



YARD4ALL

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Using School's yard for ALL child's wellbeing and development

A peer-to-peer model



Project partners

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July, 2022

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The Yard4All project: an overview

The convention on the rights of the children postulates that children have the right to education (Article 28) and education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full (Article 29). Improving the quality in education is also one of the sustainable goals that also need to be achieved by 2030.

The Yard4All project is an Erasmus+ project that brings together nine partner organizations, which foresees the following objectives:

- 1) To improve the learning quality of children, using non-formal learning and teaching environments to promote more social contact between pupils with SEN and pupils without impairments; develop innovative learning processes guided by flexible curricula.
- 2) To strengthen professionals' attitudes, skills, and abilities, providing them training opportunities aligned with national- and local-level policy goals for and understandings of inclusive education.
- 3) To use an alternative learning environment - school yards - to create an innovative methodology to develop ALL CHILDREN mathematics, science, and other competences (e.g., entrepreneurship and creativity).

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4) To build on the existing resources following the principles of permaculture in the economy of hydric resources, soil conservation, activation of the microbiological fauna and plague protection.

5) To increase the parents' and community's participation by organizing local fairs of agro products with the aim to raise financial resources for the sustainability of the project (sell seeds and products, implementing principles of the Fair Trade). The objective is to use the yard of the school as a tool to increase teachers' skills and bring all children together. This is an opportunity for formal (STEM) and non-formal education as well as quality and inclusive education.

The project includes five intellectual outputs (IO), namely:

- IO2 - Child-to-child peer support model
- IO3 - Business & Marketing Game for children
- IO4 - Guide for using mathematical concepts on school yard
- IO5 - Guide to develop science concepts on school yard

This document concerns IO2, which includes:

- Peer support models: Features and phases, and their adaptation to the distinctive aspects of disability.

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- Key lessons learned from the evidence, including aspects of leadership, design and organization; support and supervision; skills and training; program longevity; issues of confidentiality; and risks.
- School-based activities focusing on disability, and on peer support interventions based on effectiveness of different models, strengths, and weaknesses.
- The piloting of those activities in each country.
- A literature review on children with SEN.

How can a peer-to-peer scheme can be helpful for the Yard4all?

Peer support can be generally defined as a structured relationship where a trained person, or someone who has the knowledge (either from their own experiences with a certain condition, or of the circumstances of those he/she helps), assists other people with different needs (e.g., Coleman et al., 2017; Davidson et al., 1999) using formal or informal approaches. In the literature it can be found a set of different concepts: peer support, peer mentoring, befriending and buddying.

A peer-to-peer program can provide emotional support (e.g. empathetic, caring interactions, encouragement), informational support (e.g. providing knowledge, advice, suggestions, including availability of relevant resources, alternative courses of action and guidance about effectiveness), or/and appraisal

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support (e.g. providing information to encourage personal decision-making and motivational aspects to encourage persistence and resilience).

In **schools** peer supporters are responsible pupils providing support to their younger or same age through structured activities supervised by an adult. The central principle of peer support is that it can be helpful for children to receive support from their peers, rather than adults. In school settings with children with special needs, a peer support model can be considered as an intervention involving one or more classmates without impairments providing academic and/or social support to a peer with SEN. Peer students can become the “teacher” by modeling appropriate behavior, interactions, expectations, perceptions, and learning schemes and when assisting special education pupils they can be also helpful with routine tasks.

Peer learning refers to “the use of teaching and learning strategies in which students learn with and from each other without the immediate intervention of a teacher (Boud et al., 1999, p. 413). In peer learning the acquisition of knowledge and skill is achieved through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched pupils.

School-based one-to-one support and School-based group support are two examples of peer-to-peer support models (Coleman et al, 2017). School-based one-to-one support refers to a student who helps others – in some cases an older classmate (e.g., year 7 pupils supported by those in years 10-12) – with the supervision on an adult facilitator.

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Some **psychosocial approaches** underpin peer support models, particularly:

- **Bandura's Social Learning Theory**: the assumption underpinning this theory is that people learn through observing another's behaviour and attitudes (*live model*), as well as the outcomes of that behaviour. According to this approach, behaviour is modeled and can serve as a guide for action.
- **Festinger's Social Comparison Theory**: this theory posits that individuals self-evaluate based on the comparison of their own beliefs and desires against those of another (similar) person's. Upward comparisons with similar others (e.g., peer supporters) can improve ones' motivation and self-improvement and be a source of hope and inspiration. Peers can be more effective than adults at teaching age-appropriate play and leisure activities (Pierce & Schreibman, 1997, p.207).
- **Empowerment framework**: it aims to increase an individuals' knowledge, confidence and personal skills to activate personal or systemic/community change (e.g., Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010).

Overall, evidence shows that **peer to peer programs at school** (in-person peer support schemes) provide **benefits** to all the pupils involved¹.

Benefits for children with SEN	Benefits for children without SEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Friendships 2. Increased social initiations, relationships and networks 3. Peer role models for academic, social and behavior skills 4. Increased achievement 5. Greater access to general curriculum 6. Enhanced skill acquisition and generalization 7. Increased inclusion in future environments 8. Greater opportunities for interactions 9. Higher expectations 10. Increased school staff collaboration 11. Increased parent participation 12. Families are more integrated into community 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meaningful friendships 2. Increased appreciation and acceptance of individual differences 3. Increased understanding and acceptance of diversity 4. Respect for all people 5. Prepares all students for adult life in an inclusive society 6. Opportunities to master activities by practicing and teaching others 7. Greater academic outcomes 8. All students needs are better met, greater resources for everyone

Peer to peer support helps in the promotion of social bonds that lead to independence and an increase in self-esteem, self-efficacy and in school climate.

Benefits have been also found with teachers and in school environment: special education teachers reported that peer support programs allow them to use their time more effectively which is spent on planning, consulting, and co-teaching (Barnitt, 2005).

In school settings the main goals of peer-to-peer support models are usually the promotion of group cohesion and supportive atmosphere in schools, while at the same time learning in school activities. Considering that **Yard4all** aims to promote more social contact between pupils with SEN and without impairments and to develop innovative learning processes, a peer-to-peer support scheme that can place children at the heart of the process through cooperative group work (Cowie & Wallace, 2000) provides a great opportunity for pupils to work together on structured activities in class or outside class.

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YARD4ALL: A roadmap for the implementation

What are the objectives of this model?

The model aims to provide a roadmap of a peer-to-peer support scheme that helps to implement an [alternative learning environment - school yards](#) – and to create an [innovative learning methodology that puts together children with and without SEN](#).

What are the expected outcomes?

- [Promoting \(positive\) social contact between pupils with SEN and pupils without impairments;](#)
- [Improve a more inclusive learning environment.](#)

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The peer-to-peer support model: Key actions

Peer to peer models should be previously planned and assessed during and after its development and implementation. First, professional staff from the school must have the capacity to be responsible for program supervision, peer and peer supporter selection and training, monitoring of implementation, and evaluation (Community & Organizational readiness).



(Retrieved from *Peers for progress*²)

² <http://peersforprogress.org/resource-guide/starting-a-peer-support-program/>

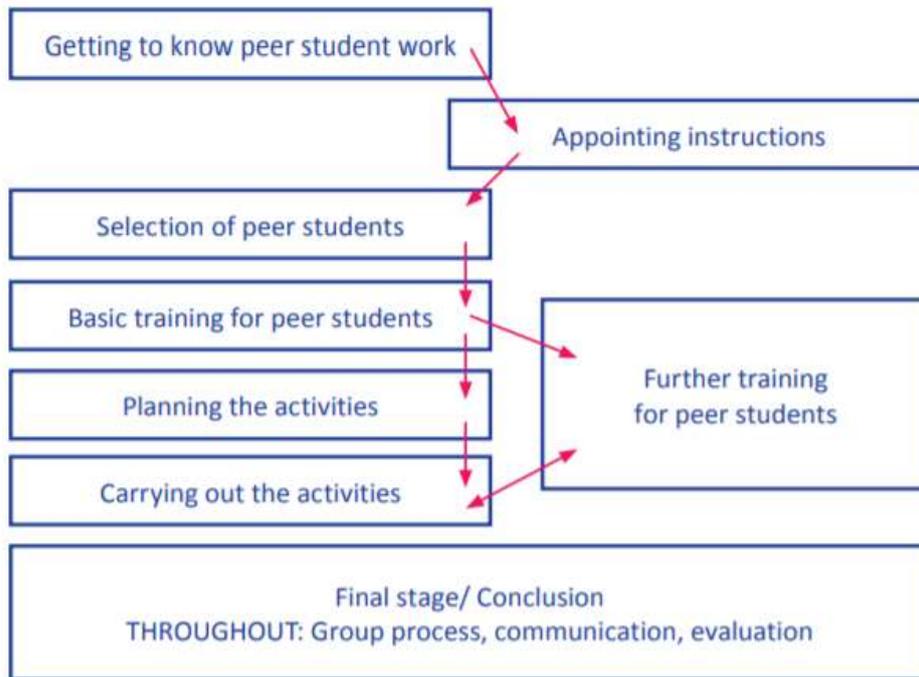
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1. Starting point

- Start establishing who is going to be the coordinator, your team at school and the stakeholders.
- Identify needs and align program goals to meet those needs:
 - How many pupils will be involved with SEN and without?
 - What will be the role of each person/entity along the intervention?
 - What are the facility's needs? (e.g., Accessibility for all children is ensured? Equipment's' needs are listed?)
 - Establish time table for activities/period of time.
- Identify children who are going to be involved as peer supporters – define criteria.
- Define a training period before intervention for peer supporters, and for other key actors and stakeholders.
- Identify who is going to do the supervision of peer supporters and set a training before the implementation.

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Suggested steps for peer supporters' selection & training³:



³ Adapted from Klicksafe

(https://www.klicksafe.de/fileadmin/media/documents/pdf/Ueber_Klicksafe/Youth_Panel/Setting_up_Peer_Support_Programmes_in_Schools.pdf)

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Who are the key actors?

Peer supporters are one of the key actors. What are the qualities of a peer supporter? The literature stresses some interpersonal skills:

Interpersonal skills: • good/active listener • approachable • trustworthy, friendly • kind • patient • role model • good leader • caring • passionate about helping others

Success depends on the quality of the peer supporters; specifically, trained supporters who are enthusiastic, committed and who have strong communication and interpersonal skills are key elements to ensure a succeed implementation.

Make sure that in step 1 goals and a time-bond are settled, barriers and challenges are considered. A S.M.A.R.T. model can help at this point.

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Define goals and action-oriented steps: the use of a S.M.A.R.T. scheme⁴:

Specific	What you want to accomplish? [• Who • What • Where • When • Why]
Measurable	What do we want to measure and how? [use mix method approach – qualitative and quantitative instruments]
Achievable	Goals; barriers/challenges; steps to meet it
Relevant	Relevant goals must be settled: for pupils and for families (Engaging the whole school in planning is important)
Time-bound	Define whether specific goals are achievable before the program is over or over the course of the whole program.

