	
3.6 Do we provide and foster professional learning and development opportunities for teachers and staff to develop their competences in raising learner achievement and well-being?					See policy measure C.9	

Table 9. Supporting, monitoring and evaluating practice

Questions	Something to consider	Emerging	In progress	Sustainable practice	Does policy effectively support this?	Comments/notes
3.7 Do we facilitate reflective practice with the aim of transforming teaching, learning and assessment?					See policy measure C.9	
3.8 Do we use data as a basis for teacher reflection and on-going improvement?					See policy measure C.10	
3.9 Do we promote professional responsibility and accountability and ensure that teachers take responsibility for all learners, especially those vulnerable to exclusion?					See policy measures C.1, C.13	

Is there additional information to consider that the questions above have not addressed?

Reflecting on our replies about human development:

1. How inclusive is our school leadership practice in developing all the staff in our school?

2. What are our strengths in that regard?

3. What areas do we need to improve/further develop?

4. What are our three priority issues?

5. In what areas are policies needed to support our practice?

6. What issues would we prioritise to discuss with policy-makers?

A SELF-REFLECTION FOR POLICY-MAKERS

Inclusive school leaders are responsible for leading schools that build on the principles of equity to raise the achievement and well-being of all learners in their school community, including those most vulnerable to exclusion. For the whole school team to fully embrace inclusion, school leaders must set a **strategic vision** and attend to both **human** and **organisational development**. To achieve this effectively, school leaders need support from policy measures that provide:

- **access** to status, appropriate pay, necessary resources, and training and professional learning and development for inclusive school leadership;

- **autonomy** to make informed decisions on the school's strategic direction, development and organisation, including fulfilling the vision of inclusive education for all learners;

- **accountability** in line with the level of access to resources, support and professional learning and development, and the degree of autonomy school leaders have at different policy levels.

Policy-makers include (but are not limited to) policy-makers at community, municipality, regional and national level with a mandate in education or in other sectors impacting on education, such as inspectors, health and social services, or those responsible for quality assurance.

The self-reflection tool invites policy-makers to reflect on questions that are based on policy measures needed to support school leaders in building and developing inclusive schools. Policy-makers can use the tool to reflect on specific aspects such as setting direction, organisational development or human development. Policy measures that are already in place may be seen as a **strength**. Policy measures that are being developed may be seen as an **opportunity**. If policy measures are not in place or are not being considered, they may be seen as a **challenge**.

The reflection can support in:

Step 1: Identifying which necessary policy measures are in place, need improvement or might be missing.

Step 2: Identifying which measures are possible priorities and which must be addressed in further policy development.

When using the self-reflection tool, policy-makers may decide to only complete Step 1 or to proceed to Step 2.

Instructions for policy-makers

The three tables in this section are organised by the core functions of inclusive school leadership:

A. Setting direction

B. Organisational development

C. Human development.

Step 1: Identifying which necessary policy measures are in place, need improvement or might be missing

Each table has two columns:

- Column 1 asks if the policy measures needed to support inclusive school leadership for each of the core functions are in place.

- Column 2 provides space for evidence of national/regional/local policy and additional comments. This allows users to provide information on the sources of their assessments, as well as clarifications or evaluative comments relating to specific items. Recording such information can serve as the basis for discussion on the evidence for areas to be built upon and areas for development.

After each table, there is space for additional relevant information that the tables have not addressed. Answering all the questions in the tables will create an overall perceived profile of strengths and opportunities for further development in the current policy situation.

Step 2: Identifying which measures are possible priorities and which must be addressed in further policy development

After each table, there are a few questions to assist with reflecting on the findings. These questions invite respondents to look for areas of strength and areas to improve, and to prioritise policy actions for supporting inclusive school leadership. This reflection can encourage dialogue between school leaders and policy-makers.

A. Policy measures needed to support inclusive school leaders' role in setting direction

Setting direction is a core function of inclusive school leadership. Policy can support inclusive school leaders and leadership teams in this function by providing a framework that focuses on the values underpinning inclusive practice and on discourse that supports inclusive practice.

Table 10. Setting direction

Do policy measures support inclusive leadership teams by …	Evidence and additional comments
A.1 Stating that national education policy is built on principles of inclusion, children's rights and equity?	
A.2 Ensuring that initial teacher education and continuous professional learning and development focus on equity and diversity?	
A.3 Ensuring support for learner-centred education, a culture of listening to learners and involving them and families in decisions about their learning and progress (particularly at times of transition)?	
A.4 Providing access to communication between policy-makers and school leadership about education policy and accountability?	
A.5 Ensuring access to professional learning and development and support to enable leaders to fulfil responsibilities relating to inclusion and equity?	
A.6 Ensuring access to support for school leadership development on cultivating a school ethos and improving inclusive school culture?	
A.7 Aligning school self-evaluation with the vision of inclusion?	

Do policy measures support inclusive leadership teams by …	Evidence and additional comments
A.8 Setting out accountability measures that monitor the enactment of principles of equity?	
A.9 Giving school leadership teams autonomy to be flexible in adapting national policy (curriculum, assessment, school organisation) to local contexts?	
A.10 Giving school leadership teams autonomy to appoint teachers and staff who take responsibility for and raise all learners' achievement and well-being through innovative learner-centred pedagogy?	
A.11 Giving school leadership teams autonomy to develop the school vision?	
A.12 Giving school leadership teams autonomy to set out the vision, values and outcomes for which they (and other stakeholders) wish to be held accountable (e.g. equity, non-discrimination, meeting the requirements of all learners from the local community in terms of personal, social and academic outcomes)?	

Is there additional information to consider that the questions above have not addressed?

