

# THE CONCEPT OF DIVERSITY: THE WHY, THE WHAT AND CAN WE MEASURE IMPACT?



ELC 2018  
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2pm-3.15pm  
Johore 3

# Introductions

- ***Dr Margaret Alvarez***, Head of the International School of Singapore (ISS)
- ***Luci Willis***, Whole School Principal Well-being Nagoya International School (Japan)
- ***Deidre Fischer***: CEO/founder DF Education Pty Ltd, Adelaide (South Australia).

[www.deidrefischer.com.au](http://www.deidrefischer.com.au)





# Tuning In



The importance of context



# Context for DIVERSITY

DIVERSITY (or inclusion) is the concept

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES are the actions that organisations implement for Diversity.

We have focused on all aspects of school operations; inclusive practices in Organisational structures (events, school operations etc), Communications & Messaging (Admissions) as well as Teaching & Learning (learning needs).

## Definition of Diversity

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences.

These can be along the dimensions of **race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical or cognitive abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies**. It is the exploration of these differences in a **safe, positive, and nurturing environment**. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to **embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual**.



# Presentation Roadmap

- A brief overview of the journey we have taken so far in EARCOS. EARCOS survey 2017 – what is happening in EARCOS schools (the what)
- Research – diversity supports student learning (the why)
- A potential prototype to measure impact of diversity for student learning in EARCOS schools (can we measure impact?)

# What does the Data Say about EARCOS Schools' Inclusive Practices?



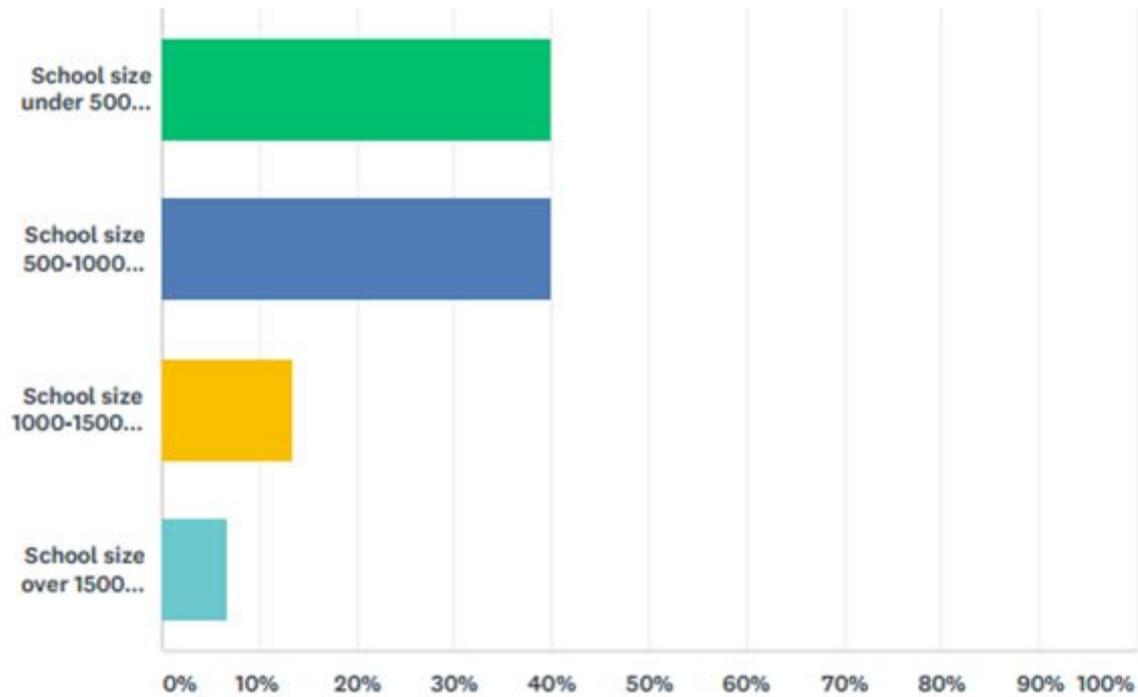
# Aims and Hypothesis

- Explore the hypothesis that in some schools inclusion is viewed as an extension of diversity
- Determine if there is a shared understanding of the term 'Diversity' amongst EARCOS schools
- Obtain and share examples of effective practice in EARCOS schools with regards to inclusive practices and diversity policies