⁴ Adapted from: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Retrieved from: <http://hrweb.mit.edu/performance-development/goal-setting-developmentalplanning/smart-goals>

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2. Delivery/Program implementation

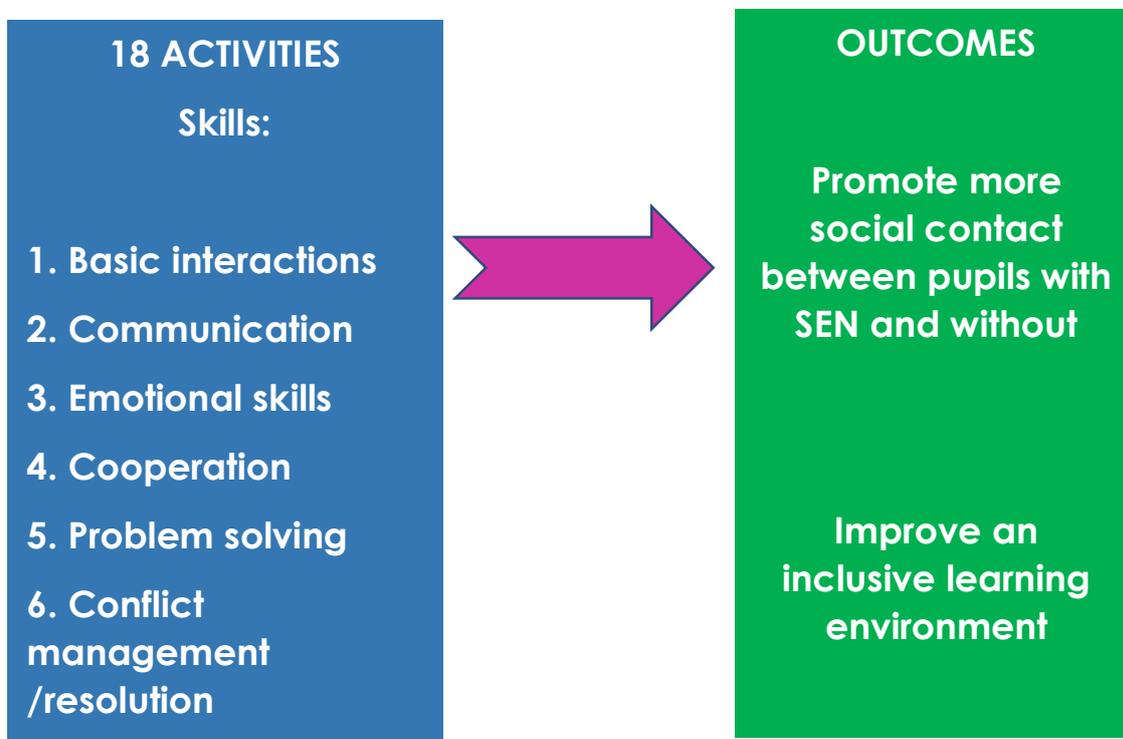
- School-based support groups should not exceed four members;
- The use of strategies from cooperative learning approaches are important:
 - Children should be encouraged to express their opinions and offer solutions to problems they are discussing.
 - A state of positive goal independence is important: group members can understand that they are required to not only complete their part of the work but to ensure that others do likewise.
 - Group members need to understand that they are individually accountable for their contributions to the group, which can emerge when members accept responsibility for completing their part of the task while simultaneously encouraging others to do likewise.

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3. Planning & monitoring

- After defining goals and action-oriented steps, implement the action plan and monitor the process:
 - Intervention is being conducted as planned? What were the adaptations needed?
 - Assess whether specific goals were achieved after an activity, identify obstacles, and reflect on possible solutions.
 - Assess peer supporters, stakeholders and team members' involvement and responsiveness from time to time.
 - Assess participants' satisfaction after each activity.
 - Assess satisfaction with supervision periods.
 - Establish two observation periods in order to monitor the quality of the intervention.
- Plan smaller training periods during intervention for peer supporters and other staff members.
- Settle when peer supporters carry out their duties, settle specific goals and monitor the process.

Considering that the Yard4all project aims to **promote (positive) social contact between pupils with SEN and pupils without impairments** and to **improve a more inclusive learning environment**, this booklet contains a set of **18 activities** that were developed to boost six main skills: basic interaction, communication skills, emotional skills, cooperative skills, problem solving, conflict management. The goal is to promote more social contact between pupils with SEN and without, and to improve an inclusive learning environment.



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Skills and activities

What can we assess?

1. Basic interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit eyeball to eyeball• Use each other's name• Follow instructions• Share materials and tools
2. Communication skills	Verbal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listening to each other,• Take turns• Develop language competences• Asking questions• Initiating conversation• common understanding of terminology• Pay attention to each other Nonverbal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expressing emotions• Recognizing emotions (face, body language)
3. Emotional skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify own emotions• Expressing emotions appropriately• Identify emotions in others• Understanding triggers• Have fun with other children• Know how to relax (self-regulation)

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Skills and activities

What can we assess?

4. Cooperative skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work in pairs/groups• Focus and support on common work and success• Sharing tasks and responsibilities• Gain experience how to help / to be helped• Offer your help / caring• Speak about pleasures and problems• Agree / disagree with an idea (not a person)• Give feedback / evaluate a situation
5. Problem solving skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect and organize information• Asking for help• Know how to analyse a situation (pros and cont) and to make decisions (individually, in pair or in group)• Accept consequences
6. Conflict management/resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore points of views• Negotiate• Compromise• Learn how to evaluate a situation

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Name of the activity	Social competencies						Scientific knowledge (biology, mathematic) or art skills
	Basic interaction	Communication skills	Emotional skills	Cooperative skills	Problem solving skills	Conflict management /resolution	
Step by step in pictures	X	X		X			
What is on my back?	X			X			X
Sailors	X		X	X	X		
Goblin Stickyfinger	X	X		X	X		
Scale of feelings - poisoning words	X	X	X			X	
My turn - beanbag technic	X	X					
What is under our roof?	X			X	X		
Collecting herbs	X			X	X		X
Collecting herbs to use as spices	X			X	X		X
Let's plant seeds together!	X			X	X		X
Gardening for Christmas gift	X			X	X		X
Make a "How to plant inside?" book	X		X	X	X		X
Uses, preparation of herbs and making herbal tea	X			X	X		X
Make a plan of seed starting time	X		X	X	X		X
Recognition of herbs	X				X		X
Tilling your garden	X		X	X	X		X
Using herbs as spices	X			X	X		X
Walk in the garden, introduction of herbs	X	X		X			X

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How to deliver the activities?

- The tools are intended to have a flexible implementation according to previous need's assessment and the group of children involved.
- Activities were thought to be implemented for children between 6-12 years old.
- The tool includes indoor and outdoor activities.
- The main goal is to apply the 18 activities to achieve the expected outcomes or to apply activities focused on specific competencies that need to be improved according to a previous need assessment.

For peer learning to be effective, the peer supporters should be provided with instructions and guidance beforehand on how to effectively teach quality material to others.

Overall, following peer to peer support assumptions, peer supporters must work together in each activity with at least one peer with SEN.

To promote positive interactions, the literature shows that peer support learning is fundamental, but other variables are relevant too: cooperative activities toward common goals; equal status (among peers); support for contact embedded in social norms.

At the end of each activity, it is important to monitor peer supporters' guidance and peers comprehension.

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Name of the activity:	Step by step in pictures	 YARD4ALL
Covered outcomes:	Positive Contact between children Focus and support of common work	
Age:	> 6 years	
Number of participants:	Pairs (2) or small groups (3-4 children/group) – 1 child with SEN in each group	
Duration:	30 minutes (max)	
Type of the activity:	Preparation and organization	
Aims of the activity:	To set the steps of a working process To make easier to structure/organize processes for children with some SEN (e.g., ASD, ADHD, or mental disability, hearing disorder, language disorders)	
Preparation:	Related pictures (e.g., ARASAAC) with magnet or rip tape or pieces of papers and pencils, scissors	
Equipment:	Pictures/ pieces of papers to draw, scissors with magnet or rip tape on backside Small, moveable magnetic table / rip tape table	
Details of the activity:	Children in pairs/small groups build the structure of the following work session: Teacher defines the work session (e.g., plant kohlrabi, pick apples in the garden) Children draw the steps of the work sessions. Children make the order, how the steps follow each other. Pairs or groups make a small presentation about the process and the pictures. Class can discuss about the order or give positive feedback. Variants: - pairs or groups can plan different/parallel processes - pairs/groups show the pictures, other children must define the steps - pairs/groups show the pictures and play the process as a pantomime	

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- pairs/groups play the process as a pantomime and the other children must define it.
 - children can match steps with names – who is responsible for it?
 - children can match steps with tools
- as homework children can make pictures of household processes together with parents (e.g., how to make the dinner /cleaning basin)
-

Processing and evaluation:

Questions for children:

- Hands up! – Was it helpful to make a visual guideline to the process?
- Would you do it again?
- What was the importance of working together with a peer?

Questions for teachers:

- Could the children finish the process successful?
 - How many helps they needed and when? It was helpful for the children?
-

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Name of the activity:	What is on my back?	 YARD4ALL
Covered outcomes:	Positive contact between children Focus on common success Develop language competence / biological knowledge	
Age:	>6 years	
Number of participants:	Pairs (2) – 1 SEN children in each group	
Duration:	30-45 minutes (max)	
Type of the activity:		
Aims of the activity:	Reinforce knowledge acquired Reinforce cooperation	
Preparation:	Choosing and print related pictures of plants/choosing plants from the yard	
Equipment:	Pictures of plants or whenever possible, real plants	
Details of the activity:	<p>Children are working in pairs. The teacher sticks the picture of a chosen plant on the back of the one child. The other member of the pair has to describe the plant without to say the name of it.</p> <p>Variant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it can be played as a twenty question and with the starting “Am I a ... /Have I ...?/Need I ...?” - the speaker has + 1/2/3 taboo-words – these are not allowed to mention <p>It can be helpful to play a test: teachers can give some suggestion how to ask, how to think. Children can answer together to gain experiences.</p> <p>If it is difficult to certain children, teachers can help:</p>	

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- Teacher can ask: "what would you ask from yourself in his/her place?"
 - Teacher can whisper some ideas
 - Other pairs can help to give some suggestion to ask
-

**Processing
and
evaluation:**

Questions for children:

Could you ask good questions?

Did you receive useful answers?

What was difficult/easy to you? Asking or answering?

What was the importance of working together with a peer?

Questions for teachers:

How many help children needed and when?

If it was frustrating, what were the sources? (e.g., Theoretical knowledge or communication skills?)