Reflecting on the findings about setting direction

1. Policy measures that are already in place may be seen as a **strength**. In which areas do the findings show supportive policy measures are in place?

   a. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' access to communication, support and resources? (See measures A.1–A.6)

   b. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' accountability regarding school self-evaluation or monitoring? (See measures A.7–A.8)

   c. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' autonomy in decision-making? (See measures A.9–A.12)

2. Policy measures that are being developed may be seen as an **opportunity**. Where is there room for improvement or further development?

   a. Improvements or further developments needed in access to communication, support and resources:

   b. Improvements or further developments needed in accountability, school self-evaluation or monitoring:

   c. Improvements or further developments needed in school leaders' autonomy in decision-making:

3. Which area is a priority for developing policy that supports inclusive school leaders' role in setting direction?

B. Policy measures needed to support inclusive school leaders' role in organisational development

[Organisational development](#) is a [core function](#) of inclusive school leadership. Policy can support inclusive school leaders and leadership teams in this function by focusing on elements affecting the learning environment, where every learner is a valuable participant expected to achieve through quality education.

Table 11. Organisational development

Do policy measures support inclusive leadership teams by …	Evidence and additional comments
B.1 Recognising the benefits of collaborative practice in professional learning, development and support? Erkennen der Vorteile der kollaborativen Praxis beim beruflichen Lernen, bei der Entwicklung und Unterstützung?	
B.2 Detailing measures that facilitate interdisciplinary working at all levels to ensure inclusive school leaders can effectively draw on the resources, experience and expertise of colleagues/other professionals?	
B.3 Emphasising increased collaboration between ministries/departments at national/regional/community level that have a key role in education and support for learners and their families?	
B.4 Ensuring clarity on the functions of formative and summative assessment or assessment for learning and working towards an integrated assessment system that is fit for purpose and includes all learners?	

Do policy measures support inclusive leadership teams by …	Evidence and additional comments
B.5 Enabling access to support (including peer support) and on-going training for: • managing change; • overseeing staff professional development to strengthen inclusive practice; • allocating resources to equitably support all learners?	
B.6 Promoting access to career-long professional learning to develop enquiring and coherent approaches that build and sustain practice?	
B.7 Providing access to resources and support, and the autonomy to develop partnerships, including with universities and higher education institutions, to increase research engagement and well-informed practice?	
B.8 Providing access to resources and adequate funding to meet the needs of the whole school community? Zugang zu Ressourcen und angemessener Finanzierung gewähren, um den Bedürfnissen der gesamten Schulgemeinschaft gerecht zu werden?	
B.9 Providing access to on-going support that is appropriate to levels of autonomy?	
B.10 Providing access to support with financial management and guidance on equitable resource allocation? Zugang zu Unterstützung bei der Finanzverwaltung und Anleitung für eine gerechte Mittelzuweisung?	

Do policy measures support inclusive leadership teams by …	Evidence and additional comments
B.11 Providing access to resources to develop the workforce's capacity for diversity and implement national policy initiatives?	
B.12 Ensuring access to professional learning and development that cover knowledge of disability and diversity?	
B.13 Enabling school leadership teams to be held accountable (to learners, families, local community) through mechanisms that are aligned with other policy areas, ensuring support for inclusive education policy and practice?	
B.14 Aligning accountability for managing and using financial resources with other policy areas? Angleichung der Verantwortlichkeit für die Verwaltung und Verwendung von Finanzmitteln mit anderen Sektoren?	
B.15 Ensuring alignment between national/regional accountability measures and inclusive education policy, enabling school leaders to align school-level monitoring, self-review and evaluation?	
B.16 Ensuring that accountability and quality assurance mechanisms are coherent and support inclusive development?	
B.17 Giving school leaders autonomy to appoint teachers and staff who take responsibility for and raise all learners' achievement and well-being through innovative learner-centred pedagogy?	
B.18 Giving school leadership teams the autonomy to play a lead role in monitoring, self-review and evaluation, together with key stakeholders, to provide information on learner outcomes and reflect on data to inform on-going improvement?	

Do policy measures support inclusive leadership teams by …	Evidence and additional comments
B.19 Ensuring school leadership teams have autonomy to make well-informed decisions on funding and equitable resource allocation? <mark>Die Autonomie von Schulleitungsteams gewährleisten, damit sie fundierte Entscheidungen über die Finanzierung und gerechte Mittelzuweisung treffen können?</mark>	
B.20 Providing autonomy to support all learners without using labelling or bureaucratic processes?	

Is there additional information to consider that the questions above have not addressed?

Reflecting on the findings about organisational development

1. Policy measures that are already in place may be seen as a **strength**. In which areas do the findings show supportive policy measures are in place?

   a. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' access to communication, support and resources? (See measures B.1–B.12)

   b. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' accountability regarding school self-evaluation or monitoring? (See measures B.13–B.16)

   c. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' autonomy in decision-making? (See measures B.17–B.20)

2. Policy measures that are being developed may be seen as an **opportunity**. Where is there room for improvement or further development?

    a. Improvements or further developments needed in access to communication, support and resources:

    b. Improvements or further developments needed in accountability, school self-evaluation or monitoring:

    c. Improvements or further developments needed in school leaders' autonomy in decision-making:

3. Which area is a priority for developing policy that supports inclusive school leaders' role in organisational development?

C. Policy measures needed to support inclusive school leaders' role in human development

Human development is a core function of inclusive school leadership. Policy can support inclusive school leaders and leadership teams in this function by providing access to resources and support, giving a framework for accountability, monitoring and evaluating teaching practice, and giving school leaders autonomy in developing human resources according to school needs.

Table 12. Human development

Do policy measures support inclusive leadership teams by …	Evidence and additional comments
C.1 Stating that national education policy is built on principles of inclusion, children's rights and equity?	
C.2 Facilitating and supporting collaboration between ministry-, regional- and local-level professional learning providers and schools to develop: • a continuum of professional learning opportunities; • an agreed framework of competences for aspiring and practising inclusive school leaders?	
C.3 Ensuring specific professional learning for school leaders on education in diverse settings and on developing inclusive education practices?	
C.4 Introducing strategies to develop leadership competences (e.g. school leadership or learning support leadership roles) for inclusive education in all relevant professional learning opportunities?	
C.5 Setting criteria/competences for teachers and school leaders working in inclusive education and providing opportunities to develop the relevant capabilities?	