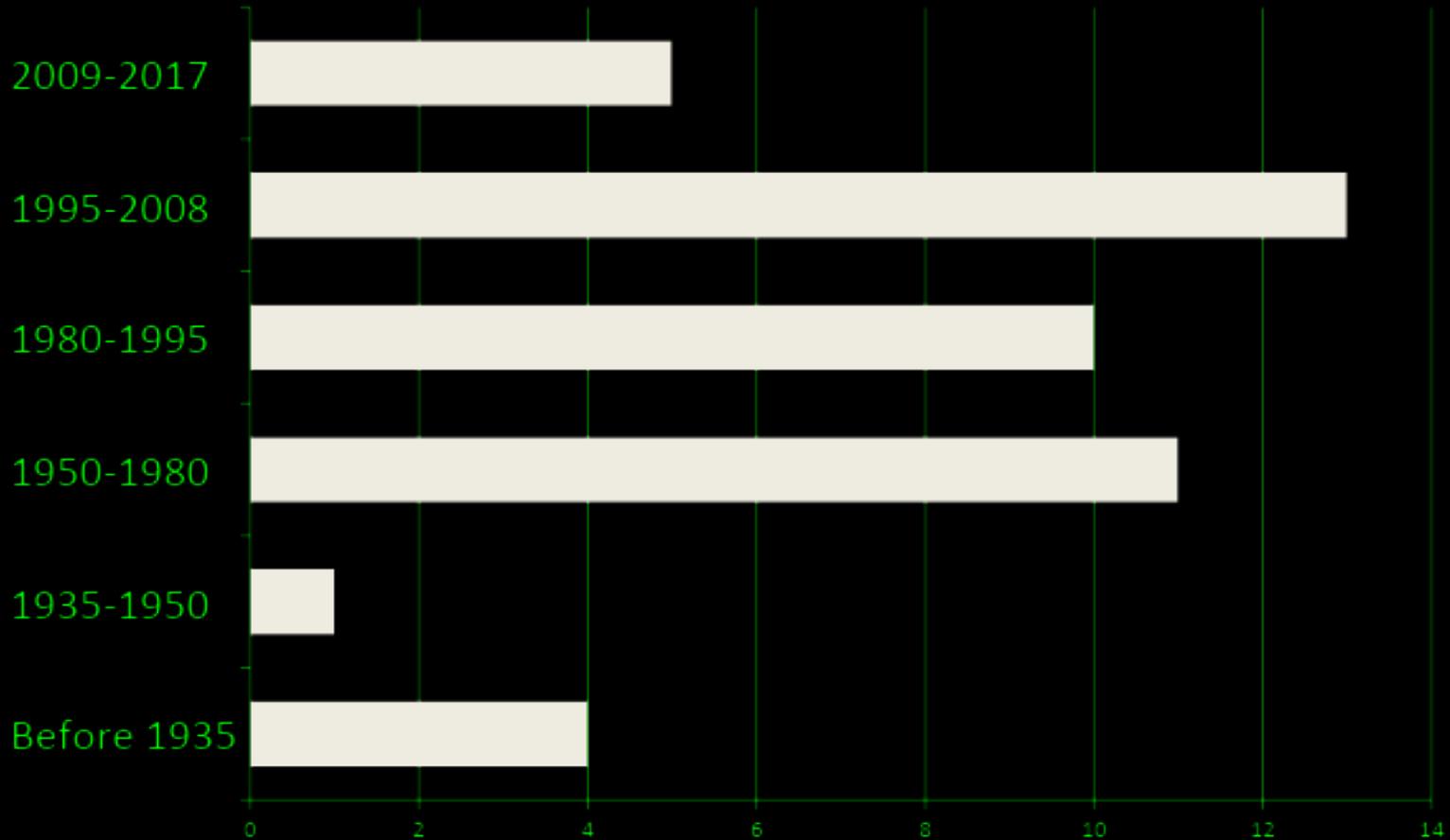
# Some Background

- Survey questions based on research undertaken during the last 3 years.
- 5 basic questions and a section on practice
- Sent to all member schools (3 times)
- 30% of membership responded
- Some surveys not fully completed