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Name of the activity:	Sailors	 YARD4ALL
Covered outcomes:	Improving emotional skills: sensitization for blind people or people with visual disability, and communication skills (listening, recognizing the feelings of others), Gain experience how to help / to be helped and problem solving	
Age:	>6 years	
Number of participants:	Pairs (2) – 1 SEN children in each group	
Duration:	30 minutes (max)	
Type of the activity:	Using practical knowledge Developing social skills	
Aims of the activity:	Reinforce knowledge about plants in garden. Trial of roles of supporter and a person who need support. Sensitization for blind people / people with visual problems. Children with SEN can gain experiences to be able to help to others.	
Preparation:	Make safe ways	
Equipment:	1 cloth to cover the eyes / pair	
Details of the activity:	<p>Story: sailors travelled on a boat but after a big storm they were shipwrecked on the Invisible Island, where you cannot see anything. All of them are very hungry and must search for something to eat. On the Invisible Island they are living Lightbeings and they are so kind and friendly that they are ready to help the sailors.</p> <p>One member of the pairs is the Lightbeing, the other member is an outcast, who must wear a cloth to hide his/her eyes.</p>	

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Lightbeings have to navigate sailors to the garden, and they have to find some plants appropriate for cooking/baking / eating raw / make a tee.

Teacher talks with Lightbeings how to navigate another people:

- You can offer your arm, shoulder.
- You have to say turns, staircase, barriers, etc.
- On the staircase you must go in front of your pirate/princess to protect them.
- You must give clear information: you have something in front of you / on your left hand / we have to go 10 steps right.

After the successful harvest children change roles.

Processing and evaluation:

Questions for children:

How did you feel yourself as a blind sailor? Did you feel safe yourself? Why? /How could it be better for you?

How did you feel yourself as a supporter Lightbeing?

Which was more difficult for you? Why?

Your peer was important to you? How?

Questions for teacher:

How children evaluate the activity? How many helps they needed and when? Were the goals achieved? What was the role of peer supporters?

Name of the activity:	Goblin Stickyfinger	
Covered outcomes:	Improve cooperating activities: initiating conversation, sharing tasks and responsibilities, ask for help and offer your help; improve problems solving skills: make decision and accept consequences focus on common success	
Age:	>6 years	
Number of participants:	Small groups (3-4 children/group) – 1 SEN children in each group	
Duration:	30 minutes (max)	
Type of the activity:	Developing social skills and problem-solving skills	
Aims of the activity:	Find a problem-solving method Cooperate for success	
Preparation:	Define an exercise in the garden to do and the necessary tools. Every group will get a toolkit with one or two missing tool(s)	
Equipment:	1 toolkit for gardening / group	
Details of the activity:	<p>Story: last weekend Goblin Stickyfinger moved to the garden and stolen some apples/flowers/... and tools. Now our Goblin gone away but will be back in 20 minutes. We must make our gardening in this time.</p> <p>The goal is that children recognize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - missing tools - they cannot do the work on time <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - they can cooperate: help each other and/or change tools. 	
	Groups can have the same task to do or can have different tasks.	

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If it is necessary, teacher can motivate them to search a solution for the problem or can give some suggestion.

Variant:

Children are not allowed to speak because Goblin Stickyfinger can hear anything and will be back to steal some more things.

Processing and evaluation:

Questions for children:

Did you manage to finish your tasks?

Why was it successful?

What was the importance of working together with a peer?

Questions for teachers:

Was it easy to find a solution?

How can children finish working on time? Some of them did everything or could they do activities together helping each other? What was the role of peer supporters?

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Name of the activity:**Scale of feelings – poisoning words****YARD4ALL**

Covered outcomes:	Improve problem solving skills and conflict management: signing problems between children, prevention of conflicts, express emotions, recognizing emotions
Age:	> 6 years
Number of participants:	Groups with 3-4 elements (1 SEN children in each group)
Duration:	30 minutes (max), during more than once/daily/weekly/monthly)
Type of the activity:	Developing communication skills / conflict management skills/ emotional skills
Aims of the activity:	Give opportunity for children to give feedback in a good way; Support children with behavioral problems.
Preparation:	Choose appropriate tools
Equipment:	Scales and colorful papers/disks, numbers, smileys
Details of the activity:	<p>Teacher talk with children about how to speak during common work. What can we do if we are not agreed? How can we give feedback? How can I give a sign if somebody hurts me?</p> <p>Teacher can make an agreement with children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If we are not agreed, we can use poisoning words. We want to avoid this. - It is hard to stop discussing if it is a conflict. Our goal is to avoid big conflicts and hurt each other. - Children can decide if they use colors / numbers / smileys to sign how they feel the reaction of each other in a discussion. e.g.: scale of colors: blue – green – yellow – orange – red; scale of numbers from 1 to 6

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-
- Children can demonstrate which level has which meaning. Blue is “okay/you're nice”; orange is “you are rude”; red has the meaning “you are frightening / dangerous”.
 - Groups can define poisoning words / behavior – these are not allowed.
 - Groups can collect examples what to use instead of this.
 - Children can give feedback each other during working together.
 - Teachers are there to help – you can ask for help
 - Everybody can make mistakes; everybody can say sorry.
 - If you get a feedback orange or red, 5 or 6, or related smileys you must step back and make a break for 3-5 minutes. Peers can then help you to find a solution to get a blue sign.
-

**Processing
and
evaluation:**

Questions for children:

Is it easier to give feedback / receive feedback this way?

Were you able to stop anger if you get feedback this way?

How peers helped in the process?

Questions for teachers:

Does come in children's mind to use scales to give feedback in a conflict situation?

Could you prevent bigger conflicts? How many in a day/week/month?

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Name of the activity:**My turn – beanbag technic****YARD4ALL****Covered outcomes:**

Improve communication skills and basic interaction: pay attention to each other, respect each other, take turns

Age:

> 6 years

Number of participants:

Small groups (3-4 members/group) – 1 SEN children in each group

Duration:

30-45 minutes

Type of the activity:

Developing communication skills

Aims of the activity:

Teach a method to be safe in big groups: to listen and to be listened.
 Structure communication in groups.
 Give support for children with behavioral and concentration problems.

Preparation:

Choose a topic

Equipment:

Beanbag

Details of the activity:

If children have to speak about a topic in big groups, it can be difficult to listen to each other.
 In each group students have a beanbag – the one who holds can speak.
 Teacher can define how long / children can arrange and use a sandglass. The beanbag must circulate among all the students in each group.
 At the end each group can choose a topic and the exercise is done for the big (class) group.

- Children that wait for their turn must learn how to pay attention to each other (e.g., ask questions at the end).

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**Processing and
evaluation:**

Questions for children:

Could you follow who's turn is it?

Could you wait for your turn?

Could you keep the rules?

How important was to do it with your peers in a smaller group first?

Questions for teachers:

Were children able to keep the rule? How many times did you have to remind children to keep the rule?

Children helped each other? How?

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Name of the activity:

What is under our roof?



YARD4ALL

Covered outcomes: Improving cooperative and problem-solving skills:
Speak about pleasures and problems
Teach a method to evaluate our situation

Age: > 6 years

Number of participants: Small groups (3-4 students/group) – 1 SEN children in each group

Duration: 30 to 60 min (max) – the exercise must be conducted more than once

Type of the activity: Developing social skills

Aims of the activity: Teach a method to speak about problems in an appropriate way

Preparation: Draw a big paper / table with a roof

Equipment: Flipchart / big paper, pencils, and notes papers

Details of the activity: After a work phase / at the end of the month / year / half year it is good to evaluate our common work.

What is under our roof?

Children get 2 papers in different colors: one is for pleasures, one for problems/challenges.

Every child can write many things on papers/do an audio.

Everybody can stick his/hers notes under the roof. On the one side come the pleasures on the other side the challenges or problems.

If children do not identify problems, teachers need to have an example to work with children.

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Children can be asked if they have any idea how to solve problems. Peer supporter can show some tips (learned previously with the teacher).
Exercise can be repeated regularly. We can realize development / changes.

**Processing
and
evaluation:**

Questions for children:

Have we more pleasure or more challenges/problems?

It was important to talk about this in groups. With your peers? How did they help?

Questions for teachers:

Did children formulate real challenges/problems what you realized in group too? Was anything surprising for you?

Did you see a development compared the evaluation before?

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Name of the activity:

Collecting herbs



YARD4ALL

Covered outcomes: Knowledge application and development of cooperative skills, problem-solving skills (working in groups, sharing tasks and responsibilities and make decision, asking for help)

Age: > 6 years

Number of participants: Small groups (3-4 children/group) – 1 SEN children in each group

Duration: 30 minutes (max)

Type of the activity: Theoretical and practical

Aims of the activity: To collect herbs and learn its effects

Preparation: Group creation, task description, preparation of drying place

Equipment: Baskets, strings, pruning shears

Details of the activity:

- Before the task we revise the way of herbs collecting
- Each group collects 5-6 kind of herbs helping each other
- They sort them
- Exercises:
 - to make bouquets
 - tie them together
 - hang up the bouquets to



dry

Processing and evaluation:

- Children & teachers:
- Discussing the experiences
 - Drawing the experiences
 - Talk about helping each other

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Name of the activity:

Collecting herbs to use as spices



YARD4ALL

Covered outcomes:	Gaining knowledge, application, and development of cooperative skills, problem-solving skills (working in groups, sharing tasks and responsibilities and make decision, accept consequences, asking for help)
Age:	> 6 years
Number of participants:	Small groups (3-4 children/group) – 1 SEN children in each group
Duration:	40 minutes
Type of the activity:	Theoretical and practical
Aims of the activity:	Using herbs in the kitchen Education for a healthy lifestyle and tradition
Preparation:	Forming groups, description of task, preparation of equipment
Equipment:	Baskets, pruning shears
Details of the activity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn uses of herbs • Learn the benefits of herbs • Learn the several ways of uses • Watching informative film about herbs and its preparing • Helping each other in collecting herbs in the garden and tasting them

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-
- Exercises:
 - collecting herbs
 - smelling
 - learning folk songs (including herbs



names)

**Processing
and
evaluation:**

Tasks for children:

- Discussing the experiences
 - Drawing the experiences
 - Talk about helping each other
-