Do policy measures support inclusive leadership teams by …	Evidence and additional comments
C.6 Focusing on strengthening teaching and school leadership professions and recognising the benefits of collaborative practice in professional learning, development and support?	
C.7 Providing access to networks, coaching and mentoring opportunities, support for evaluation and consultation on school improvement?	
C.8 Ensuring access to resources to develop teachers and staff and their working environments?	
C.9 Promoting access to career-long professional learning to develop enquiring and coherent approaches that build and sustain practice?	
C.10 Giving access to data on different policy levels for use as an evidence base?	
C.11 Ensuring leadership autonomy in decision-making about school leaders' manifold duties, so they can balance administrative and inclusive school leadership issues?	
C.12 Promoting autonomy in developing/empowering teachers and staff through shared leadership tasks and collaborative professional learning and development?	
C.13 Giving school leaders autonomy to appoint teachers and staff who take responsibility for and raise all learners' achievement and well-being through innovative learner-centred pedagogy?	

Is there additional information to consider that the questions above have not addressed?

Reflecting on the findings about human development

1. Policy measures that are already in place may be seen as a **strength**. In which areas do the findings show supportive policy measures are in place?

    a. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' access to communication, support and resources? (See measures C.1–C4, C6–C.10)

    b. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' accountability regarding school self-evaluation or [monitoring](#)? (See measure C.5)

    c. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' autonomy in decision-making? (See measures C.11–C.13)

2. Policy measures that are being developed may be seen as an **opportunity**. Where is there room for improvement or further development?

    a. Improvements or further developments needed in access to communication, support and resources:

    b. Improvements or further developments needed in accountability, school self-evaluation or monitoring:

    c. Improvements or further developments needed in school leaders' autonomy in decision-making:

3. Which area is a priority for developing policy that supports inclusive school leaders' role in human development?

JOINT SELF-REFLECTION OF SCHOOL LEADERS AND POLICY-MAKERS

This section of the self-reflection tool recognises the synergy between school leaders and policy-makers in achieving positive change towards more inclusive education. It acts as a stimulus for professional dialogue and collaborative policy development.

International conventions and agreements, as well as legislation and policy at national, regional and community levels, affect inclusive school leadership. Policy determines the available resources (**access**), flexibility in decision-making (**autonomy**) and what school leadership (in every form), according to context and culture, is held accountable for in monitoring and evaluation processes (**accountability**).

Inclusive leadership practice, roles and responsibilities lie at the interface between education policies and their implementation in schools. This practice highlights the potential for school leaders to play a key role in supporting wider system transformation across different policy levels and within their schools.

Inclusive school leadership is influenced by policy. It is also responsible for transforming policy and legislation into improved inclusive education practice. Inclusive school leaders can influence local, regional and national-level policy if appropriate communication and feedback mechanisms to national-level policy-makers are in place.

Jointly, school leaders and policy-makers can use the guiding questions to exchange on and discuss what actions need to be taken after identifying priorities in the Self-Reflection for School Leaders and the Self-Reflection for Policy-Makers.

This tool allows both school leaders and policy-makers to present, observe, discuss and negotiate key strengths, opportunities for further development, challenges and priorities. The intention is to highlight differences of perspectives and gaps between inclusive school leadership practice (**standards for inclusive school leadership practice**) and existing policy measures (**supportive policy measures**), and to reflect on possible future actions.

Before completing this joint self-reflection, both the school leaders' self-reflection and the policy-makers' self-reflection must be completed. These may be completed in full, limited to the individual sections of setting direction, organisational development and human development, or focused on certain categories within the individual sections.

The joint self-reflection process consists of:

- Reflections on school leaders' role and policy measures in setting direction

- [Reflections on school leaders' role and policy measures in organisational development](#)

- [Reflections on school leaders' role and policy measures in human development](#).

Tables are provided for each of the three areas for joint reflection. Respondents can use these tables to record the:

- priorities discussed;

- priority actions to be addressed;

- jointly agreed priorities;

- jointly agreed commitments.

Reflections on school leaders' role and policy measures in setting direction

1. Where are we now? An exchange on strengths, opportunities and areas to investigate further

This section is for assessing the current extent to which school leadership can be considered inclusive. Depending on the focus group participants, this section can provide information on where your country, region, municipality or local school is currently on the journey to inclusive education for all.

The focus group exchange is based on the reflections on replies from the setting direction sections. To support the exchange, Table 13 below maps the relevant questions.

Step 1: Presentation of findings and reflections

Each group presents its main findings and reflections.

Mapping school leaders' and policy-makers' responses from the reflections:

Preliminary reflection questions for **school leaders**:

1. How inclusive is our school leadership practice in setting direction for our school?

2. What are our strengths in that regard?

3.   What areas do we need to improve/further develop?

Preliminary reflection questions for **policy-makers**:

1.   In which areas do the findings show supportive policy measures are in place?

    a.   Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' access to communication, support and resources? (See measures A.1–A.6)

    b.   Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' accountability regarding school self-evaluation or [monitoring](#)? (See measures A.7–A.8)

    c.   Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' autonomy in decision-making? (See measures A.9–A.12)

2.   Where is there room for improvement or further development?

    a.   Improvements or further developments needed in access to communication, support and resources

    b.   Improvements or further developments needed in accountability, school self-evaluation or monitoring

    c.   Improvements or further developments needed in school leaders' autonomy in decision-making

Step 2: Questions and discussion

After each presentation, the floor is open to questions and responses. This discussion is moderated and notes are taken.

Table 13. Priorities discussed

Which stakeholder group? (school leaders, policy-makers or both)	What are the strengths?	What are the opportunities?	What are areas to address?

Which stakeholder group? (school leaders, policy-makers or both)	What are the strengths?	What are the opportunities?	What are areas to address?

2. Where do we want to be? An exchange on areas for improvement and shared goals

This section is for finding common ground on what areas need improvement to reach the common goal of inclusive education that enables participation, raises achievement, supports well-being and creates a sense of belonging for **all** learners, including those most vulnerable to exclusion. Within this common goal, each stakeholder group may formulate specific goals needed to achieve it.

