GigaPan School Dialogues: Diversity and Inclusion in the Community

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A Classroom Project as a Learning Experience

2009
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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce the various elements involved in developing GigaPan School Dialogues: Diversity and Inclusion in the Community as a classroom project. This document complements in further detail the one entitled “Curriculum Guidelines” for the project.

We approach the overall aim of the GigaPan classroom project as a learning experience that promotes intercultural dialogue and understanding based on an appreciation and reaffirmation of diversity and cultural identities. A classroom project involves the careful orchestration of learning and teaching objectives, selected pedagogies and resources, aligned to particular expected outcomes. As will be addressed in Part I, the quality of the classroom project as an educational experience is based on principles of active learning within a cooperative and inclusive learning environment. As will be discussed in Part II, such an environment is also shaped by taking into account and engaging the school, curricular and community contexts. Based on this, 5 main steps useful for the design of a classroom project will be presented in Part III – 1) purpose and main features of the project; 2) guiding problem/essential question; 3) curricular objectives and scope of the project; 5) teaching/learning activities; and 6) learning outcomes and assessment of the project - accompanied by guiding optional examples.

Part I.

What kind of learning and learning environment is needed for a successful GigaPan classroom project?

“To teach is not to transfer knowledge, but to create the possibilities for its own production or construction” (Paulo Freire, Pedagogía de la Autonomía, 1996)

A classroom project is specified within time and space (i.e. scope) in a tailored learning environment within the curriculum. It is materialized through an educational process - an educational experience- in which, as a goal, the students’ critical understanding, sharing and constructive use of concepts of, for example - cultural diversity, Learning to Live Together, sustainable development, and community - are enhanced through active guided

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1 Author: Carolina Belalcázar, International Bureau of Education, UNESCO.
2 GigaPan School Dialogues: Diversity and Inclusion in the Community will be referred to as the “GigaPan”.
pedagogies (e.g. cooperative learning, inquiry-based, problem-based); this with an overall impact on the development of the student’s knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours regarding intercultural understanding and social tolerance at local and global levels.

What will students learn with a GigaPan Classroom Project?

The focus of a classroom project is on the student’s active and creative engagement in an ongoing learning process. With flexibility as part of the curriculum, the GigaPan project should aim to develop the following knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours in students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Attitudes and Behaviours (social and emotional development)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking skills (e.g. analytical, comparative, inductive &amp; deductive reasoning along conceptual learning).</td>
<td>Knowledge about the other cultures (understanding of the socio-economic, cultural and political changes that shape societies)</td>
<td>Social tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills (applying knowledge to new situations)</td>
<td>Knowledge about the inter-disciplinary nature of sustainable development</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative and active participation</td>
<td>Accurate, independent and efficient understanding of information and ideas to co-construct knowledge about culture and society.</td>
<td>Appreciation and inclusion of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork skills (participatory towards a shared goal)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement and participation with local and global communities (e.g. local and global citizenship)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and working skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility and participation within equal and just societies (e.g. sustainable development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological skills</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 1: GigaPan Learning Objectives

It is important to emphasize that the project is expected to have an impact not only on the student’s knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour, but also as a consequence, on his/her immediate community, as well as globally. Learning takes places at an individual level yet also collectively. In learning, new possibilities open up for understanding and living within cultural diversity at the same time that alternatives and solutions to bring change to our social environment are considered and proposed. Also, it is important to take into account the relevance that new knowledge and skills will have on work habits useful for lifelong learning and future development.
Active Guided Pedagogies

To accomplish the above learning objectives, the GigaPan classroom project proposes a flexible implementation of instructional methods based on learning theories supportive of active, cooperative and problem-based/inquiry-based learning, among other, with roots in the work of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky. Their various approaches to the development of learning should be useful examples for a background reference to take into account when designing learning activities for your classroom project (Part III).

- Cooperative learning means -

"working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative activities individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and to all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each others’ learning. Carefully structured cooperative learning involves people working in teams to accomplish a common goal, under conditions that involve both positive interdependence (all members must cooperate to complete the task) and individual and group accountability (each member individually as well as all members collectively accountable for the work of the group)\(^4\).

Cooperative learning is deemed to counteract competitive and individualistic approaches of learning since a “positive inter-dependence” is created among the students when working together as a group\(^5\). In cooperative learning groups, students foster interaction and encourage and support each other’s learning efforts. “Students must believe that they are linked with others in a way that one cannot succeed unless the other members of the group succeed and vice versa. Students must perceive that they sink or swim together”\(^6\).

Instructional methods that address cooperative learning, as proposed by the GigaPan project, will share the aim of developing in students “meta-cognitive thought, willingness to take on difficult tasks, persistence (despite difficulties) in working toward goal accomplishment, intrinsic motivation, transfer of learning from one situation, etc. higher self-esteem than when working competitively or individualistically. Numerous social psychological theories predict that students’ values, attitudes, and behavioural patterns are most effective when developed and changed in cooperative groups”\(^7\).