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Name of the activity:	<p style="text-align: center;">Let's plant seeds together!</p> 
Covered outcomes:	To develop students' fine motor skills, to increase students' scientific knowledge, to improve social skills by cultivating group work and communication, to share responsibilities, to support for joint decision-making, have fun together
Age:	> 6 years
Number of participants:	Small groups 3-4 students/group (1 SEN children in each group)
Duration:	45 minutes
Type of the activity:	Indoor/outdoor activity
Aims of the activity:	To learn about pests, to protect our seedlings from pests, to teach students about the importance of sustainability, to recycle material that is around home, to learn about seeding and planting process
Preparation:	Collect tubes from toilet paper or paper towel rolls
Equipment:	Scissors, metal box or tray, toilet paper tubes/paper towel rolls, wooden sticks, soil, seeds, markers for labelling,
Details of the activity:	<p>Explanations of the activities should be simple and understandable for all. During the activities group members can help each other.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students prepare the collars together. They cut 5 cm tall pieces from the toilet paper tubes or paper towel rolls to get secure circles from them. One of the students can collect them into a metal box or tray. Students can label the collars/containers, the name of the plant and date of the seeding could be written on them. 2) Students make some 50 mm measuring tools together, that will show the proper depth for planting the seeds.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3) Students fill the small containers with soil together.4) With the help of the measuring tools, students plant two seeds in each container to ensure that each container will have a seedling (in case some of the tomato seeds do not germinate).5) Students place the seedling tray in a warm place where bright light is available.6) Students can make a watering plan- the soil of the tomato seedlings should be kept moist. Students take turns in watering (the best way is to water the containers from below)7) After planting the seedlings outside the collar will protect them against pests.
Processing and evaluation:	<p><u>Questions for children:</u> Did you enjoy the activity? Was it important to work in group? Why? What did you learn about seeding process? What did you learn about pests? How can we make containers from recycling materials? [Strong and healthy seedlings –as the result of the careful work]</p>

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Name of the activity:	Gardening for Christmas gift	
Covered outcomes:	To increase student's creativity, to develop students' fine motor skills, to increase students' scientific knowledge, to improve social skills by cultivating group work and communication, to share responsibilities, to support for joint decision-making, have fun together.	
Age:	> 6 years	
Number of participants:	Small groups 3-4 students/group (1 SEN children in each group)	
Duration:	Different activities have different duration: harvest 40 minutes / drying 2 weeks / making the gift 40 minutes	
Type of the activity:	Outdoor/indoor activities	
Aims of the activity:	To learn about lavender, to experience the process of drying plants, to encourage students to make a handmade gift, to show students the various uses of lavender, to increase student's creativity	
Preparation:	Start to grow lavender plants a year before this activity in the school garden	
Equipment:	Scissors, string, brown paper bag -for drying; Wrapping paper, markers for labels. Ingredients for lavender cookies: https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/lavender-cookies/	
Details of the activity:	Explanations of the activities should be simple and understandable for all. During the activities, peers help each other (e.g. to tie a knot, to wrap the gift) 1) Students first harvest the lavenders as early as they can during the day. They must pick those flower spikes that haven't fully opened yet. 2) Then they remove the lower leaves and bundle four to six branches together, securing with string.	

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- 3) After that they must place them upside down in a brown paper bag, with stems protruding and tie closed.
 - 4) Students should punch small holes along the top of the paper bag for air circulation.
 - 5) Lavenders must be hung in a warm, dark, area for about two weeks, checking periodically until the herbs are dry. Students in the group can take turns checking, making a checking plan which can be followed for each group member (for the SEN member as well). They can hang the plan on the wall of the class.
 - 6) When lavenders are dry, the students pick the flowers and collect them in a basket.
 - 7) Based on the enclosed recipe the students bake lavender cookies in the school practice kitchen. They can make different forms from the pasta.
 - 8) They wrap the cookies in wrapping paper and decorate it with dried lavender

Processing and evaluation:

Questions for children:

What did you learn about the drying process of the plants?

What other ideas do you have of gardening for Christmas? (dried herbs, dried vegetables, strawberry jam)

How else can you make other kinds of lavender gifts? (lavender sugar, lavender-scented pillows)

It was important to work in groups? Why?

[Delicious, creative and sustainable gifts for Christmas/other special festivity day].

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Name of the activity:	Make a “How to plant inside?” book	
Covered outcomes:	To work together, to develop scientific knowledge, to increase art skills, to share responsibility, to learn how to organize information, to improve social skills by cultivating group work and communication, support for joint decision-making, have fun together	
Age:	>6 years	
Number of participants:	Small groups (3-4 members/group)	
Duration:	45 minutes X 6 times (depends on the growing season of the plant)	
Type of the activity:	Indoor activity	
Aims of the activity:	To learn about the life stages of plants, to examine the basic needs of seeds and plants and the influence of environmental factors, to have a hands on experience planting seeds, to make observations and predictions,	
Preparation:	Buy the seeds, the soil, collect paper cups,	
Equipment:	Seeds, soil, twelve-pack containers, squirt bottles with water, garden journals, rulers, wooden sticks and markers for labelling, squirt bottles with water,	
Details of the activity:	<p>Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students collect different kinds of warm season plants which need a head start inside. Then children vote to select 8 plants they want to grow. 2) Write the name of the plants on different paper. Place them upside down on a table. Divide the class into groups (4-5 kids). Each group should pick 2 plant names. 3) Create seed related to math problems: the tasks can be of different difficulty (addition, subtraction, multiplication SNI*), percentage calculation (typically developed peers**) 	

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*The class plant 8 types of seeds. They work in 5 groups. Each group puts the seeds in a 12-compartment container. Each group planted two kinds of seeds in half and half ratios. How many seeds are planted in total?

** The class plant a total of 8 seed types (tomato, pepper, eggplant, pumpkin, cucumber, melon, bean, corn) two in each student group. There are 5 groups and each group places the seeds in a 12-pack container in a ratio of half to half. If you put 3 seeds in each part of the container, what percentage of the seeds planted will have tomato seeds?

- 4) Encourage the kids to create seed related math problems themselves.
- 5) The groups have to collect information about their plants and start to write a gardening journal.
- 6) They should estimate the depth to plant seeds and work together to plant, water and label their seeds.
- 7) In their journals students should record the process and, based on their observations they have to describe the most important events (germination, shoot appearance, growth, light requirement, water requirement, special characteristics). They can add their seed related math exercises as well.
- 8) Students also have to draw pictures about the seed, the sprouts, the seedling and the plant itself.
- 9) Journals can put together to form a "How to plant inside" book, which contains useful information about the process when a seed growing into a plant and seed related math tasks to develop math skills as well.

Through this activity each member of the group will find the task that he/ she can perform with responsibility. Group members need to work together in several areas to achieve the result they wanted. This led to equity within the group.

Processing and evaluation:

Questions for children:

- 1) Did you enjoy the activity?
- 2) What did you observe and learn about the growing process of a plant?
- 3) Was it important to work in groups? Why?

[Strong and healthy seedlings –as the result of the careful work.]

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Name of the activity:	Uses, preparation of herbs and making herbal tea	
Covered outcomes:	Gaining knowledge, application and development of cooperative skills, problem-solving skills	
Age:	> 6years	
Number of participants:	Pairs (1 child with SEN and 1 without)	
Duration:	2x30 minutes	
Type of the activity:	Theoretical and practical	
Aims of the activity:	Making and tasting herbal tea Education for a healthy lifestyle	
Preparation:	Group creation, description of task, preparation of equipment	
Equipment:	Kettle, jug, herbs, cups	
Details of the activity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the uses and making of herbal tea • Learn the benefits of herbs • Learn the several ways of uses • Watching informative film from herbs and its preparing • Helping each other in the making herbal tea 	

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-
- Exercises:
 - boil water
 - soak herb
 - tasting



**Processing
and
evaluation:**

Tasks for children:

- Discussing the experiences
 - Talk about helping each other
 - Drawing the experiences
 - Filling in a test
-

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Name of the activity:	Make a plan of seed starting time	
Covered outcomes:	To increase students' scientific knowledge, to increase mathematical skills, to develop students' skills of being able to collect and understand information, to learn how to organize and use information to improve social skills by cultivating pair work and communication, support for joint decision-making, have fun together	
Age:	>6 years	
Number of participants:	Pairs (1 child with SEN and 1 without)	
Duration:	60 minutes	
Type of the activity:	Indoor activity, collecting information, interpretation.	
Aims of the activity:	To know about the proper times for starting plants from seed; To learn about different types of plants (early autumn crops/summer crops); To be able to take into consideration maturity, length of growth season, variety, zone, and time of last expected frost.	
Preparation:	Buy different types of seeds	
Equipment:	Computer with internet, paper, pen/pencil, seed packets	
Details of the activity:	<p>Steps:</p> <p>Make a list of your seeds, and draw a chart (name, picture, direct sowing/indoor sowing, date of sowing, depth of sowing, seed spacing, length of germination time, date of starting to harden the plant, date of transplantation, growing height, additional needs*)</p> <p>Read the seed packet directions and group the seeds: early autumn crops/summer crops</p>	

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Count the seed starting time: seeds need to be started four to six weeks before the date of the last frost. Their starting times are calculated by taking the date of the last frost and subtracting the days until transplant. The Last Frost Date can be checked from the meteorological reports. The seed pocket provides information on how many weeks.

*Collect more information about the plants (daily sunlight, soil, soil moisture level, water, fertilizer)
Do together a diary/portfolio

Processing and evaluation:

Questions for children:

- 1) Did you enjoy the activity?
- 2) What did you learn about the different plants?
- 3) What did you learn about interpreting the seed pocket directions?
- 4) Can you teach it for the other students at school?

[Based on the completed plan, planting of different plants can be worked out]

Name of the activity:

Recognition of herbs



YARD4ALL

Covered outcomes:

Knowledge application and development of cooperative skills, problem-solving skills

Age:

>6 years

Number of participants:

Pairs (1 child with SEN and 1 without)

Duration:

30 minutes

Type of the activity:

Practical

Aims of the activity:

Recognize the known herbs

Preparation:

Group creation, description of task, collect herbs

Equipment:

Baskets, several herbs, blindfolds

Details of the activity:

Steps:

- Before the task we collect several herbs from the garden
- Put them in separate baskets
- Children work in pairs, examining herbs one by one while helping each other
- Exercises:
 - inspection of the various kinds of herbs with closed eyes (blindfolds)
 - then with open eyes
 - they discuss their answers

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**Processing and
evaluation:**

Questions/tasks for children:

- Discussing the experiences
 - Drawing the experiences
 - We check how many plants they know one by one and together
 - How important it was to work in pairs?
-

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Name of the activity:	Tilling your garden	
Covered outcomes:	Increase students' scientific knowledge, improve social skills by cultivating pair work and communication, support for joint decision-making, having fun together	
Age:	> 6years	
Number of participants:	Pairs (1 child with SEN and 1 without)	
Duration:	30 minutes (depending on the size of the garden)	
Type of the activity:	Outdoor activity	
Aims of the activity:	Preparing the soil for planting plants and sowing seeds Learn about when and how to till the garden	
Preparation:	Make an action plan with the steps of the activity which students can follow	
Equipment:	Thermometer, spade, shovel, hoe, rake, wheelbarrow,	
Details of the activity:	<p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Testing the soil: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dry enough? (pick up a handful and squeeze it, if it falls apart ☹ if it stays in a ball ☺) • measure the temperature if it is $\geq 15^{\circ}\text{C}$ ☺ 2) Clean the surface 3) Tilling or digging your soil (students can start from the different ending) 4) Loosening the soil with organic material (compost). Children can carry the compost with a wheelbarrow, on the way back one of them can sit in the empty wheelbarrow and the other can push her/him then they can swop. 	

