



# European Workshop

Towards an inclusive school: addressing  
respect and celebrating diversity

Santander, Spain. 16 to 19 April 2016

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Trainers:  
**Mercè Bernaus, Spain**  
**Carmen Siurana, Spain**

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# Focus

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This workshop was organised by the SEPIE (Spanish Service for the Internationalization of Education) and the Education Authorities of the Autonomous Region of Cantabria. The event was focused on inclusion. The 3-day workshop was centred on the methodology of the Pestalozzi Programme: learning by doing.

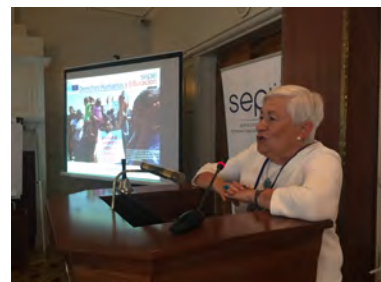
16 International participants from 11 countries and 14 national participants, primary and secondary teachers, along with teacher advisers, took part in this workshop, hosted at Palacio de la Magdalena in Santander.

## Day 1 -Inclusive education: framework

The opening session started with a warm welcome from Alfonso Gutierrez Morillo, DG of Innovation and Educational Institutions at the Education Department of Cantabria.

Pablo Martin, Director of the SEPIE, focused on the need to strength synergies in education between the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

Afterwards, Mercedes Cruz Terán, Head of the Unit of Technical Guidance and Attention to the Diversity at the Education Department of Cantabria, focused her presentation on "Policies for inclusive education at national and regional level". The key issues of her presentation were the principles of quality, equity and equal opportunities. These principles should be understood as offering each individual opportunities according to their needs and abilities versus giving everyone the same opportunities. To this end, she highlighted the need to make use of nearby resources, external advice and customized teaching. She also addressed the concept of inclusion viewed as progress towards integration, and the need to provide an essentially practical approach when dealing with inclusive policies. In this regard, the proposal focused on three principles: the customization of the educational offer; the participation and responsibility of the entire educational community; and the direct action from and by the school. The implemented education measures in Cantabria have focused on activities such as team building in early care stages, guidance in the field of intercultural issues and orientation on behavioural disorders.



Fuencisla Alberto Cuesta, Coordinator of the Unit of Technical Guidance and Attention to the Diversity at the Education Department of Cantabria, explained the implementation of their action plans at regional level.

## The Council of Europe

Andres Ajo Lázaro, Director of the School Education Unit at the SEPIE, delivered a presentation on the "Principles and values of the Council of Europe", focusing on the mechanisms, initiatives and resources launched by the Council of Europe in order to disseminate these principles through education. Beatriz Tourón Torrado, National Liaison Officer for the Pestalozzi Programme, explained the regulations and activities of the Pestalozzi program connected to teacher training in all signatory countries of the European Cultural Convention.



After the plenary sessions, Mercé Bernaus and Carmen Siurana, trainers from the Pestalozzi program, tackled the practical part of the workshop. Classroom strategies to address specific inclusion measures were put into practice. These strategies were taken from the practical approach of the Pestalozzi methodology: ice-breaking activities, evaluation trees, open space, and learning by doing. All participants contributed with their previous experience in this field, producing a fruitful exchange of good practices.

## Day 2 - Good practices

As continuation of the practical workshops with the trainers, the program for the second day also included a visit to the CEIP Maria Sanz de Sautuola, a pre-primary and primary school, which is a reference institution for its inclusive policy. After a brief presentation on the school history and the actions plans aimed at inclusion, participants took active part in some lessons and shared lunch with the community in the school dining room. The cultural program included organized visits to the Sobrellano Palace in Comillas, and to the medieval town of Santillana del Mar.



## Day 3 – Inclusive methodologies

The activities for the third day were initiated by Andrés Ajo Lázaro, Head of the School Unit at the SEPIE, who approached the possibilities of creating projects for an inclusive school through the Erasmus+ Programme, launched by the European Commission.

Other activities carried out during this last day were the “Values Market” and “Methodologies for inclusion”. The synergies among participants were consolidated through the working groups and the creation of collaborative networks.



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## Conclusion

The event concluded with a certificate presentation ceremony. Participants expressed their satisfaction with the workshop and the activities carried out and expressed how inspired and motivated they felt by the Pestalozzi philosophy. This workshop provided an international frame of reference for individual efforts, highlighting the similarity of issues and challenges which teachers across borders face. It is hoped that this workshop will contribute to the continuous development of teachers and the dissemination of the Pestalozzi philosophy.