The focus group exchange is based on the reflections on replies from the setting direction sections. To support the exchange, Table 14 maps the relevant questions.

Step 1: Presentation of findings and reflections

Each group presents its main findings and reflections.

Mapping school leaders' and policy-makers' responses from the reflections:

Preliminary reflection questions for **school leaders**:

1. What are our three priority issues?

2. In what areas are policies needed to support our practice?

3. What issues would we prioritise to discuss with policy-makers?

Preliminary reflection question for **policy-makers**:

Which area is a priority for developing policy that supports inclusive school leaders' role in setting direction?

Step 2: Questions and discussion

After each presentation, the floor is open to questions and responses. This discussion is moderated and notes are taken.

Table 14. Priority actions to be addressed (maximum 3)

Actions for school leaders	Actions for policy-makers	Joint actions
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Step 3: Prioritising actions

Three priority actions for each stakeholder group are agreed, as well as three joint priority actions. The individual priority actions may overlap with the joint ones but do not have to. These could be agreed by listing the priorities and applying a point system (where each participant has a number of points to distribute across actions and the most voted for are selected) or vote to determine which ones to take forward.

Table 15. Jointly agreed priorities (maximum 3)

Priority actions for school leaders	Priority actions for policy-makers	Priority joint actions
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

3. What do we commit to? An exchange leading to actions for both parties to take

This section requires each stakeholder group to commit to actions it can take individually and jointly.

Based on the agreed priority actions, the group should agree which actions to take forward and whether these are short-term (immediate) actions or require long-term planning. These could be agreed by applying a point system (where each participant has a number of points to distribute across actions and the most voted for are selected) or vote to determine which actions to take forward in the short or long term. In addition, the group should specifically state how to take each action forward.

Tables 16–18 are for recording the agreed commitments (maximum 3 per table).

Table 16. School leaders' commitments

Priority actions for school leaders	Short term/long term	How to take forward

Table 17. Policy-makers' commitments

Priority actions for policy-makers	Short term/long term	How to take forward

Table 18. Joint commitments

Priority joint actions	Short term/long term	How to take forward

Reflections on school leaders' role and policy measures in organisational development

1. Where are we now? An exchange on strengths, opportunities and areas to investigate further

This section is for assessing the current extent to which school leadership can be considered inclusive. Where is the country, region, municipality or local school currently on the journey to inclusive education for all?

The focus group exchange is based on the reflections on replies from the organisational development sections. To support the exchange, Table 19 maps the relevant questions.

Step 1: Presentation of findings and reflections

Each group presents its main findings and reflections.

Mapping school leaders' and policy-makers' responses from the reflections:

Preliminary reflection questions for **school leaders**:

1. How inclusive is our school leadership practice in ensuring our school's organisational development?

2. What are our strengths in that regard?

3. What areas do we need to improve/further develop?

Preliminary reflection questions for **policy-makers**:

1. In which areas do the findings show supportive policy measures are in place?

    a. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' access to communication, support and resources? (See measures B.1–B.12)

    b. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' accountability regarding school self-evaluation or [monitoring](#)? (See measures B.13–B.16)

    c. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' autonomy in decision-making? (See measures B.17–B.20)

2. Where is there room for improvement or further development?

    a. Improvements or further developments needed in access to communication, support and resources

    b. Improvements or further developments needed in accountability, school self-evaluation or monitoring

    c. Improvements or further developments needed in school leaders' autonomy in decision-making

Step 2: Questions and discussion

After each presentation, the floor is open to questions and responses. This discussion is moderated and notes are taken.

Table 19. Priorities discussed

Which stakeholder group? (school leaders, policy-makers or both)	What are the strengths?	What are the opportunities?	What are areas to address?

Which stakeholder group? (school leaders, policy-makers or both)	What are the strengths?	What are the opportunities?	What are areas to address?

2. Where do we want to be? An exchange on areas for improvement and shared goals

This section is for finding common ground on what areas need improvement to reach the common goal of inclusive education that enables participation, raises achievement, supports [well-being](#) and creates a sense of belonging for **all** learners, including those most vulnerable to exclusion. Within this common goal, each stakeholder group may formulate specific goals needed to achieve it.

The focus group exchange is based on the reflections on replies from the organisational development sections. To support the exchange, Table 20 maps the relevant questions.

Step 1: Presentation of findings and reflections

Each group presents its main findings and reflections.

Mapping school leaders' and policy-makers' responses from the reflections:

Preliminary reflection questions for **school leaders**:

1. What are our three priority issues?

2. In what areas are policies needed to support our practice?

3. What issues would we prioritise to discuss with policy-makers?

Preliminary reflection question for **policy-makers**:

Which area is a priority for developing policy that supports inclusive school leaders' role in organisational development?

Step 2: Questions and discussion

After each presentation, the floor is open to questions and responses. This discussion is moderated and notes are taken.

Table 20. Priority actions to be addressed (maximum 3)

Actions for school leaders	Actions for policy-makers	Joint actions
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Step 3: Prioritising actions

Three priority actions for each stakeholder group are agreed, as well as three joint priority actions. The individual priority actions may overlap with the joint ones but do not have to. These could be agreed by listing the priorities and applying a point system (where each participant has a number of points to distribute across actions and the most voted for are selected) or vote to determine which ones to take forward.

Table 21. Jointly agreed priorities (maximum 3)

Priority actions for school leaders	Priority actions for policy-makers	Priority joint actions
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

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3. What do we commit to? An exchange leading to actions for both parties to take

This section requires each stakeholder group to commit to actions it can take individually and jointly.

Based on the agreed priority actions, the group should agree which actions to take forward and whether these are short-term (immediate) actions or require long-term planning. These could be agreed by applying a point system (where each participant has a number of points to distribute across actions and the most voted for are selected) or vote to determine which actions to take forward in the short or long term. In addition, the group should specifically state how to take each action forward.