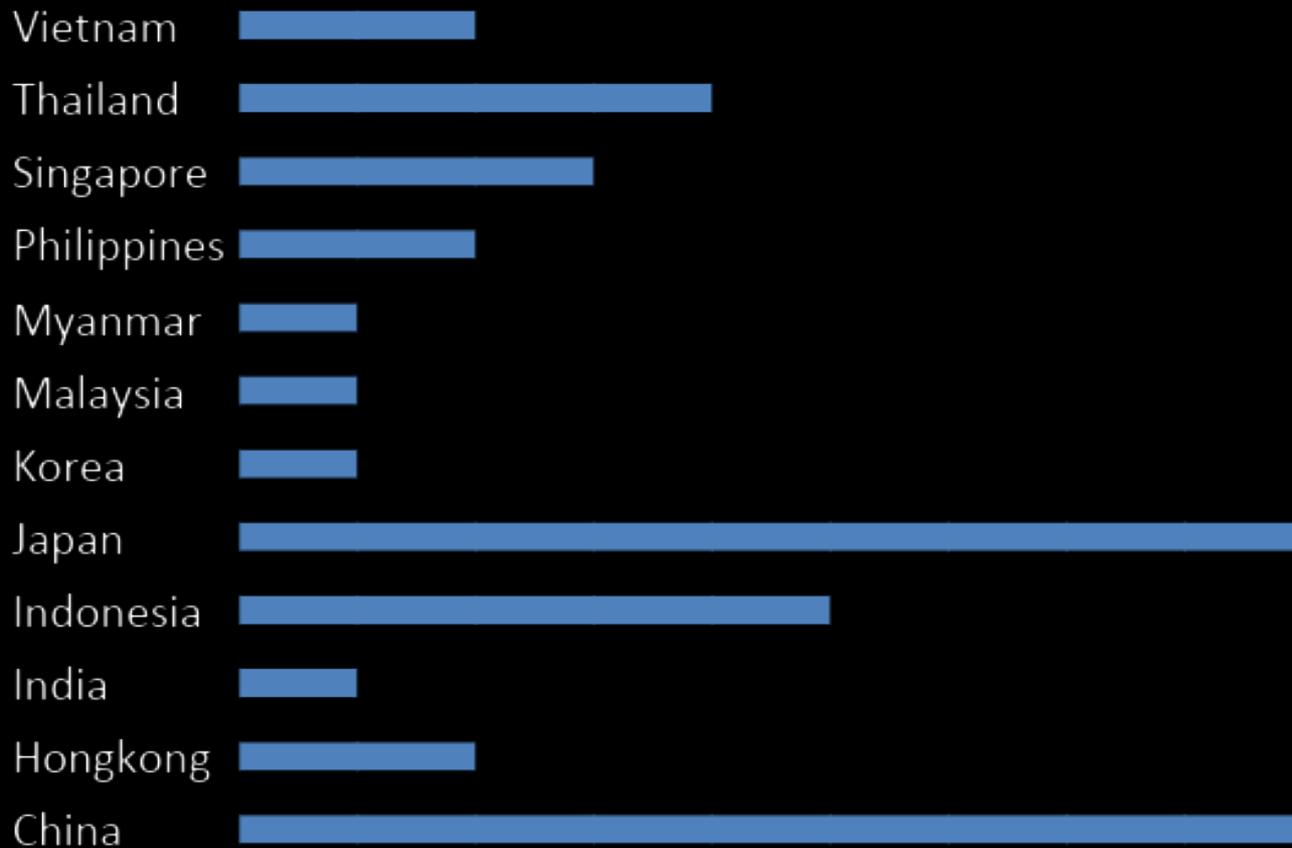
# Tell us about your school



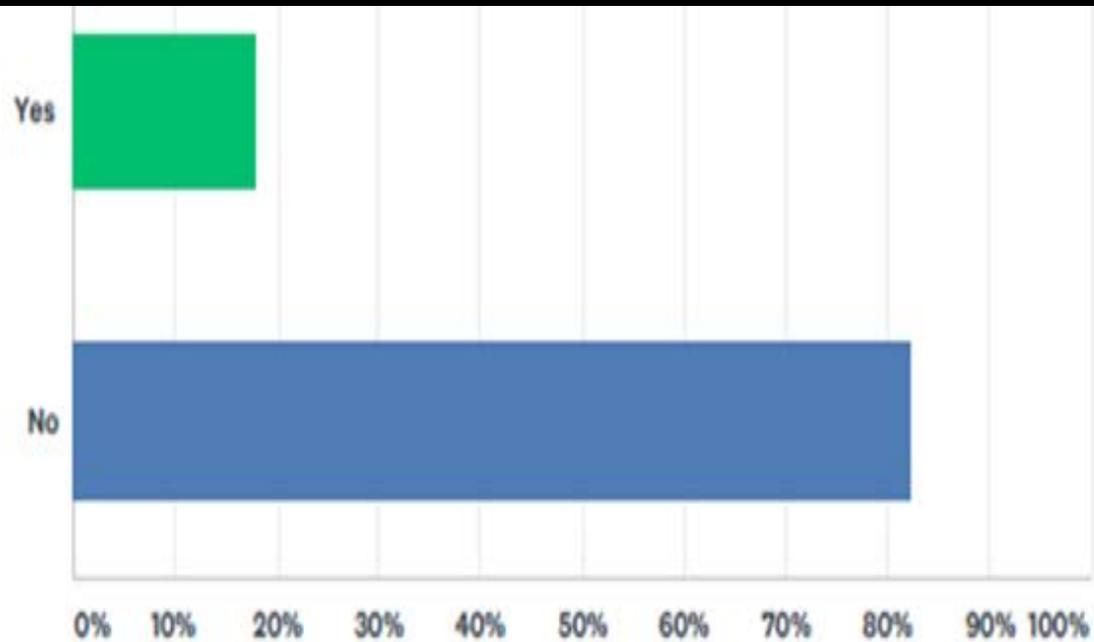
# When was your School founded?



