

## **SYMP - (18880) - PROMOTING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS: AN INQUIRY-BASED APPROACH**

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### **Short Abstract**

This presentation will draw on the findings of a programme of collaborative action research projects, carried out in a range of countries, to consider how partnerships between practitioners and researchers can facilitate inclusive developments in schools (Ainscow, 2020). These studies were all guided by the principles of inclusion and equity, summed up by UNESCO (2017) as '*Every learner matters and matters equally*'.

Within the studies, teacher inquiry teams used a variety of collaborative inquiry methods to analyse their school contexts. These included the use of mutual lesson observation, sometimes through video recordings, and comments collected from students about teaching and learning arrangements within a school. Such approaches provided 'interruptions' that stimulated self-questioning, creativity and action. In so doing, they sometimes led to a reframing of perceived problems that, in turn, drew the teacher's attention to overlooked possibilities for addressing barriers to participation and learning. In this way, differences amongst students and staff - within and between schools - became a catalyst for improvement.

It is important to note, however, that none of this provides a simple way forward. To gain the potential benefits, it is necessary to address the challenges involved in using processes of collaborative inquiry within the busy contexts of schools. Researchers who get involved in such processes must expect to face many difficulties and dilemmas (Ainscow, Chapman & Hadfield, 2020). Consequently, they have to develop new skills in creating collaborative partnerships that cross borders between actors who have different professional experiences.

### **References**

Ainscow, M. (2020) Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from international experiences. *The Nordic Journal of Studies on Educational Policy*, 6(1), 7-16

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UNESCO (2017) *A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education*. Paris: UNESCO