



Empowering Teachers across Europe to deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity related Career Challenges

Newsletter no. 1/2021

Welcome to *HAND IN HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity Related Career Challenges* (HAND:ET) biannual project newsletter!

HAND:ET Consortium will use this path to share news about the project as well as the scientific and other related information on the topic of the project.

About the project

HAND IN HAND: Empowering teachers across Europe to deal with social, emotional and diversity related career challenges (HAND:ET) is a **policy experimentation** project (under the Erasmus + program, Key Action 3) that brings together 11 partners from six countries. The project focuses on teachers by supporting their development of **social and emotional competencies** as well as their **diversity awareness** (SEDA) to empower them for the complexity of everyday working life with increasingly diverse classrooms and enable them to deal flexibly with new challenges. It also puts the teachers' well-being at the center by highlighting how developing SEDA competencies simultaneously fosters self-care for teachers, giving a central role to the voices of teachers. Moreover, project aims to contribute to the **formation of a comprehensive EU teacher policy** (by providing EU and country-specific recommendations), addressing contemporary structural problems of the teaching profession in an evidence-based long-term way.

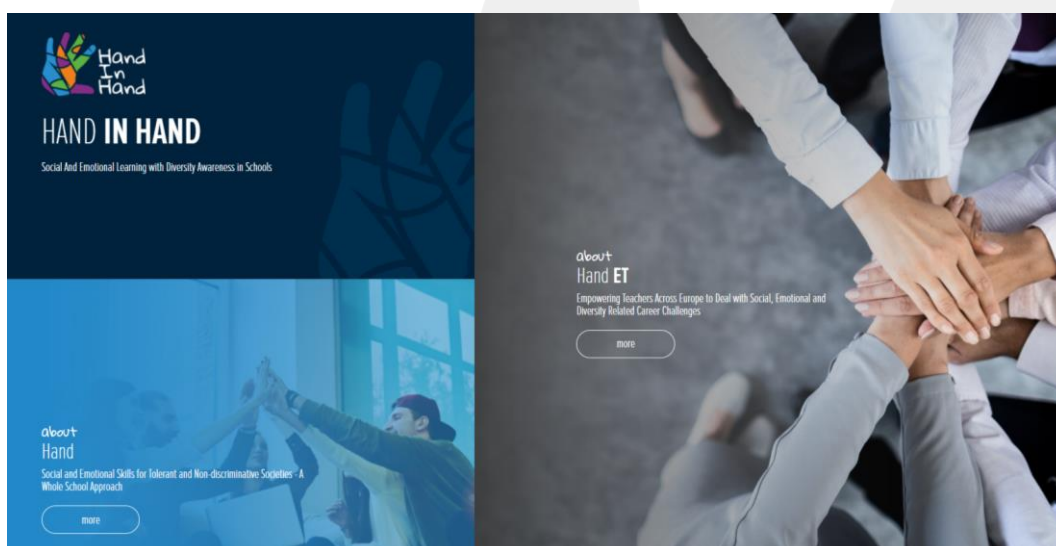
HAND: ET builds on the lessons learnt and insights from *HAND IN HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies – A Whole School Approach* which was recognized as one of the ten most relevant EU projects addressing teachers' and school.

The project started in March 2021 and will last for three years (until March 2024).

News

HAND: ET is now live!

We are happy to announce the (re)launch of the official HAND:ET project web page and [social media](#). The [web page](#) consists of the original [HAND in HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies - A Whole School Approach](#) project subpage where you can find all previously published materials and tools and new [HAND IN HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity Related Career Challenges](#) project subpage where you will find all recent news, publications and materials relevant for the project and connected to the topic of empowering teachers in dealing with social, emotional and diversity related career challenges. Moreover, you can stay updated on the recent project developments via official project [Facebook page](#).



Evolution of the understanding the need for social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA) in schools

HAND:ET project coordinator Ana Kozina, Scientific Associate at [Educational Research Institute](#), shared her insights on the evolution of the project idea from the initial Hand in Hand project to current HAND:ET project as well as on the importance of the topic of empowering teachers and social and emotional competencies and diversity awareness (SEDA) in schools.

The context and specific circumstances during which both project ideas were formulated was elaborated, lessons learned in the initial Hand in Hand project that provided significant input and deeper understanding of the need for the central role of teachers in the project were explained as well as the deepened policy dimension of the HAND:ET project.

You can read the full article [here](#).