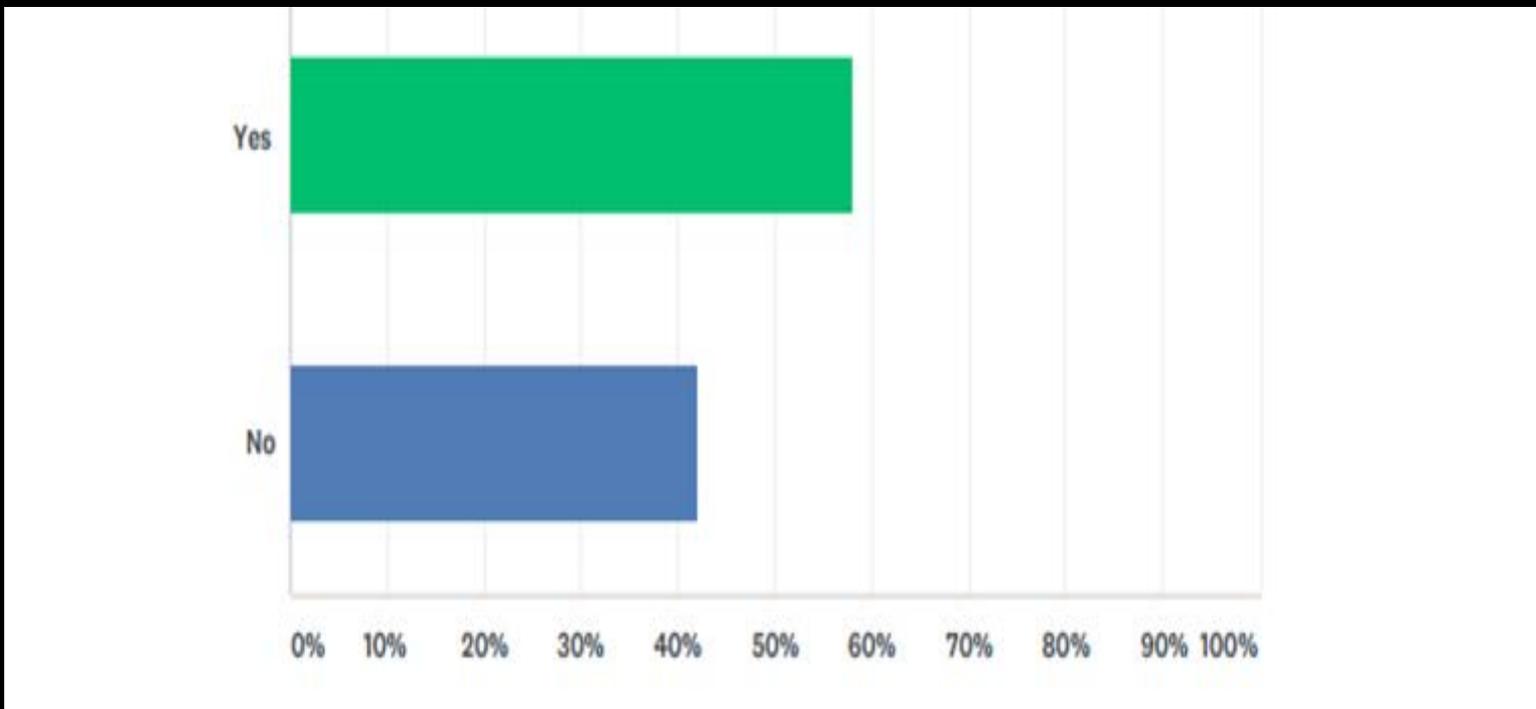
## Location of Respondent schools



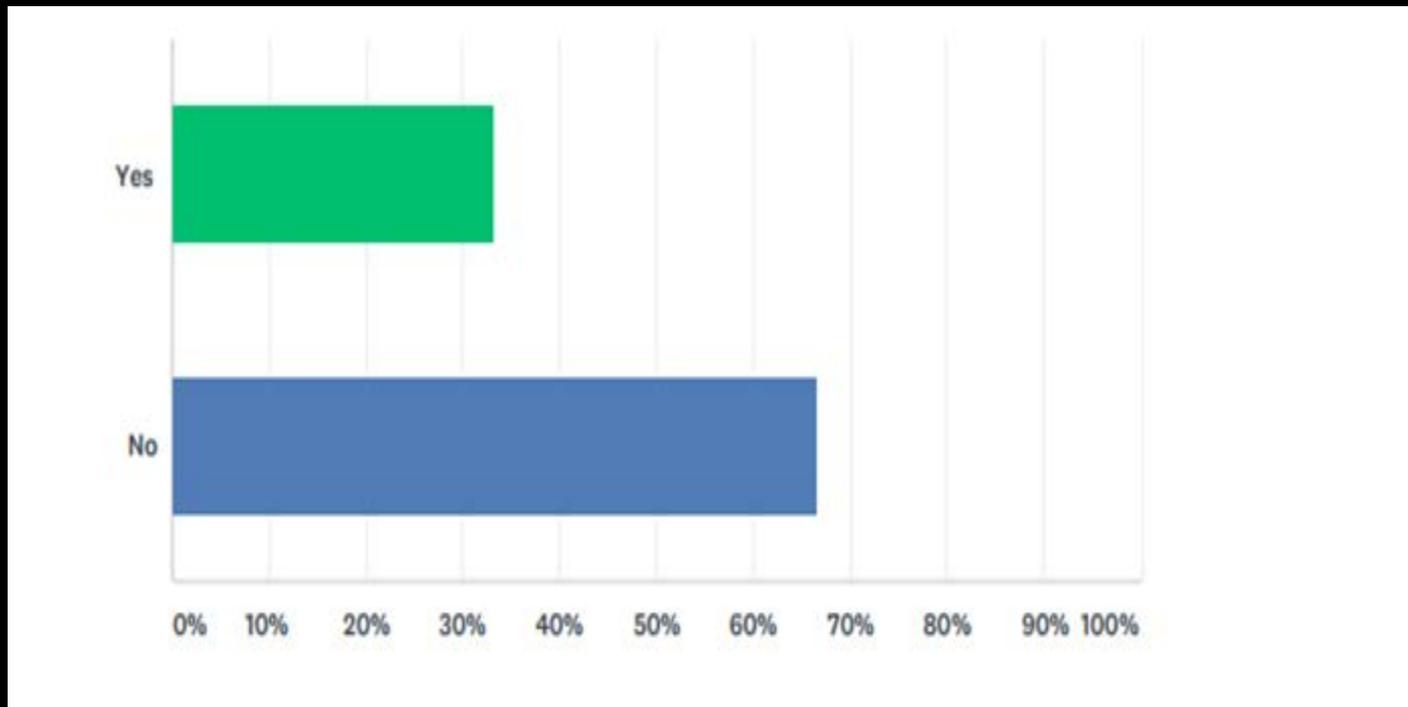
Does your school has a definition of diversity ?