Tables 22–24 are for recording the agreed commitments (maximum 3 per table).

Table 22. School leaders' commitments

Priority actions for school leaders	Short term/long term	How to take forward

Table 23. Policy-makers' commitments

Priority actions for policy-makers	Short term/long term	How to take forward

Table 24. Joint commitments

Priority joint actions	Short term/long term	How to take forward

Reflections on school leaders' role and policy measures in human development

1. Where are we now? An exchange on strengths, opportunities and areas to investigate further

This section is for assessing the current extent to which school leadership can be considered inclusive. Where is the country, region, municipality or local school currently on the journey to inclusive education for all?

The focus group exchange is based on the reflections on replies from the human development sections. To support the exchange, Table 25 maps the relevant questions.

Step 1: Presentation of findings and reflections

Each group presents its main findings and reflections.

Mapping school leaders' and policy-makers' responses from the reflections:

Preliminary reflection questions for **school leaders**:

1. How inclusive is our school leadership practice in developing all the staff in our school?

2. What are our strengths in that regard?

3. What areas do we need to improve/further develop?

Preliminary reflection questions for **policy-makers**:

1. In which areas do the findings show supportive policy measures are in place?

    a. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' access to communication, support and resources? (See measures C1–4, C.6–C.10)

    b. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' accountability regarding school self-evaluation or [monitoring](#)? (See measure C.5)

    c. Are the supportive policy measures related to school leaders' autonomy in decision-making? (See measures C.11–C.13)

2. Where is there room for improvement or further development?

    a. Improvements or further developments needed in access to communication, support and resources

    b. Improvements or further developments needed in accountability, school self-evaluation or monitoring

    c. Improvements or further developments needed in school leaders' autonomy in decision-making

Step 2: Questions and discussion

After each presentation, the floor is open to questions and responses. This discussion is moderated and notes are taken.

Table 25. Priorities discussed

Which stakeholder group? (school leaders, policy-makers or both)	What are the strengths?	What are the opportunities?	What are areas to address?

Which stakeholder group? (school leaders, policy-makers or both)	What are the strengths?	What are the opportunities?	What are areas to address?

2. Where do we want to be? An exchange on areas for improvement and shared goals

This section is for finding common ground on what areas need improvement to reach the common goal of inclusive education that enables participation, raises achievement, supports well-being and creates a sense of belonging for **all** learners, including those most vulnerable to exclusion. Within this common goal, each stakeholder group may formulate specific goals needed to achieve it.

The focus group exchange is based on the reflections on replies from the human development sections. To support the exchange, Table 26 maps the relevant questions.

Step 1: Presentation of findings and reflections

Each group presents its main findings and reflections.

Mapping school leaders' and policy-makers' responses from the reflections:

Preliminary reflection questions for **school leaders**:

1. What are our three priority issues?

2. In what areas are policies needed to support our practice?

3. What issues would we prioritise to discuss with policy-makers?

Preliminary reflection question for **policy-makers**:

Which area is a priority for developing policy that supports inclusive school leaders' role in human development?

Step 2: Questions and discussion

After each presentation, the floor is open to questions and responses. This discussion is moderated and notes are taken.

Table 26. Priority actions to be addressed (maximum 3)

Actions for school leaders	Actions for policy-makers	Joint actions
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Step 3: Prioritising actions

Three priority actions for each stakeholder group are agreed, as well as three joint priority actions. The individual priority actions may overlap with the joint ones but do not have to. These could be agreed by listing the priorities and applying a point system (where each participant has a number of points to distribute across actions and the most voted for are selected) or vote to determine which ones to take forward.

Table 27. Jointly agreed priorities (maximum 3)

Priority actions for school leaders	Priority actions for policy-makers	Priority joint actions
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

3. What do we commit to? An exchange leading to actions for both parties to take

This section requires each stakeholder group to commit to actions it can take individually and jointly.

Based on the agreed priority actions, the group should agree which actions to take forward and whether these are short-term (immediate) actions or require long-term planning. These could be agreed by applying a point system (where each participant has a number of points to distribute across actions and the most voted for are selected) or vote to determine which actions to take forward in the short or long term. In addition, the group should specifically state how to take each action forward.

Tables 28–30 are for recording the agreed commitments (maximum 3 per table).

Table 28. School leaders' commitments

Priority actions for school leaders	Short term/long term	How to take forward

Table 29. Policy-makers' commitments

Priority actions for policy-makers	Short term/long term	How to take forward

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Table 30. Joint commitments

Priority joint actions	Short term/long term	How to take forward

ANNEX 1: GUIDANCE FOR USING THE SELF-REFLECTION TOOL

This guidance gives an example of how to prepare for and guide the use of the SISL self-reflection tool. It consists of three sections:

Section 1 clarifies roles and responsibilities for organisers and participants.

Section 2 provides guidance for setting up the self-reflection activity within countries. This includes practical information for using the tool in groups as well as proposed structures for organising the focus group work.

Section 3 provides a short overview of how to report on the self-reflection activity.

Section 1: Roles and responsibilities

The roles in the self-reflection activity are:

- the **organising team**, which is responsible for organising the self-reflection activity;

- the **participants**, who are the group of policy-makers and school leaders invited to partake in the activity.

The organising team

The role of the organising team is to plan and implement the self-reflection activity so that there are maximal possibilities for collecting information on reflections regarding key issues for supporting inclusive school leadership in the country.

Before the self-reflection activity

- Research and agree which participants to invite and how to include both school leaders and policy-makers

- Invite participants to the meeting (see the next section for further information)

- Carry out the practical organisation of the meeting

- Provide a meeting venue with required facilities

- Prepare materials before the meeting, including:

  – Agenda

  – Participants' lists (in compliance with each country's data protection regulations)

  – The self-reflection tool in the participants' language. This will help participants to prepare so they can contribute in the best ways.

During the self-reflection activity

- Host/chair the event or select a facilitator

- Involve/engage the relevant stakeholders
- Collect meeting information for a report on the outcomes of the activity.