Learning activities

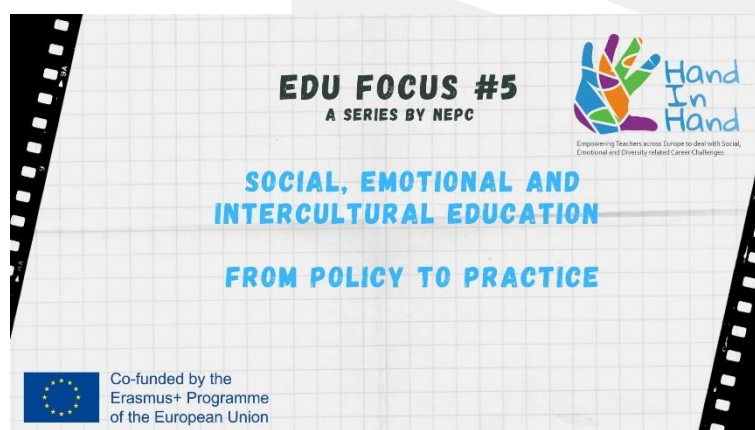
Focus on social, emotional and intercultural education in Edu Focus

Early in September and right on time for the next school year we have (re)opened the topic of social, emotional and intercultural education (SEI). [Educational Research Institute \(ERI\)](#) team member Urška Štremfel was part of the [Edu Focus](#), video series hosted by [Network of Educational Policy Centers \(NEPC\)](#), HAND:ET partner, where she presented the mapping study Policies of social, emotional and intercultural education in six countries (Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, The Republic of Moldova, Russia and Slovenia).

The need for this mapping study originates from the *HAND in HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies - A Whole School Approach* project, that was implemented from 2017 – 2020 and on which this project was built on. The project among other important policy experimentation results revealed a lack of integrated and coherent policies supporting the realization of SEI education in participating European Union member states¹. Taking into consideration the cultural conditionality of SEI education it confirmed the need for further research in the field.

Aim of the mapping study was to develop an in-depth understanding of national policy initiatives at the system, school and classroom levels, which promote and mainstream SEI education in schools in selected NEPC countries. The results are consistent with scarce existing international mapping studies in the field. The mapping reveals the similar challenges of establishing coherent national system for supporting SEI education.

The video is available [here](#) and you can read the full publication [here](#).



¹ Štremfel, U. (2020). The embeddedness of social, emotional and intercultural/transcultural learning in European and national educational policies and practices. In A. Kozina (ed.), *Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe - Relationships matter*. Berlin: Verlag Dr Kovač.

Norm critical pedagogy: Revealing the power embedded in “normal”

We have continued with the learning activities in the October as well! As a part of the HAND in HAND: ET project, [Mid Sweden University](#) hosted an online webinar *Diversity, norm critical approaches and intersectionality*, focusing on the conceptualisation of diversity in society with a special focus on the diversity in the classrooms. The webinar was open for the members of Consortium as well as the interested parties.

[Dr. Lovise Haj Brade](#), researcher at Mid Sweden University, expert in the field of diversity gave a lecture on diversity, intersectionality and dimensions of diversity such as gender, socio-economical background, functional variations and ethnicity.

Lecture consisted of the short introduction about the legal framework regarding inclusion and diversity in Swedish schools and legally acknowledged and not acknowledged grounds of discrimination in Sweden. Furthermore, norm critical interventions in ‘diversity/equality work’ were elaborated and the concept of intersectionality was explained. Main conclusion was that “in order to challenge the structural inequality we have to address not only the marginalisation of ‘other’ position but also how the normative position is reproduced. Intersectional approach means to consider how “categories” are co-produced and constitute one another and it is necessary in order to avoid reproducing normative assumptions about what some category is”.

After the lecture, a discussion followed debating the presented ideas and connecting them to the HAND:ET project activities.

Events

Social and emotional competencies in the context of support mechanisms

Ana Kozina and Tina Vršnik Perše from [Educational Research Institute](#) were invited to participate at the International Conference [Resetting education and training for the digital age](#) where they moderated the workshop on the importance of social competencies for emotional well-being with a title [What is the role of teachers in supporting emotional wellbeing and nurturing social skills?](#). Conference took place on 8th and 9th November and in the workshop the challenges faced by the teachers and the important role social and emotional competencies can play when looking for a support mechanisms were addressed.

Publications

Throwback on the knowledge base from the HAND project

As the HAND:ET project activities are taking its momentum, we would like to remind you on the rich and valuable source of knowledge on the SEI competencies from the *HAND IN HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies – A Whole School Approach* project. [Here](#) you can find the full library with publications that were result of the project, from a review catalogues on SEI Programmes for [School Staff](#) and [Students](#), [Catalogue for the Assessment of Social, Emotional, and Intercultural Competencies](#) and finally the book „[Social, emotional and intercultural competencies for inclusive school environments across Europe: Relationships matter](#)“ that brings in the insights from the three-year learning process of the project.

Additionally, more than a few scientific articles were also published sharing the knowledge on the topic of the SEI competencies and project results:

- [Social, emotional and intercultural competencies: a literature review with a particular focus on the school staff](#)
- [Students’ Social, Emotional and Intercultural Competencies and their Development in School Settings](#)
- [Empathy and Classroom Climate as Predictors of Student’s Well-Being: An International Pilot Study](#)
- [Assessing Social, Emotional, and Intercultural Competences of Students and School Staff: A Systematic Literature Review](#)
- [Predictive Value of Empathy Components for Types of Aggression in The School Setting: A Cross-Country Comparison](#)