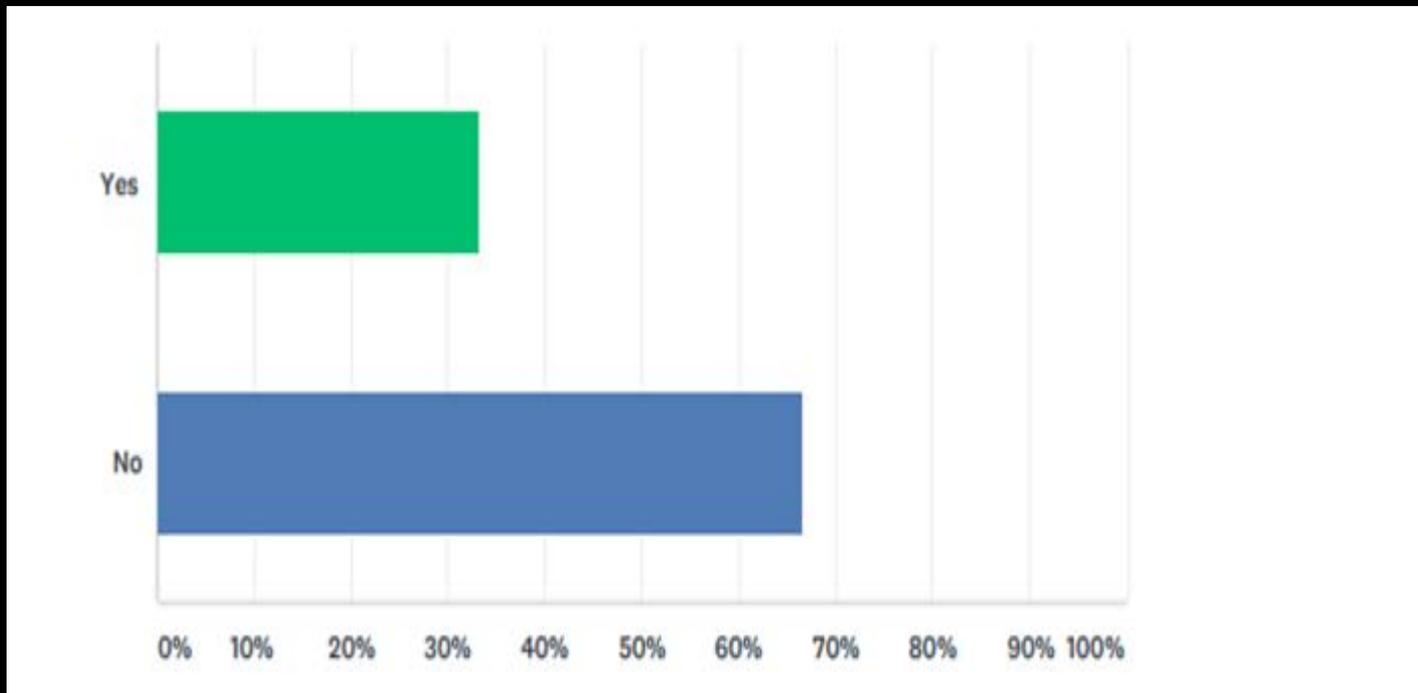
Do you have **Board approved school policies** that support the promotion of inclusive practices or a culture of inclusion for your school ?