After the self-reflection activity

- Draft a report on the main discussions in the meeting.

The self-reflection activity participants

The participants' role is to reflect on how school leaders are being supported to be inclusive in their work.

Before the activity

- Prepare to take part in discussions about inclusive education and school leaders' roles.

During the activity

- Actively contribute to all discussions
- Give feedback on the self-reflection tool.

After the activity

- (Depending on country preference) comment on the draft self-reflection report.

Section 2: Practical organisation

While the aim of the self-reflection activity is clear, its organisation is flexible in the sense that each country can choose its focus. Countries may opt to look at a specific school community, region or locality, at a certain core function of school leaders/leadership teams or at specific categories within the core functions. This has implications when it comes to selecting participants.

The activity duration can be a half-day or longer. Practical arrangements must be made accordingly.

Finding and inviting participants

To gain a wide reflection on how school leaders are supported to be inclusive and a range of views on using the self-reflection tool, a key group of stakeholders should be invited to participate. Existing formalised structures that enable discussions and exchanges between school leaders and leadership teams and policy-makers might make it easier to establish focus groups. Also, stakeholders can be invited through professional networks, associations or personal connections.

Depending on the focus, the participants can represent different levels of the education system. They must represent both stakeholder groups indicated below:

- **School leaders and leadership teams** include (but are not limited to) principals, senior, middle and teacher leaders, support staff, specialist community and

support services, members of school boards, and system stakeholders involved in leadership support.

- **Policy-makers** include (but are not limited to) policy-makers at community, municipality, regional and national level with a mandate in education or in other sectors impacting on education, such as inspectors, health and social services, or those responsible for quality assurance.

These lists are not definitive, as the stakeholder groups may differ between countries. They also depend on the activity's focus area. For example, the organising team may decide to focus on a specific region and/or school level. Moreover, it is important to pair school leaders and leadership teams with the policy-makers whose decisions impact on their work.

The organising team should send invitations to the participants at least four weeks before the meeting, including information about the time and place.

Organising focus groups and proposed agenda

The participants are arranged into focus groups. The size and number of groups can vary depending on the number of participants. For each focus group, the roles of **moderator**, **timekeeper** and **notetaker** are set.

- The **moderator** moderates the discussions and makes sure all voices are heard.
- The **timekeeper** makes sure that the activity stays on schedule.
- The **notetaker** takes notes for the group.

If possible, each focus group should be given a laptop (or be asked to bring their own) to record their replies in a Word template of the self-reflection tool. If this is not possible, the groups can write into a printed version of the self-reflection tool. Each participant should receive a printed copy of the tool.

The focus group reflection has **two stages**:

1. Participants are grouped into focus groups by their roles as either school leaders/members of leadership teams or policy-makers (the number of participants in each focus group can vary but maximum 8–10 people per group). This part can take 1.5–2 hours. The procedure is as follows:

   a. The focus groups with school leaders/leadership team members work on **A Self-Reflection for School Leaders**.

   b. The focus groups with policy-makers work on **A Self-Reflection for Policy-Makers**.

2. Participants are regrouped into new focus groups. Each group has an equal mix of policy-makers and school leaders/leadership team members. These new focus groups work on the **Joint Self-Reflection of School Leaders and Policy-Makers**. This part can take up to 2 hours.

Proposed agenda

Table 31 sets out the approximate timing for each part of the agenda. These times are proposals and can be adapted to each country's context and possibilities. Ensure that participants receive the final version of the agenda before the meeting.

Table 31. Suggested agenda

Time	Session	Room / practicalities
15 minutes	Welcome participants, introduce participants and explain the meeting set-up	All together
1.5–2 hours	Stage 1 focus groups School leaders/leadership teams and policy-makers in separate groups	Group tables / rooms
15–30 minutes	Break	–
1.5–2 hours	Stage 2 focus groups School leaders/leadership teams and policy-makers in joint groups	Group tables / rooms
15–30 minutes	Break	–
15–30 minutes	Joint reflections and comments with all participants	All together

Section 3: Reporting on the self-reflection activity

The outputs of the self-reflection activity can be compiled into a report on inclusive school leadership for the participating schools and organisations involved in school policy within the country.

The self-reflection tool offers a clear structure for summarising the outcomes. The findings from the focus group work on each part of the self-reflection tool can be collected into a report with the following structure:

- Main issues school leadership raised

- Main issues policy-makers raised

- Agreed areas of action.

ANNEX 2: ADAPTING THE SELF-REFLECTION TOOL TO COUNTRY CONTEXTS

The self-reflection tool is an open-source document. As such, users may translate it and adapt it to the policy context governing each school system and the work of school leaders and leadership teams. Adaptations can address the roles of school leaders/leadership teams, centralised or decentralised governance, the language and terminology used in the country or linking existing standards/measures to relevant structures within the country.

The suggested **first step** in adapting the tool is to go through a piloting process. Piloting the self-reflection tool entails identifying relevant stakeholders from two groups:

- **School leaders and leadership teams** include (but are not limited to) principals, senior, middle and teacher leaders, support staff, specialist community and support services, members of school boards, and system stakeholders involved in leadership support.

- **Policy-makers** include (but are not limited to) policy-makers at community, municipality, regional and national level with a mandate in education or in other sectors impacting on education, such as inspectors, health and social services, or those responsible for quality assurance.

These lists are not definitive, as the stakeholder groups may differ between countries.

The **second step** is to invite the relevant stakeholders to discuss the tool. This can be through focus groups (see Annex 1 for an example), through interviewing stakeholders individually or through a survey with open questions. If formalised structures for bringing the stakeholders together already exist, these might enable discussions between school leaders and leadership teams and policy-makers. Also, stakeholders can be invited through professional networks, associations or personal connections.