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- 5) Mixing the compost and the soil: one student puts the compost and the other digs it.
 - 6) Smoothing the surface (students can start from the middle of the place and go toward the edge)
-

Processing and evaluation:

Questions for children:

- Did you enjoy the activity?
- What did you learn about soil?
- Can you teach it for the other students at school?
- How important it was to learn in pairs?

Examine the soil:

- 1) Is it clear enough?
 - 2) Isn't it compacted?
- How can we improve soil which is compacted?
-

Name of the activity:	Using herbs as spices	 YARD4ALL
Covered outcomes:	Gaining knowledge, application and development of cooperative skills, problem-solving skills	
Age:	>6years	
Number of participants:	3-4 children per group (1 child with SEN)	
Duration:	2x30 minutes	
Type of the activity:	Theoretical and practical	
Aims of the activity:	Using herbs in the kitchen Education for a healthy lifestyle	
Preparation:	Group creation, description of task, preparation of equipment	
Equipment:	Baskets, pruning shears	
Details of the activity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn uses of herbs • Learn the benefits of herbs • Learn the several ways of uses • Watching informative film from herbs and its preparing • Helping each other in making salad 	
	Exercises:	

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-
- collecting vegetables and basil...)
 - preparing salads
 - tasting



herbs (parsley,

**Processing
and
evaluation:**

Tasks for children:

- Discussing the experiences
 - Talk about helping each other
 - Drawing the experiences
-

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Name of the activity:	Walk in the garden, introduction of herbs	 YARD4ALL
Covered outcomes:	Relaxation and development of cooperation skills, problem-solving skills	
Age:	> 6years	
Number of participants:	4 children per group	
Duration:	30 minutes	
Type of the activity:	Practical	
Aims of the activity:	Getting to know the herbs	
Preparation:	Group creation, description of task	
Equipment:	Outdoor shoes, basket	
Details of the activity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group goes out into the garden helping each other • Children look around the beds in the garden, looking for the bed of herbs • The group observes the various kinds of herbs • The children share their previous knowledge • The children learn how to inspect a herb 	

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-
- The child who is able to collect the of herbs and gives it to others
 - They look, touch, rub and smell the



useable parts
plants

**Processing
and
evaluation:**

Tasks for children:

- Discussing the experiences
 - Drawing the experiences
 - Drawing herbs that they saw
-

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Piloting the activities: case studies per country

CASE STUDY 1 – ROMANIA

Participants

- 1 coordinator
- The team was formed by five teachers for the primary grades.
- 206 children participated in the piloting; 20 of them have emotional difficulties, attention deficits, behavioral disorders; some of them were not native.

Procedures

- The roles were clear for each participant in the project. There was a training period with all the team. Each teacher had their own training session with the children one day before the starting of the activities, although training continued during the activities as well. Teacher explained to their students the purpose of the activities, the details of each activity, the needed facilities and materials and the period of implementation of the activities in the school programme.
- Each teacher chose a set of activities according to the needs assessment, which were mainly: basic interaction, emotional skills, cooperative skills, scientific knowledge, problem solving skills, conflict management.

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The teachers have chosen the following activities:

- Scale of feelings-poisoning words;
- Let's plant seed together!;
- Using herbs as spices;
- Step by step in pictures;
- What is on my back ?;
- My turn-beanbag technic
- What is under our roof?
- Collecting herbs (effects);
- Recognition of herbs;
- Sailors;
- Collecting herbs to use as spices;
- Make a plan of seeds starting time
- Make a "How to plant inside?" book
- Uses, preparation of herbs and making herbal tea
- Make plan of seed starting time

Peer supporters were selected from a list with children owning the following qualities: good interpersonal skills (good/active listener, approachable, trustworthy, friendly, kind, patient, role model, good leader, caring person, passionate about helping others.

Results

Activities took approximately 30 minutes.

"In the Romanian educational curriculum, the bond with the nature has a very small part. These activities gave all the participants a higher key of motivation in life, made them feel useful and belonging to a greater cause. They saw each colleague as a valuable member of the community, and everyone has their place in a common project".

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“It was joy, it was laugh and it was about working together and seeing that they manage life via the plants they care for”.

All the groups mentioned the first level of cooperation and all the children benefit from being together, sitting eyeball to eyeball, knowing each other by name, sharing the materials and paying attention to each other.

“It felt good. It felt like being relatives and sharing a common goal”.

Peer supporters asked for help for few times, but they were able to manage the main challenges that they needed to face. This created a strong foundation for a future cooperation in more standardized situations: learning conditions, testing.

The communication skills improved. Many children have chosen a positive, non-violent way of verbal communication. This proved to be a very valuable ability in peer supporters but also in those who used to have attentional challenges. They considered a good listener as a person who shows respect to another. They took turns without any problem, they initiated respectful and efficient conversations and they discovered the power of belonging to a group with a common purpose. Their vocabulary enriched and the knowledge regarding plants and their use, increased.

Children with emotional challenges were invited to ask questions and to initiate conversations. This made things interesting for all their colleagues, especially the peer supporters showed an increased patience and a caring attitude.

The children using another native language went very curious in exchanging opinions and expressing emotions. They used mimics and pantomime, and “this was very relaxing for all the children involved”. In this situation, the rules needed to be explained several times so all the children align to the same purpose and to respect the phases of the project.

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“Peer supporters’ best quality was their level of emotional intelligence”: They expressed their emotions in appropriate ways, and this made a model to be followed by their peers. When something went more difficult, they felt the change in their colleagues, and they intervened in supporting them.

“All children were able to relax and to emotionally support each other. The main obstacle came from the children with attentional issues”.

“One of the best consequences of working in pairs or in groups is about focus and support on common work and success”.

A very good example of offering help and receiving help was the activity named “Sailors”: The children gained a very useful experience regarding giving feedback to someone, sharing tasks and responsibilities.

A great deal for all the children was agreeing/not agreeing with a situation and not a person. This was an important part of nonviolent attitude in communication.

In developing problem-solving skills, it seems, however, that “there were some difficulties regarding how to analyze a situation (pros and cons) and how to make decisions (individually, in pair or in group) and to accept the consequences”.

But, overall, in all the activities children needed to negotiate, to compromise and to learn how to evaluate a situation. “This made them listen actively, communicate efficiently and follow the instructions in order to be efficient and to involve all the children in the activities”. The peer supporters were present and active, always available.

The children with SEN (or with any kind of difficulties in achieving success) considered them a real help and sincere friends.

Overall, peer supporters provided informational support and emotional support.

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These activities brought children together and even the children with SEN proved themselves to be useful for the project. This increased their self-esteem and their motivation of being involved in future projects.

A significant aspect appeared in this project was aligning the curricular and extracurricular objectives.

We have avoided the totalitarian type of organizing the practices and a new democratic view led and stimulated a decent behaviour and tolerance towards those with different opinions.

The whole coordination followed some specific objectives regarding self esteem, the competences of working together and helping each , developing a new horizon of knowledge.

The children participated actively in all the activities, they manifested responsibility and they fulfilled their tasks.

The educational activity implied two types of activities which were highly valuable for us: the preparation /the coordination and the evaluation.

This project brought new aspects in increasing the image of our school in the community. We became more visible and our interest in nature, plants, a healthier life gained attention and respect from the community and the stakeholders.

Every activity respected all the steps in preparation, coordination and evaluation and it was considered to be a success.

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CASE STUDY 2 – PORTUGAL

Participants

- School A: 56 pupils: 49 without SEN; 7 with SEN
- School B: 24 pupils: 11 with SEN; 13 without SEN
- 1 coordinator in each school
- 3 teachers from school A
- 4 teachers from school B

Procedures

A training period was conducted with teachers and students (peers).

The teachers have chosen the following activities:

- Let's plant seed together!;
- What is on my back ?;
- My turn- bean bag technic

Results

Pupils with and without SEN worked together. The students had a good interaction even for pupils with some autism diagnosis. There were no conflict situations.

Some students with SEN had difficulty describing the picture of a plant stick in the back (in the activity 'What is on my back?'), but the peer without SEN gave extra help. Teachers reported that their pupils were happy while doing their tasks.

In the activity "Let's plant seeds together" peer supporters were very responsible and understanding for their peers with SEN. Teachers reported that those students have

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developed some skills in each task. They learnt how to use some tools and also have had the chance to experience different activities in the garden. The peers considered that the work performed was good concerning the difficulties of some SEN students. Some of the students didn't like to interact so much, but they show their emotions by the joy expressions while performing the tasks. The peers understood well how to carry on their tasks and they considered that it was a very positive experience.

Overall, peer supporters provided informational support and emotional support. Activities took approximately 30 minutes.



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CASE STUDY 3 – FRANCE

Participants

- 19 pupils (6 pupils in some activities, in others 8, 9 or 12)
- 2 teachers (the special needs teacher and another teacher)
- 1 coordinator

Procedures

The teachers have chosen the following activities:

- My turn
- Sailors

There was no garden in the so the activities were adapted (e.g., Sports equipment for obstacles).

Results

The Sailors activity was useful for a first contact between children who did not know each other. Pupils with SEN spontaneously preferred to be guided.

Primarily 'physical' assistance (hand-holding guidance), and oral assistance. When necessary, verbal communication to signal the action to be taken was used (e.g., turns right, left or lifts foot).

Some SEN students did not want to participate particularly in the My turn activity; The teacher had to encourage students with BEP to speak up.

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In sailors activity children respect the turn to speak and respect each other. Overall, children trusted each other. Very good cooperation, and problem solving through communication.

The My turn activity took 45 minutes whereas Sailors took 30 minutes.

“Overall, Sailors activity was much more invested by the students with BEP. In the activity My turn students with BEP felt restrained from the speaking that was asked of them. They seemed impressed by the ease of speech of their non-BEP peers”.



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CASE STUDY 4 – HUNGARY

Participants

- 31 pupils (24 with no-SEN; one SEN pupil in each group)
- 1 coordinator

Procedures

The peer supporter received specific instructions before implementation of each activity; those instructions are mainly as follows:

- giving help concerning communication/cooperation;
- paying attention to the details;
- communicating that helps to think;
- paying attention to each other;

The teachers have chosen the following activities:

- Step by step – with pictures: observing the development of the plant
- What is on my back?
- Sailors
- Goblin stickyfingers – finding missing objects with the help of each other
- Collecting herbs
- Walking in the garden, presenting the plants
- Using herbs - making tea and salads
- Making gifts
- My turn
- Other: Planting tomato seeds using DIY plant collars! - sowing, planting, plant care; How to plant indoors

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Participants were distributed in groups of 3 to 4 children.

Results

The activity Planting tomato seeds using DIY plant collars! - sowing, planting, plant care; How to plant indoors was conducted 8 times, 45 minutes each.