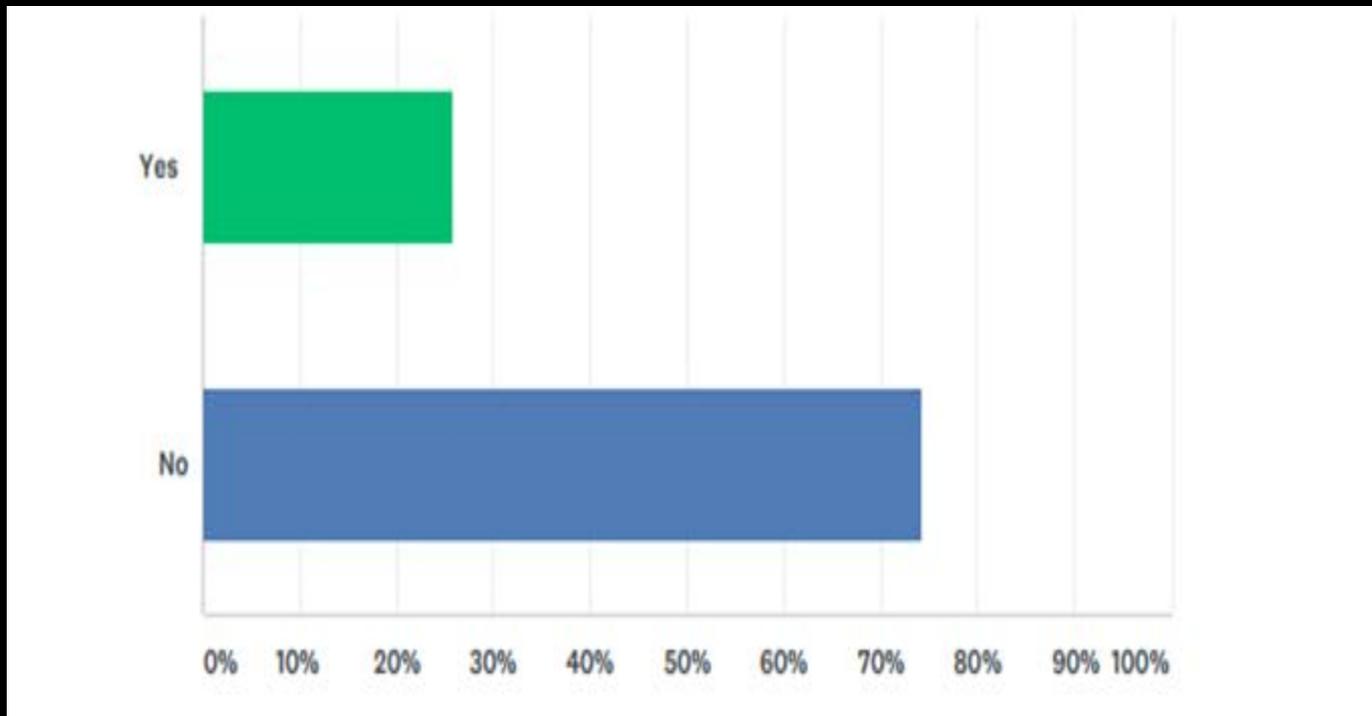
Within your **HR Policies and Procedures** do you have any policies/procedures that would contribute to a culture of inclusion within your school?



Within your **instructional programme policies**, do you have any policies that support diverse learning needs?



Does your school have **student policies** that support diversity and the promotion of inclusive practices amongst students in your school?





# Limitations of Research

- Sample size small (3 requests sent!)
- Survey interpretation
- Self reporting
- Bias
- Generalization

# Analysis

- The majority of the respondents did not have policy on diversity/inclusion or policies in other supporting areas outside the teaching/SEN.
- For several schools practice seems to precede policy.
- Some schools did not feel a definition was important as by nature international schools are diverse.
- Several schools reported a shift to increased enrolment of learning support students & need for policy development.

# Analysis

- In some cases practice contradicted informal definition (celebration of differences v Special Needs support)
- Diversity/inclusion – multiple understandings across region- celebration of difference, nationalities, Learning Support, diversity a tool to inclusive approaches
- Schools felt diversity/inclusion implied in policy but not explicit

# Aims and Hypothesis

- Explore the hypothesis that in some schools inclusion is viewed as an extension of diversity (minority of respondents)
- Determine if there is a shared understanding of the term 'Diversity' amongst EARCOS schools (NO)
- Obtain and share examples of effective practice in EARCOS schools with regards to inclusive practices and diversity policies (See the following)

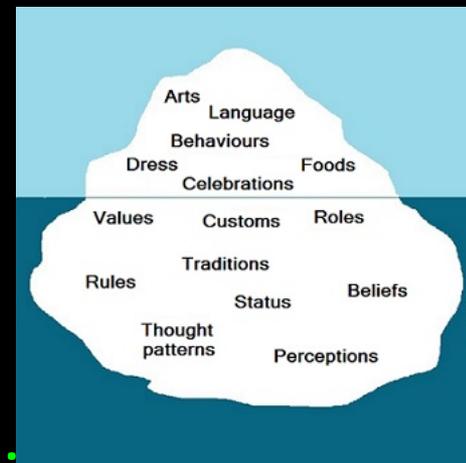
# Responses – Inclusive Practices

- 45 in total
- 19 Schools provided examples of practices (some were incomplete)
- Some information provided, eg 'student voice' or 'definition of international mindedness' – not able to determine the practice from the information provided.

# Grouping the Practices

1. School Culture (which included any reference to Child Protection/Child Safety/Homeroom/Pastoral care/Advisor as well as School Events and School Structures)
2. SEN/Learning Needs (7 schools focused only on this component of 'inclusion')
3. Teaching and Learning Practices
4. Other

# SCHOOL CULTURE



Practices that fostered a climate of inclusion by providing for a child's emotional, social and physical well-being in schools.

Within this category we included student management practices or practices that ensured student voice and choice was a part of the School's procedures (eg Restorative approaches, peer counsellors, Student buddy system, Autonomous Discipline, School Advocate etc).

- 14 Responses



# Examples of practices

- Restorative practices
- Pastoral Care/Advisory/HomeRoom structures
- Kelso's choice program (conflict resolution process)
- Lunch meetings with administration and Student Council (monthly)
- Lunch meetings with administration and Parent Group (monthly)
- Lunch meetings with administration and Teacher Leadership Team (monthly)
- Active Teacher and Administration communication team
- Consistent communication/messaging
- Other: School Events and School Structures

# SEN/Learning Needs

- 7 Schools
- Schools referred to EAL together with SEN/Learning Needs
- Referred to their inclusion of SEN/Learning Needs/EAL students as part of the school programme for inclusive practices.



