Social and Emotional Learning
Quality Education for the Twenty first Century

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Outline

- Do we need SEL?
- Does it work?
- How does it work?
- What is the way forward?
- Are there any side effects?
Reality is changing for many children today

- Many children come to school with a heavy baggage
From a life of tests to the tests of life

“We need to prepare our children for the ‘tests of life’ rather than burdening them with a ‘life of tests’”

(Elias, 2010)
Tests of life: Self/Others
But does SEE work?
Cefai, Bartolo, Cavioni, Downes (2018)

Strengthening Social and Emotional Education as a core curricular area across the EU

A Review of the International Evidence
Methodology

METHODOLOGY:

- Review of international research, including in-depth analysis of 14 major reviews, additional reviews, studies, and research reports, amongst them several from Europe (screened for quality and reliability)
- Report focused on studies, particularly reviews of studies, of universal school-based SEL, but excluded targeted interventions, evaluations of health promotion, citizenship
**IMPACT**

- Increase in SE competences
- Increase in prosocial attitudes and behavior
- Increase in academic learning
- Decrease in negative behaviours: anti-social behavior, delinquency, anxiety and depression
- Modest effect sizes (0.17 to 0.57) but comparable/ higher than those of other psychosocial interventions
- Effective across school years, especially in early years, and across geographical setting (urban/rural), SES or ethnicity
- Effects maintained from 6 mths to 3 years
A framework for effectiveness
- Need for a *balanced curriculum*, focusing on both interpersonal and intrapersonal domains

- Citizenship, health promotion, physical education, prevention of violence and bullying, moral/religious education, overlap but **do not substitute** SEE
- SEE needs to be integrated as a core in the curriculum (curricular and cross curricular) - not add on (SAFE) – need for increased time on the timetable

- There is **not yet sufficient common focus** on SEE as a core curricular area
SEE needs to be ‘caught’ through relational, contextual supports (‘climate’)

- Teachers need education to improve their socio-emotional competence - empathy, conflict management (eg. discrimination, authoritarian teaching)
- We need to start early:
  - SEE more effective in early years
  - early SEE related to happy and productive adults (Jones et al, 2015)

- SEE offers strong economic and financial returns on investment (Belfield et al, 2015)
Need for active student voice in learning and in design and production of material

De Paoli et al (2018) – secondary students did not feel they received adequate SEE
- SEE is also about adults: parents’ active engagement—sharing responsibility for SEE

- emancipatory approach, not top down
SEE is also about teachers’ education and own wellbeing.

SEE leads to more competent, confident, satisfied teachers.

Need for framework of key SE competences in ITE.
Children with additional SE needs need extra support

Universal + targeted interventions
Quality implementation key to effectiveness (adequate planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation)

Need for sensitivity and adaptation to context: balance between fidelity and adaptation
A whole school approach

Quality Implementation

- Targeted interventions
- Curriculum

Intra- and inter-personal competences

Quality Adaptation

- Staff competence & wellbeing
- Parental engagement & education
- Early Intervention
- Student Voice
Some recommendations

- EU (2018) included SEE as one of the key competence areas (*personal, social and learning*)
- Universal SEE as a mandatory core content area in the curriculum (*curricular, cross-curricular*)
- National, culturally responsive, Learning Standards
- ITE key SE competences; adequate teacher education
- Bottom-up approach (flexibility, empowerment, local adaptability) coupled with quality implementation
- Whole school, systems approach (*family, community, non formal education*)
Things to avoid

- **One size fits all** paradigm (national/regional standards, formative assessment)
- Wholesale importation from alien cultures (eg Western bias for individualism, extraversion, assertiveness)
- Instrument of social control and conformity (individuality and culture flattened through prescribed personality packages promoting ‘ideal’ employee)
- Placing burden of responsibility on ‘victims’ to overcome disparity, without systems to address structural sources of poverty and exclusion