“Walking in the garden, presenting the plants” and “My turn” were conducted twice, 30 minutes each time. The other activities took between 30-45 minutes.

Most tasks were carried out in small groups and in pair work, which adequately developed different areas of the children's social skills. Basic interaction, motivation, eye contact, and paying attention to one another could be felt at every point of completing the tasks. Communication skills were also developed by all the activities. The bean bag technique could be used at any time to discuss experiences. This developed language skills, as well as cooperation and emotional skills. During the playful tasks, children intuitively pursued to find solutions to problems. All types of activities offered the chance to develop cooperation skills. Planning and implementing procedures strengthened skills of thinking and logic.

“It was the first-grade juniors who took part in the implementation of the program (...) Pupils already knew one another”.

“The most enthusiastic pupils were the supporters. We experienced that the members of the groups became as enthusiastic as the supporters themselves while doing the activities thanks to having success and to the experiential tasks”.

The playful sessions were particularly suitable for the 7–8-year-olds.

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Time spent outdoors in nature was very useful, though it proved to be insufficient.

It must be stressed that SEN pupils were remarkably motivated by the tasks and experiential activities themselves. The closeness of nature and the joy of creation fascinated them, and several times they were able to support and strengthen each other when completing a certain task.

The viewpoint that the role and person of the peer supporter and the supported fellow child are not necessarily permanent, but may as well change depending on the objectives, tasks and the composition of the community, furthermore that not always the same children require more support, meets more fully the principles of inclusion and inclusive community education.



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CASE STUDY 5 – SPAIN

Participants

- 10 pupils (2 with SEN)
- 2 teachers
- 1 coordinator
- Other school staff and a father
- 1 peer supporter

Procedures

The peer supporter received some information before implementation.

The teachers have chosen the following activities:

- Sailors

Results

The activity took one hour.

The peer supporter provided informational and emotional support.

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APPENDIX

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Do you want to know more?

Theoretical background on

- ***Facts and Figures on Disability***
- ***“Impairment” and “Disability” are not interchangeable concepts***
- ***What do we mean by “special educational needs”?***
- ***Where do attitudes towards persons with disabilities come from? Specific features and correlates***
- ***Intergroup contact: What impact on the prejudice towards persons with disabilities?***

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YARD4ALL

Theoretical background

Facts and Figures on Disability

Persons with disabilities comprise one of the most expressive minority groups in the world. In fact, according to the most recent data estimates made available in *The World Report on Disability*, published in 2011, about 15% of the world population of all age groups lives with some form of disability, a proportion corresponding to over one billion people (World Health Organization & World Bank, 2011; p. 29). Moreover, this report also states that it is strikingly evident that these figures increased about five percentual points since the last monitorization undertaken by World Health Organization (WHO) in the 1970's, a time when the estimates indicated a proportion of 10% of the world population pertaining to this population group (WHO & WB, 2011).

Concerning Europe, it is estimated that around 80 million people are disabled, what implies that over 15% of the continent's total population is part of this minority (European Commission, Communication No. 636 European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, 2010).

At this point, it is very important to state a very significant caveat regarding all these data. The instruments used to gather them reflect different stances in what concerns theoretical and methodological assumptions on the conceptualization and operationalization of central concepts in this domain such as "impairment", "disability" or "handicap". Hence, it is not possible to fully compare all disability data available from several sources worldwide. In this sense, more recent estimates on disability express the theoretical framework proposed by the International

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Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), a major paradigm shift from the dominant (bio)medical model, to a bio-psychosocial perspective, which, by no-means is the only, nor the ultimately unanimously preferred, alternative to the latter.

Therefore, it is not difficult to anticipate several issues related to the conceptual definition of relevant terms in this field of study – including those already identified above - which assume paramount importance, as they present significant methodological implications and challenges, which are also relevant to the present project, and that will be briefly discussed below.

Given this project's objectives, scope, and target population, it is especially important to know the figure estimates on disabled children in Europe, more relevantly the ones in the 6 to 10 years old age group.

In what concerns that specific sub-population within the people with disabilities group, data concerning it suffers from the same conceptual and methodological limitations already stated, which leads to strikingly disparate estimates regarding the prevalence number of children with disabilities. In this sense, the *World Report on Disability* points to the worldwide existence of 93 million children (5,1%) between the ages of 0-14 years with a "moderate or severe disability", as published by the *Global Burden of Disease* (WHO, 2008; cited by WHO & WB, 2011), an inferior estimate comparing to the 150 million figure presented by the *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF, 2005; cit. by WHO & WB, 2011) - which, however, includes all children under the age of 18, a broader age group, while, on the other hand, there is no information referring the degree of severity of the disability associated.

On the other hand, various other broad international studies data also suggest the existence of several indicators of social inclusion/exclusion of disabled persons, which in turn point

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to lives market by experiences of prejudice, discrimination and social inequalities (e.g. CRPG & ISCTE, 2007b; Eurofund, 2013). Moreover, it has also been shown that other markers of social differentiation as age, gender, ethnicity or social orientation may lead to additional hardships (e.g. CRPG & ISCTE, 2007b; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2013). In fact, the Third European Quality of Life survey (EQLS; 2011), undertaken among the EU27 countries, has showed people with limiting health conditions or disabilities face significant disadvantages in what concerns autonomy, treatment with dignity and respect, social support and social inclusion. In addition, according to another research by Eurofound (2013), being a woman, a senior citizen, having a limiting health condition or being severely disabled, or unemployed, meant to have experienced a significant negative impact in self-reported general health, which also led to a rise in the likelihood of reporting material deprivation. Additionally, during the recent world economic crisis period, the standard of living conditions of persons with disabilities in Europe have significantly worsen, especially when compared to those of the population without disabilities; furthermore, the poverty rate substantially rose between 2008 and 2010 in several European countries, and more markedly affecting this specific fringe of the population (EQLS, 2011; Eurofound, 2013).

All these indicators suggest this group is particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, which in turn is frequently associated to material deprivation. Moreover, they also generally point to the already recognized two-way causal relationship between poverty and disabilities (e.g. WHO & WB, 2011). In addition, data also suggests disabled people from all age groups are especially prone to inequality/inequity experiences when compared to their non-disabled peers. Moreover, such differences may be boosted by *disablism* (Emerson et al., 2009; cited by Emerson, Madden, Graham, Llewellyn, Hatton, & Robertson, 2011), defined as prejudice, stereotyping or "institutional

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discrimination" against people with disabilities (Council of Europe, n.d.). Hence, the available collection of data also points to an interaction between impairments and social contexts that detrimentally impact the lives of persons with disabilities.

In fact, such interaction's possible negative impact has been recognized in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF; 2001), a document where World Health Organization acknowledged, for the first time, the role of environmental factors, such as attitudes, relationships, services and policies, in causing disability - and hence with potential to also significantly impact individuals' health and wellbeing (e.g. WHO & WB, 2011). This publication proposes a universal bio-psychosocial model of all human functionality, being disability conceptualized in a continuum, which mirrors research stemming from several academic domains and, to some extent, as well as the demands presented by disabled persons civil rights movements (WHO & WB, 2011). However, societies have still not completely abandoned the medical model's perspective and assumptions, which remains very influential, while addressing the context and the range of social conditions and environmental factors that contribute to provision these people's effective needs according to their particular health conditions or impairments is still widely forgotten (Emerson et al., 2011).

Experiences of ablism are transversal to many contexts, including health and educational settings, whose professionals may also hold negative attitudes towards people with disabilities (Chubon, 1982), what might impose barriers to equality, and, ultimately, hinders people with disabilities from fully participating in society.

Furthermore, as Emerson et al (2011) state, *disablism* also indirectly fuels the increased risk of exposure to socio-economic disadvantage of this minority group, thus accounting for 20 to 50%

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of the risk of worse mental and physical health among children with intellectual disabilities (Emerson et al, 2011). In addition, *disablism* entails even higher barriers and impediments to a full participation in mainstream society for those with severe disabilities, in situations of major dependence or with complex needs, who face very significant limitations in their abilities to communicate, to interact or to participate in conventional day to day life and prevailing contexts, for what are frequently seen as a burden (Freyhoff, et al., n. d.), a perspective coherent with the medical model of disability which entails very orthodox normalcy standards. In addition, the literature has also shown that attitudes towards different disability groups may vary (Chubon, 1982), with more negative attitudes directed to the more severely disabled individuals (e.g. totally blind or deaf), or to those whose appearance or behaviour more deviates from “normal standards” (Block & Yunker, 1982).

As a conclusion, one may state that professionals working with individuals with disabilities are information and services gatekeepers, for it is possible that their negative attitudes may lead to restrictions in service options and alternatives, which in turn might hinder educational or rehabilitation services' quality and outcomes (Paris, 1993; cited by Chan et al., 2009).

We shall briefly discuss the reasons behind this matter of affairs, but before, it is important to define central concepts in this scientific domain, while also clarifying their differences, given their relevance to this project operationalization.

A much necessary remark: “Impairment” and “Disability” are not interchangeable concepts

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As it became apparent above, several central concepts in this domain such as “handicap”, “impairment”, or “disability” faced changes throughout time and inevitably reflect the socio-historical, cultural contexts and their most prevalent values and reference frameworks.

Traditionally, their conceptualizations focused the 19th century forged medical model, whose assumptions impose “patterns of normality”. As such “disability” is seen as a personal tragedy and an individual failing associated with “defective”, or “impaired” minds and bodies (Barnes & Mercer, 2011a). It is not surprising then, it privileges interventions which are exclusively individually centred, and based in the recognition of his or her special needs and inaptness, what in turn deems justifiable the creation of specialized and specific services, while also favouring institutionalization mechanisms, under the power and authority of credentialed professionals (e.g. CRPG & ISCTE, 2007b, 2007c). Hence, the stigmatization, prejudice and exclusion of persons with disabilities is promoted as their integration in the mainstream services and social structures is regarded as impossible (CRPG & ISCTE, 2007b), thus disregarding any individual, social, attitudinal and contextual barriers (e.g. CRPG & ISCTE, 2007b, 2007c; Barnes & Mercer, 2011a, 2011b).

The civil rights' movements of the 60's and 70's of the last century, in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, promoted people with disabilities' self-advocacy movements against the medical model's disability orthodoxy, which in turn, much contributed to the emergence of the social model of disability. This framework adopts a diametrically opposite stance to the prevailing model, as it focuses on the relationship between the individual's body features, including impairments of any type, and the conditions of the social context he/she lives in. Alternatively, then, the social model states that the society imposes an experience of disability to those who have an impairment, whether temporary or permanent, because it fails to

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encompass human diversity. This perspective imposes a radical shift: from the focus in the individual “incapacity” as the source of dependency and marginalization, to the fundamental role social, economic, cultural and politic “disabling barriers” in hindering this minority group from effectively participating in society, and in denying their citizenship rights (CRPG & ISCTE, 2007b; Finkelstein, 1980; DeJong, 1981; cited by Barnes & Mercer, 2011b). Furthermore, its theoretical assumptions also allow to surpass the erroneous association between “impairment” and “disability”, as established by the medical model, stating the possibility that a person with an impairment may not experience disability, depending on the societal level of adjustment to include functional diversity (CRPG & ISCTE, 2007b,c). In sum, the social model thus conceives disability as a social construction problem and not a personal attribute (e.g. Barnes & Mercer, 2011a, 2011b, WHO, 2001).