# Teaching and Learning Practices

- 6 Schools
- included references to the practice of differentiation,
- the inquiry teaching approach,
- using planned reflection and the teaching of ToK.
- Other examples include:
  - the use of Essential Agreements within classrooms, Digital citizenship curriculum,
  - students encouraged to pose questions and seek answers,
  - responsive classroom training, and
  - Best learning practices PL teams



# Other

- Admissions – 4 Schools, no theme emerged and acknowledgement limited policy in place. One school gave scholarships to enhance diversity.
- One school stated that they try to live by their norms of how to respond to people on campus with eye contact, a smile and greeting.
- HR/Teacher Recruitment: There was one school that responded that they recruit for diversity.

..... so finally .....

In our changing world and with the multiple interpretations of diversity/inclusion do we need explicit policy and practices in all school operations to develop shared understandings amongst school communities?

AND .....

- If we believe in the concept of DIVERSITY, can we identify a measure to show how INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS supports student achievement?



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# What we take for granted in our international education world

Working in a diverse environment helps students learn about the experiences, customs, cultures of different groups such as differences in communication styles and perceptions. The skills learnt such as teamwork, conflict management, overcoming misunderstandings are necessary to work effectively and ethically with diverse communities and groups

Holivo et al 2004



# Other Dimensions

- The benefits of exposure to diverse learning environments are “significant and positively related to cognitive development” The novelty and challenge of diverse learning environments “spurs higher order thinking and repeated energy in effortful thought and contributes to a generalised disposition towards and preference for complex thinking.”

- Bowman 2010



# Bowman 2010

- Early experiences with diversity are likely to be very different from learned norms thus serving as an early disrupter. This phenomena may “result in a more linear trend in cognitive growth”



## ... further thoughts ...

- Diverse learning environments result in greater creativity and better problem solving.

McLeod et al (1996), Watson et al (1996). Carrell et al (2006), Cox and Blake (1991), University of Arizona (2018)



# From a practitioner's perspective

Diverse learning environments result in a safe learning culture where students develop a comfort level with difference and as a result are more comfortable with themselves which in turn leads to greater mental safety.



- Queens University (2018)



# The Impact

- Greater propensity to differentiated instruction
- Supportive teaching strategies
- High Expectations for all
- Effective use of resources
- 
- Osewalt (2018)



# New Brunswick Association for Community Living

- All children are able to be part of their community and develop a sense of belonging and become better prepared for life in the community as children and adults.
- It provides better opportunities for learning. Children with varying abilities are often better motivated when they learn in classes surrounded by other children.
- The expectations of all the children are higher. Successful inclusion attempts to develop an individual's strengths and gifts.
- It allows children to work on individual goals while being with other students their own age.
- It encourages the involvement of parents in the education of their children and the activities of their local schools.
- It fosters a culture of respect and belonging. It also provides the opportunity to learn about and accept individual differences.
- It provides all children with opportunities to develop friendships with one another. Friendships provide role models and opportunities for growth.

# The Tilford Group- University of Kansas

- students (and faculty) are introduced to more issues and perspectives: knowledge, strategies, applications
- students are more willing to examine (and re-examine) their personal perspectives and values; learn more about themselves
- students are exposed to ideas and points of view that they disagree with or do not understand in a safe (non-hostile) environment
- students and faculty gain a clearer idea of how cultures process the same information in different ways and how all information is deeply culture-bound
- students learn ways of reshaping issues, new ways of reading classroom material, new learning strategies, and are more creative in their approach to learning in general
- students learn and come up with new research topics
- students learn and practice new ways of collaborating in class
- students gain an “increased capacity for tolerance, respect and concern for others”
- students’ stereotypes about important issues in academic disciplines are more often confronted
- students’ social and political stereotypes are more often confronted
- students acquire an enhanced ability to think creatively and in more complex ways, use more higher-order cognitive thinking skills, acquire more intellectual maturity
- students are able to adapt more quickly to a broader range of learning environments

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- Watson, W. E., Kumar, K., & Michaelsen, L. K. 1993. Cultural diversity's impact on interaction process and performance: Comparing homogeneous and diverse task groups. *Academy of Management Journal* 36: 590-603.



# How the prototype was developed

- Major findings from the latest research were field tested in a survey
  - for example ..... metacognition is enhanced in a diverse learning environment, global citizenship skills are enhanced, risk-taking and self-identity are augmented)
- two schools (NIS and ISS) tested the prototype
- Open questions sought to identify possible measurement tools



# A potential prototype to measure impact of diversity for student learning in EARCOS schools

Can we measure impact?

# **EARCOS Diversity/Inclusive Practices: Impact on the learning bottom line Prototype survey**

The results of this survey will be used to help design a larger-scale survey for use in EARCOS schools to help us gain greater understanding around the relationship between a school's efforts to embrace diversity through inclusive practices and the effect those efforts have on student learning outcomes.

- By inclusive practices we mean the practices that schools implement to create and sustain a diverse learning environment.

# Survey format

## 4 questions

1 - aimed at gathering data on inclusive practices

2 - understanding the school's definition of learning

3 - is there a correlation between 1&2?

4 - how do we know and how do we measure?