The discussion aims to determine what adaptions are needed to make the self-reflection tool useful in the country context. This could involve:

- deciding which aspects of the tool can be used;

- linking the tool to the current policy and legislative context (country-specific standards or quality assurance tools);

- checking if there are questions that are redundant in the country context;

- reviewing and adapting language and concepts to the country context while maintaining the original document's core vision and principles of inclusion;

- deciding on the process of implementing the self-reflection tool in the country. This includes reflecting on if and how training or preparation is needed before using the tool.

Please note that changes to the document might affect the internal links, especially in the tables linking the roles of school leaders and the policy measures and linking to the glossary.

ANNEX 3: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This glossary offers a shared language for all experts to use. Different sources for definitions have been used:

- Existing definitions in use at the international level, particularly key terms defined within key literature quotations and citations (see the References)
- Operational definitions developed within the SISL project.

Assessment for learning

Many countries use this term in a general way to refer to:

> … assessment procedures that inform decision-making about teaching methods and next steps in a pupil's learning. Assessment for learning is a process usually carried out in classrooms by teachers/other professionals. It involves finding and interpreting evidence and working with learners to establish where they are in their learning, the next steps to be taken and the best ways of moving forward (European Agency, no date).

Continuum of support

The existence of learning, physical and social supports and intervention. These range from less intensive to more intensive according to the needs of those asking for/needing support (European Agency, 2020a).

> Ebersold (2012) supports an ecological approach to disability, where the focus is on the means (human, economic and material) necessary to create accessible learning contexts and on the inter-dependence among different professionals in the locality to provide a continuum of interventions throughout a learner's life (European Agency, 2013, p. 30).

Core functions of school leadership

Research has identified the main organisational functions that must be performed for inclusive schools to run effectively (Billingsley, McLeskey and Crockett, 2017; Leithwood, 2021; McLeskey and Waldron, 2015; Skoglund and Stäcker, 2016). These functions fall into the three broad categories of setting direction, human development and organisational development. Fulfilling these functions supports leaders to challenge a school culture that identifies and reacts to learners. It enables them to create an inclusive school culture with a focus on the learning environment, where every learner is a valuable participant expected to achieve through quality education.

Critical friend

Costa and Kallick define a critical friend as:

> … a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work …

A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work (1993, p. 50).

Distributed leadership

This firstly involves the devolution of responsibilities to middle leadership teams that are able to support and manage the transfer of knowledge and skills when necessary. Secondly, it enables all staff and school stakeholders to take responsibility by promoting flexibility and sharing practice. Thus, this leadership model involves the interactions between those in formal and informal leadership roles much more than the actions they perform. The main concern is how leadership influences organisational and instructional improvement (Harris, 2013).

Equity

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, equity:

> … 'considers the social justice ramifications of education in relation to the fairness, justness and impartiality of its distribution at all levels or educational sub-sectors'. We take equity to mean that a distribution is fair or justified. Equity involves a normative judgement of a distribution, but how people make that judgement will vary (2018, p. 17).

According to the Council of the European Union:

> … equality and equity are not identical and […] education systems must move away from the traditional 'one-size-fits all' mentality. Equal opportunities for all are crucial, but not sufficient: there is a need to pursue 'equity' in the aims, content, teaching methods and forms of learning being provided for by education and training systems to achieve a high quality education for all (2017, p. 4).

Formative assessment

Formative assessment:

> … puts the learner at the centre of the assessment process. It provides the basis for personalisation according to the learner's interests and aptitudes.

> Unlike summative assessment ('assessment of learning'), which has been traditionally linked to standardised, high-stakes tests and accountability, formative assessment can involve learners, enabling them to take a more active part in their learning. It is usually carried out in collaboration with others and can have substantial positive impacts on learner achievement ([European Agency, no date](#)).

Human development

According to Dorczak, school leaders' main role is 'to release and develop the talents of all teachers or other members of staff as well [as] recognizing and activating the potential of

all students' (2013, p. 55). Thus, school leadership focused on improving teachers' motivation, capacities and working environment is most likely to improve learner achievement.

At the centre of this strategic role is monitoring and evaluating teaching, in order to collect information to provide professional development that will 'support and motivate each teacher to work for all' learners (Black and Simon, 2014, p. 160). This is based on leadership's ability to build capacity by developing teachers' knowledge and skills, and to promote a school-wide professional community that facilitates reflective dialogue and collaboration about inclusive instructional practices (Humada-Ludeke, 2013; Erbring, 2016).

The *Empowering Teachers* case study further recognises the need for leaders to develop leadership skills in others – for example, 'in teachers and middle managers to share or "distribute" leadership tasks' and create an inclusive school culture (European Agency, 2015b, p. 51).

Inclusive school leaders

Inclusive school leaders (or leadership teams) have the vision that 'all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers' (European Agency, 2015a, p. 1). They implement this vision of inclusive education by setting a clear direction, developing the school organisation and building staff competence to meet the needs of all learners, including those most vulnerable to exclusion. Such leaders combine elements of instructional, transformative and distributed leadership models. They take responsibility for and value all learners.

Inclusive school leadership

Inclusive school leadership goes beyond organisation. It aims to address inequity to build community and full participation. It focuses on developing an inclusive culture where all stakeholders are supported to work together, value diversity and ensure that **all** learners, including those most vulnerable to exclusion, receive a high-quality education.

Inclusive school leadership draws on and brings together different foci from three leadership models (European Agency, 2018):

- Instructional: setting vision and direction regarding all learners' learning, achievement and well-being.

- Transformative: improving agency, facilitating innovation and change or organisational learning

- Distributed: creating a shared, collective or organisational school leadership with a scope within and outside the school.

Innovative approaches in education

Innovative approaches in education focus on giving every learner 'the opportunity to achieve fair and comparable outcomes' (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2021, p. 27). This may involve developing creative ways of adapting teaching practice to the diversity of learners with regard to their different backgrounds, abilities, motivation, needs for feedback and

their different ways of showing progress and learning. Innovation in this sense is linked to the natural differences within the learner group and the:

> … need to ensure equality in the opportunities to access education, but also a need to focus on how pedagogy can lead towards fairness and impartiality ('equity') in the teaching and the outcomes (ibid.).

Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership emphasises the importance of establishing clear educational goals, planning the curriculum and evaluating teachers and teaching. The prime focus is on leaders' responsibility for promoting better measurable outcomes for learners, highlighting the importance of enhancing the quality of classroom teaching and learning (Day, Gu and Sammons, 2016).

Instructional leadership also emphasises the creation of a supportive, encouraging work environment that can support the development of teaching practices best suited to improve academic performance (Hansen and Lárusdóttir, 2015). This type of leadership has also been termed 'learning-centred leadership, leadership for learning or curriculum leadership', as one key dimension focuses on developing and co-ordinating an effective school curriculum (Gumus, Bellibas, Esen and Gumus, 2018).

Interdisciplinary

Interdisciplinary … refers to professionals 'from more than one academic discipline' working together 'to examine a theme, issue, question or topic' (Pedagogy in Action, no date).

Learner-centred education/practice/pedagogy

Effective continua of support in inclusive education systems encompass personalised approaches to learning that engage all learners and support their active participation in the learning process. This involves developing learner-centred curricula and assessment frameworks; flexible training and continuous professional development opportunities for all educators, school leaders, and decision-makers; and coherent governance processes at all system levels (Watkins, 2017).

Learners' well-being

The OECD defines learners' well-being as:

> … the psychological, cognitive, social and physical functioning and capabilities that students need to live a happy and fulfilling life. This definition of well-being combines a "children's rights approach", that emphasises the right of all children to have a happy life "here and now", with a "development approach", that underscores the importance of students developing the skills to improve their well-being in the present and in the future (Ben-Arieh et al., 2013) (2017, pp. 61–62).

Monitoring

According to Black and Simon (2014), monitoring and evaluating teaching are central to inclusive school leadership. Their role is to collect information to provide professional development that will support and motivate each teacher to work for all learners.

Organisational development

School leaders play a critical role in implementing inclusive policy and practice and, in particular, in creating a school culture that embraces diversity and promotes inclusion (Cherkowski and Ragoonaden, 2016; Mac Ruairc, 2013). Thus, school leaders are responsible for maintaining a school culture that is collegial, interactive and focused on supporting teachers and learners throughout the educational process. Setting the tone for an inclusive culture requires school leaders to place emphasis on nurturing teacher morale, partnerships with parents and professional collegiality. This will then affect the learning environment created for learners (Fultz, 2017).

Using human and financial resources strategically and aligning them with pedagogical purposes can influence the way school activities improve teaching and learning. Thus, school leaders must be involved in decisions about teacher recruitment. Being able to select teaching staff is central to establishing a school culture and capacity that has a beneficial effect on learners' achievement (Stoll and Temperley, 2010).

Professional learning and development

> Professional learning refers to any activity that education professionals engage in that aims to stimulate their thinking and professional knowledge and to improve their practice, ensuring that it is critically informed and up-to-date. ([European Agency, no date](#)).

A continuum of teacher professional learning refers to the whole range of teacher professional learning opportunities across a teacher's career. These include initial teacher education, induction, continuing professional development, school leaders' and teacher educators' professional learning, as well as the professional learning of specialist staff and support staff involved in inclusive classrooms/schools ([European Agency, 2020b](#)).

Professional responsibility and accountability

Providing high-quality instruction is the core responsibility of teachers.

> Professional accountability is designed with teachers' involvement and relies on their expertise and professionalism. Systems incorporating professional accountability generally result from public trust in the teaching profession to deliver high-quality education (UNESCO, 2017).

Rights-based approach

A human rights-based approach to education aims 'to ensure every child a quality education that respects and promotes her or his right to dignity and optimum development' (UNICEF, 2007, p. 1).

School community

This refers to the group of people closely attached to a school – its teachers, administrators, learners and the learners' families ([European Agency, 2020a](#)).

School leadership

This refers to all those in key leadership roles in schools and learning communities. Such leaders may also be referred to as head teachers, school directors or principals. There are various stages of school leadership, including teacher, middle and senior leadership. In this role, they focus on enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, learners and parents to achieve common educational aims.

Leading a school involves both leadership and management. It is important to acknowledge that school leaders need a balance of these two processes. Leadership is focused on values, vision and the future, whereas management is concerned with making the present work (West-Burnham and Harris, 2015).

Self-review

On-going school self-review is a strategic process of inquiry. It enables school staff to systematically find out their successes and challenges in teaching, learning and school operations. A regular, planned review process is about fostering a sustainable culture of professional reflection that is focused on learner achievement and school improvement [(European Agency, 2020a)](#).

Setting direction

Leadership is important for giving direction, with a focus on the values underpinning inclusive practice and on discourse that supports inclusive practice. Furthermore, it is essential for exploring and sharing meanings about inclusion, aiming to promote learners' best interests both academically and socially, through fairness, justice and [equity](#) (Stone-Johnson, 2014). The vision of an inclusive school needs to be grounded in reflection among stakeholders about what constitutes inclusive practice and discussions about the values contributing to that practice (Ekins, 2013).

An important factor in achieving the strategic vision is attending to the development of professional competences of teachers and staff in working with diverse groups of learners.

Standards

Standards are statements of desired outcomes for the education system, which are agreed upon by key stakeholders ([European Agency, 2020a](#)).

Teacher reflection

Reflective practice is 'learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and practice' (Finlay, 2008, p. 1).

> Reflection is a systematic reviewing process for all teachers which allows you to make links from one experience to the next, making sure your students make maximum progress (Cambridge Assessment International Education, no date).

Transformative leadership

Transformative leadership emphasises vision-setting and inspiration. It focuses on establishing structures and cultures that enhance the quality of teaching and learning, setting direction, developing people and (re)designing the organisation (Day, Gu and Sammons, 2016). Transformative school leadership is traditionally associated with the ability to facilitate change and innovation by impacting on people and cultures within schools (Navickaitė, 2013).

Vision of inclusive education

> The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers (European Agency, 2015a, p. 1).

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