The biopsychosocial model of disability has more recently been presented as a reconciliation framework between these diametrically opposed frameworks, being adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO), a stance that became clear through the publication of the ICF in 2001. Within this framework, “disability” (as well as “functioning”) results from the interactions between health conditions (diseases, disorders, injuries) and contextual factors, including external environmental factors (e.g. social attitudes, architectural characteristics, legal and social structures and climate), and internal personal factors (e.g. gender, age, coping styles, social background, education, overall behaviour pattern, character, among others influencing the experience of disability by the individual; WHO & DGS, 2004).

Hence, the biopsychosocial model views “disability” as a decrement in each functioning domain; it is an umbrella concept that includes impairments, limitations in activity and restrictions

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in participation, thus indicating the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition), and his or her contextual factors (environmental and personal). Furthermore, “disability” can occur to anyone throughout the life cycle and be either permanent or temporary (WHO & DGS, 2004; CRPG & ISCTE, 2007b). Although aiming at being a reconciling stance between the two others, it is not, however exempt from criticism, mainly due to the use of negatively connoted vocabulary (e.g. limitations in activity), which is contended to still significantly reflecting the medical model.

Naturally, and in addition to the cultural, social and political idiosyncrasies of a given time and place, all of these frameworks also left marks in several academic domains research, what not surprisingly is also reflected in the instruments forged under each of them with the objective of measuring the incidence and prevalence of impairments, handicaps and disabilities, while also leading to difficulties in results interpretation, while comparability is frequently impossible.

What do we mean by “special educational needs”?

The concept of “special educational needs” (SEN) was used for the first time in 1978 by *Warnock Report* and was defined as special educational provision that all children with or without disabilities could be need during their school learning career. The concept is not restricted to children with disabilities and any child may need help in their learning. The group of children with

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SEN includes children with visual, hearing, speech and physical disabilities, as well gifted children, and children with socioemotional difficulties (Warnock, 1978).

A child may have one or more special educational needs and SEN can take different forms such as “(i) the provision of special means of access to the curriculum through special equipment, facilities or resources, modification of the physical environment or specialist teaching techniques; (ii) the provision of a special or modified curriculum; (iii) particular attention to the social structure and emotional climate in which education takes place” (Warnock, 1978, p.41).

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) makes the concept of SEN more inclusive by referring that special educational needs must include “disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups” (UNESCO, 1994, p.5). This definition means that children and youth with disabilities or learning difficulties should be considered as having SEN (UNESCO, 1994).

The concept of SEN is a term used to refer to students with learning disabilities and the interventions they require. A child may need special education if he/she have “significant limitations in terms of activity and participation, in one or more domains of life, due to a functional and structural changes, of a permanent nature, resulting in continued difficulties in terms of communication, learning, mobility, autonomy, relationship interpersonal and social participation (...)” (Decree-law n.º3/2008). Special education refers to a “specialized services” (Decree-law n.º3/2008) in the educational, medical, therapeutic, social, psychological fields (Correia, 2008, cit. by Martins, 2009) “to promote the potential of biopsychosocial functioning” (Decree-law n.º3/2008) with the goal to prevent, reduce or suppress the student's problem (Correia, 2008, cit.

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by Martins, 2009). In other words, SEN refers to a child-centred pedagogy that is characterized as adapted learning to the child's needs. This type of pedagogy must be accessible to all children (UNESCO, 1994).

The group of children that are included in special education is the group of children that have high probability of having a biological etiology, innate or congenital problems that have been or should be detected early and should have an early educational prevention. This group of children require additional human recourses and specialized materials. Typical cases of these situations are changes in sensory, such as blindness and deafness, autism, paralysis cerebral, Down's syndrome (DGIDC, 2008).

In the group of students that need special education, *blind students or with severe visual limitations* have non-existent or fragmented a distorted visual information, which limits interaction with the environment and may exist delays in motor, cognitive and social development. Teachers have the challenge to create diversified situations that stimulate curiosity and the exploration of the environment and interaction with others. It is important to stimulate all other sensory channels and teaching students how to use them efficiently. Students with severe visual limitations needs an intervention that involves encouraging the use of vision, helping them to give meaning to the images they see. Blind students or with severe limitations needs adaptations in the curriculum such as in the organization strategies classroom (e.g., provide verbal information, read aloud while writing on the board, alert the student for changes in the layout of the classroom) and in pedagogic materials (e.g., materials printed in large format). These students need to include in the curriculum visual training, braille learning, ICT, orientation and mobility, activities of daily living (DGIDC, 2008).

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Students with *autism* have a qualitative deficit in social interaction, communication and pattern of repetitive and stereotype behaviours, interests, activities (DGIDC, 2008). These students may have the following behavioural manifestations: difficult in social integration with poor visual contact; frequent repetition of the speech (echolalia) and some indifference with regard to maintaining relationship with other people; repetitive interests for some objects and subjects; difficulties in the creative process; unusual behaviours (balancing) shaking some parts of the body; inappropriate emotional expressions and manipulation of the adults around them for their own benefit (Izquierdo, 2006). In school, these students need a structured teaching/learning (1. Physical structure, 1.1 time organization, 1.2 space organization) that provide clear and objective information routines, a calm and predictable environment, daily tasks that student can perform. The creation of structured teaching/learning situations minimizes the student's difficulties and provide security and confidence, helping students to maximize their strengths (DGIDC, 2008).

Overall, special education needs can also be related with *gifted children*. Gifted children are described as children who have the potential to develop significantly beyond what is expected of their age in different domains such as intellectual, academic, artistic, social, motor and mechanic. Schools have the challenge to provide more stimulating lessons and other opportunities for gifted children. Some examples are giving the child more challenging work in class; matching their personalities and learning styles with teachers matching them with older or younger pupils with similar interests or abilities to enhance the learning of both; developing independent negotiated programs of studying led by a pupil's interest and skills (ANEIS, 2017).

Special education needs are a combination of different factors and could be temporary or more prolonged in time. Despite the combination of factors that makes a child need special

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education, schools have the responsibility to provide appropriate responses to the needs of each child (Madureira & Leite, 2003). Students with SEN may require the use of additional support, such as (i) curricular adequacy (e.g., classroom organization, teaching materials, activities, teaching-learning strategies, evaluation tools, curriculum content: the introduction of Braille writing), (ii) the introduction of ICT to increase efficiency in the performance of academic tasks and to develop skills, (iii) personalized pedagogical support, (iv) therapeutic support (DGIDC, 2011; Henriques, 2012). To achieve an inclusive education, it is necessary to guarantee material and human resources that promote the autonomy of each student. The entire educational community is fundamental in all process of needs evaluation and intervention plan. The success of education for all requires a collaborative work between community-school-family.

In 2018, the Portuguese legal framework referring to children with SEN, for example, has changed regarding the principles and standards of inclusion, defined as a process that aims to respond to the diversity of needs and potentialities of all and each student, through increased participation in learning processes and in the life of the educational community (No. 1 of Article 1, Decree-Law 54/2018 of 06 July,). Thus, the publication of the Decree-Law 54/2018 of 06 July: (i) abandons the systems of categorization of students, including the "category" of special educational needs; (ii) abandons the model of special legislation for special students; (iii) establishes a continuum of responses for all students; (iv) focuses on educational responses and not on categories of students; (v) envisages the mobilization, in a complementary way, whenever necessary and appropriate, of resources from health, employment, vocational training and social security (Direção Geral da Educação, 2018). These changes seek to have an impact essentially on the way the school looks at the students and how it organizes itself in order to meet the needs of all of them.

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Where do attitudes towards persons with disabilities come from? Specific features and correlates

Eagly and Chaiken's 2003 umbrella definition of "attitude" is particularly relevant in the literature and is still quite influential (Lima & Correia, 2013). According to those authors, given that an attitude is not directly observable, it constitutes a hypothetical construct. In this sense, it can then be considered a latent variable, an inference, in what concerns the psychological processes that might explain the relationship between a given situation and subsequent observed behaviours. More simply put, Eagly and Chaiken define "attitude" as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (1993; cit. by Eagly & Chaiken, 2007; Lima & Correia, 2013).

Moreover, those authors contend that an attitude comprises three fundamental features that together predispose an individual to evaluate an attitude object in a certain way, and that will be briefly presented below.

Evaluation concerns all possible types of evaluative responding, including overt or covert responses, cognitive (beliefs and thoughts), affective (emotions and feelings) or behavioural (intentions and overt behaviour). These evaluative judgements have a direction or valence (favourable / unfavourable), as well as an intensity (weak / strong), as well as a certain degree of accessibility, which refers to the higher or lower probability of being activated automatically when the individual meets a determined attitudinal object. This last feature is related to the attitude's strength, the way it was learned and to the frequency with which it is elicited (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007; Lima & Correia, 2013). Moreover, evaluative responses can be either consciously or unconsciously experienced by the individual (e.g. Eagly & Chaiken, 2007).

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Those evaluations refer to **specific entities** or **attitude objects**, which may be present or can be remembered upon presentation of an object's evidence or proxy (e.g. Fazio, 1995; cited by Lima & Correia, 2013). These attitude objects can also present specific features they can be abstract (e.g. an ideology), concrete (e.g. bugs), refer to a particular individual (e.g. Barack Obama), or be collective (e.g. Syrian immigrants).

Lastly, being a relatively stable psychological tendency throughout time, attitudes **reflect an interior state based in the individual's past experience** with determined attitude objects that in turn lead to a tendency to respond more or less positively or negatively to it (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007; Lima & Correia, 2013).

There are three other very close constructs which are very close to that of "attitude": prejudice, stereotype and discrimination. The first, prejudice has been frequently defined as a negative attitude; however, more recent perspectives define prejudice as "an attitude or orientation towards a group (or its members) that devalues it directly or indirectly, often to the benefit of the self or own group", and independently of its valence (Spears & Tausch, 2015, p.442); moreover, Nelson (2006), also states that it is also possible to hold positive prejudice towards the ingroups one belongs to.

In what concerns **stereotypes**, these are conceptualized as a cognitive structure comprising knowledge, beliefs and expectancies regarding a determined social group (Pendry, 2015), or individual members of that group, particularly those contents that promote the differentiation between groups (Stangor, 2008).