## Definition of Diversity

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# Pilot Survey Results

4 x Teachers

4 x HS Students

2 x Board members

2 x Admin

# 1 - The features of your school which you believe makes you a diverse/inclusive school. These may be planned for or they may be 'unplanned'

## Planned Practices

1. Explicit referencing of an inclusive/diverse philosophy in guiding statements, unpacked into policies (inclusion, language, global citizenship)
2. An aligned admissions policy cognisant of what is necessary to support diversity in the classroom
3. Staffing levels in learning needs which are adequate to meet the needs of enrolled students (EAL, SEN, MT, Counseling)
4. A wider staff which was itself diverse and inclusive, and whose membership valued inclusion ensured by appropriate recruitment strategies and with explicit leadership positions or structures which ensure for diversity/inclusion to be promoted

At the level of the student experience the following trends appeared:

1. The importance of events that promote diversity
2. ASAs/Clubs or other activities which promote diversity at a deep level (range from 'mild' activities such as cultural clubs and peer tutoring to change-maker groups exploring and advocating for inclusivity in traditionally 'taboo' topics)

# Interestingly.....

## Points to note:

- The written, taught and assessed curriculum received relatively few mentions across all groups
- The relationship between the family and school is another interesting trend. Two respondents (teacher, admin) expressed the importance of family partnership/buy-in.
- There was reference to intentional communication of diversity/inclusion strategy from all four groups, particularly in social media as a key influencer. The need to make this an overt, 'marketed' and communicated intention seems to be evident.

# Unplanned Evidence of Diversity & Inclusion

- The interesting thing about this is that there was very little to add. Even though some things were cited as unplanned (e.g. the unique and spontaneous things that emerge with kids and adults in an inclusive community setting) there were two voices (board members) who explicitly or implicitly suggested that in reality everything can be argued to have been planned.
- Therefore perhaps the biggest area for exploration in this question is the relationship between big picture planning (guiding statements, overarching strategy) and the way in which this nurtures a culture in which organic action at the level of individuals can take root and promote an inclusive and diverse celebration in learning and well-being.

## 2 - What are the Learning Outcomes Hoped for in Your Students?

- An understanding of the school's definition of learning is an important part of the study as it establishes the benchmark by which schools can evaluate impact.

In other words, if a school seeks THESE outcomes and is planning for THOSE inputs, then what is the correlation or causation between the two? To this extent it does not really matter what the intended learning outcomes are, the study is merely interested as to whether planned strategies to support diversity are having a positive impact upon them.

- The conclusion is that if the school does not have a clear definition and shared understanding of learning then it is difficult to find a correlation between actual and perceived intended learning outcomes.

How would these learning outcomes be different (worse, better) if it were NOT for the diversity elements identified in Part 1?

The teachers did not see a connection between intended learning outcomes and practices and how that impacts diversity and inclusivity, although they were able to talk about inclusive practices. Do we need to be overt?

Other findings:

1. Respondees felt that a diverse and inclusive learning environment reflects the real world.
2. A diverse learning environment creates a higher expectation of professional practice for staff (differentiation, data-informed instruction) and that this has a knock on effect benefit to all learners.

## 4 - How do we know?

### Reflections on this question

1. A variety of strategies were suggested ranging from anecdotal evidence to quantitative data such as the OECD inter-cultural test.
1. There was no consensus of one way of measuring this.
2. Link to table

Comparing behaviour logs to grades (i.e. are inclusive people getting better results?)

Observing students outside of class (e.g. week w/out walls) to ascertain how the learning goals are being exhibited

OECD Intercultural test

University and employer feedback

Attendance records

Parent feedback

Looking for learning walks

Look at demographics of staff and students (country, language, culture, identity)

Numbers of students who get involved in philosophically aligned activities

We don't! It is a hunch driven by anecdotal stories at best. It is more a 'belief' based on experiences. There are lots of metrics we can look at for how diverse we are, and lots of metrics we can look at for how good learning is...but nothing that we have that really proves causation (or even correlation)

Connections are explicit in curriculum documentation

Anecdotal evidence in student/parent surveys, focus groups

Longitudinal data that is disaggregated and compared to students in less inclusive environments

ISA and other standardised comparisons to like schools

Tracking our alumni

Student reflections,

Assessment data

# Reflections on the prototype

1. In order to do the prototype, a definition of learning is essential
2. Participants need to be supported in understanding the link between philosophy, practice and outcome.
3. Some questions need rephrasing to enhance clarity and therefore validity
4. It is possible that the survey has inherent bias however the tool is designed to elicit the reality between what they say and what they do - the rhetoric/reality gap. There needs to be scope in the study for dissent.
5. The conversations during the survey helped participants internalise their beliefs and thinking about diversity and inclusion and broadened their perspective.

# Where to next?

- Refine the prototype survey
- Do further field testing? Is your school willing to be involved?
- Create a resource bank of inclusive practices
- Definition of Diversity (concept) - is this appropriate for your context?
- Create an awareness of how the definition of learning can guide practice and serve as a yardstick for success.



# Your thoughts?

## 1. Prototype survey review/refine

Try out the survey, how does it feel, are the questions clear, any suggestions?

## 2. Does the definition of diversity work in your context?

# The end ....

1. If you would like to be involved in field testing the prototype, please leave your details
1. Exit Slip - What resonated with you and why  
.....
1. Thank you for joining us.