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Finally, **discrimination**, can be defined as the negative action an individual exhibits based on prejudiced evaluative judgements (e.g. Allport, 1954; cited by Chan, Livneh, Pruett, Wang & Zheng, 2009).

Where do attitudes towards people with disabilities come from?

Regardless of the attitudinal object, the mechanisms underlying attitude and prejudice formation and change are the same. However, there are some idiosyncrasies particular to the prejudice towards people with disabilities (PWD).

One of the most influential reviews on these issues was conducted by Livneh (1988, 2012), and aimed at revealing the main roots and correlates of negative attitudes or prejudices towards PWD. However, the source's categories proposed overlap frequently, thereby evidencing their complex nature. Thus, additionally to the general mechanisms of attitude formation, negative attitudes and prejudice towards people with disabilities roots and correlates include (Dunn, 2015; Chan et al., 2009; Livneh, 1988, 2012) several aspects we shall briefly present below.

Social and cultural conditioning processes contribute to the emergence of negative attitudes and to stigmatization because of any significant deviation from dominant and pervasive social and cultural norms, standards and expectations regarding features such as physical attributes, personal productiveness and achievement, socioeconomic and health status.

Childhood and current situation influences point to causes which probably are rooted both on early childhood experiences - including parenting practices that influence the child's beliefs and value systems construction in what concerns health, illness and what is considered normal - and on those related to current situational and interactional experiences with PWD: fear that

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association with these individuals may be interpreted as mirroring one's own psychological problems or of being contaminated while interacting with a disabled person.

Anxiety-provoking unstructured social situations with people with disabilities are often ambiguous and unfamiliar in what concerns the nature and implications of disability, and are thereby anxiety provoking, mostly when social rules and protocols for adequate interaction are not (well) established, as it is quite frequent. Lack of contact and exposure to people with disabilities is hence a very important factor on the origins of negative attitudes and prejudice towards people with disabilities. Given the importance of contact with PWD in the formation of attitudes towards this group, it will be more specifically developed below.

Prejudice-eliciting behaviours. Some behaviours that PWD may overtly express such as hostility, dependence, insecurity or assistance need, may facilitate the maintenance and strengthen prejudicial beliefs and feelings towards them, even if they are not accountable for those actions. Moreover, the media might also promote PWD's devaluation by portraying them negatively.

Disability-related factors. Attitudes' negativity also depends on factors such as 1) *perceived severity* - subjectively less severe disabilities perceived more positively; 2) *visibility and cosmetic involvement* - highly visible disabilities or greater cosmetic involvement are more negatively rated; 3) *contagiousness* – the more contagious a disability is recognized to be, the more negative the triggered reactions from nondisabled people; and, 4) *predictability* – temporary/curable disabilities are more positively evaluated than permanent.

Shared responses to minority groups. As with other minority groups, people with disabilities are often marginalized because of particular features, especially disability visibility (e.g. an evident

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physical difference) or visible recognition of its presence (e.g. distinct body movement, white cane), which elicit negative stereotypes, prejudice and discriminatory behaviour from members of majority groups. These regularly encourage isolation and segregation of persons with disabilities from the rest of the population. (e.g. Safilios-Rothschild, 1970; cited by Livneh, 2012).

Aesthetic (-sexual) aversion, is frequently prompted by visible disabilities, while triggering feelings of repulsion and discomfort when individuals without disabilities. Negative attitudes thus emerge from reactions including aesthetic aversion, anxiety invoked by threats to one's body image or integrity and guilt, and from more cognitive determinants, such as worries, concerns and misconceptions regarding the nature of disability and impairments.

Fear of death thoughts. The loss of a body part or of any physical function may trigger anxiety when one meets a disabled person because those circumstances are symbolically linked to one's Ego and death and might, thus acting as reminders of own mortality, hence leading to negative affect, avoidance and withdrawal from further contact with people with disabilities.

Hierarchical attitudes towards disability. Literature has long been pointing to the existence of a hierarchy of disability acceptability among nondisabled people (e.g. Chubon, 1982; Chan et al., 2009), including professionals working with this minority group, such as teachers, counsellors and hospital staff (Chubon, 1982). This hierarchy has also been supported by more recent research (e.g. Chan et al., 2002). In this sense, it has been consistently observed that physical disability is more positively perceived than mental disabilities, and intellectual disability to be more favourably judged than psychiatric disabilities (e.g. Chan et al., 2002; Chan et al., 2009). In sum, it has been generally shown we can consider the existence of a continuum between a physical disabilities'

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pole and a cognitive and mental-health related disabilities' pole, where attitudes become progressively more negative the closer to the latter (Chan et al., 2009; Dunn, 2015).

Moral beliefs regarding disability. The sin-punishment-disability triad psychodynamic mechanism has also been extensively reported (Chan et al., 2009). Many individuals' see disability as a punishment for sins or other evil behaviours perpetrated by the person with a disability or by someone in his or her family, which in turn leads to beliefs of dangerousness, triggering fear, and ultimately to the rejection of PWD (Chan et al., 2009; Dunn, 2015).

Personality variables. Personality correlates such as high levels of authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, rigidity, narcissism, anxiety and aggressiveness, as well as low self-esteem, ambiguity intolerance or lack of body satisfaction have been found to be associated with more negative attitudes towards PWD, and may, therefore, foster their development.

Demographic variables. Variables such as people without disabilities', older, with less educational levels and socioeconomic status have previously been found to be especially relevant determinants of negative attitudes towards PWD (e.g. Livneh, 2012). Nevertheless, inconsistencies have been observed, with some reviews and recent research pointing in the opposite direction (e.g. Chubon, 1982; Yucker & Block, 1986; Pruettt & Chan (2006)).

Intergroup contact: What impact on the prejudice towards persons with disabilities?

Following several international legislations, for instance *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), and, more recently, the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD; 2006), ratifying countries

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legislation and policies have been changing over time to ensure that any such rights are accounted for.

However, in what more specifically refers to the rights of persons with disabilities, effectively implementing the policies created under that legislation is not an easy task, mainly because prejudices and discrimination are not easily tamed, as several statistical data indicators have shown over time. People with disabilities lives are significantly marked by experiences of social exclusion that detrimentally impact their wellbeing and, ultimately, quality of life.

Even if it is true that many EU countries, and others throughout the world, developed legislation and policies attuned with international standards regarding social inclusion, truth is this ambitious and much necessary goal is still not completely attained.

This matter of affairs is easily observed in several societal sectors, including those contexts where children are inserted in a day to day basis, mainly educational settings. In fact, it is not enough that children with disabilities share the space with children without disabilities for prejudice and discrimination to cease. What literature shows is that is this minority group - as well as other minority groups - are especially vulnerable to bullying and to other social exclusion experiences, which have a significant negative impact in these children's physical and psychological health and academic performance, thus also impairing future prospects of inclusion as they get older.

In this sense, effective child inclusion goes well beyond sharing the same mainstream educational space, something that today is very well established scientifically, as data gathered throughout the last 50 years have revealed to be quite robust. In this sense, Gordon Allport's seminal work is inescapable in what concerns the understanding of intergroup relationships within which prejudice and discrimination arise, as well as to the development of intervention strategies

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to surpass them and its detrimental effects(ref.). According to a social psychological perspective, the mere exposure to a typically excluded outgroup, as is the case of people with disabilities, is not enough to stop prejudice and discrimination against them. Gordon Allport 1950 framework regarding attitudes and prejudice proposes optimal conditions under which the probability of positive contact between ingroups and outgroups would allow for a reduction in prejudice, and thus, also to less discrimination, and to an effective social inclusion (see Oskamp, 2008): long-term contact; cooperative activities toward common goals; equal status; support for contact embedded in social norms.

In a very recent *Educational Psychologist* special issue on social inclusion, several authors review the most relevant literature concerning the barriers members of minority groups face concerning social inclusion, including children with disabilities.

The social and educational lives of students are very intimately connected; hence it is not surprising that those who are socially excluded by peers are negatively impacted (also) on their academic achievement (Juvonen, Lessard, Rastogi, Schacter, & Smith, 2019).

Also according to these authors, peer acceptance and having friends are two fundamental conditions for one to thrive fully as an individual, and also to achieve a better school performance, even though being socially included is not a guarantee of academic excellence; nevertheless, the counterpart situation, namely being a target of social exclusion, is very detrimental to their academic engagement and performance. Hence, for these authors, the search for the reasons underlying marginalization must shift from those marginalized to the specific setting conditions where they live in present, more precisely, how the student body composition (the "who") and organizational instructional practises (the "how") contribute to the minority lack

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of inclusion. These authors perspective puts both teachers and school administration in particularly critical positions in what concerns facilitating social inclusion. Some activities conducted with children need to be focus on positive interactions.

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Reading suggestions

Find more:

<http://peersforprogress.org/resource-guide/models-of-peer-support/>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603107/Children_and_young_people_s_mental_health_peer_support.pdf

<https://www.eluceoeducation.org/sen-gifted-children>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/works-reduce-prejudice-discrimination-review-evidence/pages/5/>

Read more:

Oskamp, S. (Org) (2008). *Reducing prejudice and discrimination*. Sussex: Psychology Press.



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Checklist

Starting point		 When?
Who is going to be the coordinator, your team at school and stakeholders?		
Roles are clear? (e.g., coordination; implementation; supervision of peer supporters; other)		
Peer supporters: criteria defined/selected		
How many pupils will be involved with SEN and without?		
Identify needs and align program goals to meet those needs		
Facility's needs and equipment		
Stablish timetable for activities/period of time.		
Define training periods before intervention, during intervention and for different actors		
Evaluation: M&A procedures		
Obstacles/challenges previously identified		

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Define and monitor: Fill in your S.M.A.R.T. model

S.M.A.R.T.	
<p>SPECIFIC What you want to accomplish?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Who What Where When Why</p>	
<p>MEASURABLE What do we want to measure?</p> <p>How you want to measure?</p>	
<p>ACHIEVABLE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Goals Barriers/challenges Steps to meet it along the implementation</p>	
<p>RELEVANT (goals)</p>	
<p>TIME-BOUND Which goals are achievable before the program is over ?</p> <p>Which goals are achievable over the course of the whole program?</p>	

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If you want to read more about peer-to-peer support models, have a look at these links:

- <http://peersforprogress.org/>
- <https://www.klicksafe.de>
- <https://www.amaze.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Final-Amaze-peer-support-literature-review-April-2018.pdf>

Scientific papers:

- Boud, D., Cohen, R., & Sampson, J. (1999). Peer Learning and Assessment. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 24(4), 413-426.
- Boud, D. (2001). Making the move to peer learning. In Boud, D., Cohen, R. & Sampson, J. (Eds.) (2001). *Peer Learning in Higher Education: Learning from and with each other*, London: Kogan Page (now Routledge), 1-20.
- Bulte, C., Betts, A., Garner, K. & During, S. 2007. Student teaching: views of student near-peer teachers and learners. *Medical Teacher*. 29(6), 583-590.

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