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\(^7\) Ibid, p.5.
Inquiry-based/problem-based learning as a constructive learning experience

“The more closely and more directly the child learns by entering into social situations, the more genuine and effective is the knowledge he gains”
*(John Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow)*

Cooperative learning shares learning principles as those presented earlier in the work of John Dewey (1859-1952) dated back to 1899 and Jean Piaget (1896-1980). For Dewey, learning implies an experience that is enriched and given meaning in social interdependence. Such interdependence involves interacting in groups around shared problems or learning projects relevant to the students’ life and community. Learning is student centred, and it becomes tangible in the doing and acting upon through an interactive dynamic between oneself and the outside world. Jean Piaget also highlighted the importance of learning in social interaction as implied within cooperative learning approaches: “Without interchange of thought and co-operation with others the individual would never group his operations into a coherent whole: in this sense, therefore, operational grouping presupposes social life. [...] The grouping is therefore a form of equilibrium of inter-individual actions as well as of individual actions, and it thus regains its autonomy at the very core of social life”

Problem-based/inquiry-based learning involves the development of the child’s cognitive abilities through his or her experience and capacity to initiate and engage with their environment. This environment provides interdisciplinary problems or questions relevant to the child’s life and that he/she can further understand and act upon as part of his/her learning process in school. “The principal idea behind problem-based learning is that the starting point of learning should be a problem, a query or a puzzle that the learners wishes to solve”

Problems or key project questions can be addressed in small groups that organize themselves and their learning focus on the developing and integrating the necessary skills and knowledge to find in cooperation the answers to such problem or question. The teacher facilitates and/or guides this journey with activities involving relevant application to the students’ experience, environment and community. “Experience of the child [is] central to the philosophy and practice of the school. Learning is active. All subjects have potential for experience of the human race, instead of being fixed and ready-made, outside of the child’s experience”

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The teacher as a facilitator and guide of cooperation and learning development

Teachers as facilitators and/or guides can help students to structure their ideas in their conversations, and as well as in their writings as part of a community of learners in the GigaPan project. The role of the teacher as a co-designer, co-constructor aims to motivate and engage a deeper processing in the child with activities using conceptual mapping, and inductive/deductive reasoning in problem-solving contexts. The teacher guides and facilitates learning experiences as a mentor and not as the provider of knowledge. This supports Lev Vygotsky’s (1896-1934)\(^\text{13}\) notion of a "zone of proximal development" in which students are able to progress to higher levels of thinking under teacher guidance and the collaborative/reflective dialogue of their peers. In this regard, learning takes place between the actual development level of a student when he/she encounters a problem individually and the student’s potential level of development when problem-solving takes place with the guidance and motivation of a teacher and in collaboration with peers to encourage a higher level of development or performance from the student. Such assistance provided by the teacher and other peers is also referred to as *scaffolding*. Scaffolding brings forth the student’s prior knowledge, skills and experiences to establish associations with new concepts and problem-solving.

What kind of learning environment?

“It would be most desirable that for the school to be a place in which the child should really live, and get a life-experience in which he should delight and find meaning for its own sake” (John Dewey, The School and Society)\(^\text{14}\)

To achieve its full potential as a learning experience, any proposed classroom project should be set in an environment that focuses on the student’s growth and learning. This environment should motivate students to learn with excitement and a purpose; it implies learning that is based on the interaction among students, with tolerance, and flexibility within diversity along constructive group cooperation. Students are active participants in the creation and development of their own learning, including the tailoring of activities along proposed objectives. An enriching learning environment enhances the student’s curiosity and motivation to learn, creatively transforming learning into action along self-assessment as the student encounters topics, situations and problems that are appealing and challenging to address. Overall, the objective is to have an open, inclusive, encouraging, unhurried, positive atmosphere that is cared for and maintained by both teacher and students.

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**An Inclusive learning environment**

UNESCO defines inclusion as:

“As a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children”.

An inclusive learning environment implies the conception and the implementation of a vast repertoire of learning strategies that allow flexibility in how to best respond to learners’ diversities. Institutional and pedagogical practices of inclusion adapt to and incorporate as an asset the learning diversity of children instead of assuming that all children have the same learning conditions and capabilities.

Thus, the GigaPan classroom project will benefit from a learning environment that is diverse regarding students’ social and cultural backgrounds as well as learning differences and styles. In this regard, the classroom project would involve a flexible selection of topics and pedagogy adaptable to the different learning needs, voices and backgrounds of the children involved.

The GigaPan classroom project would revolve in its design around a conceptual question that should be appealing to all students, yet flexible enough to be applicable with relevance to students’ particular past, present and future social reality. It draws upon students’ prior knowledge and experience to understand and further develop their knowledge and skills. There should be space in the classroom for different cultures, ways of knowing, and perspectives to enrich the learning process. What students bring into class, as prior knowledge and experience, should be used as an asset to explore, negotiate, interpret, and create new knowledge and approaches applicable to local and global realities.

As proposed by Cheryl Jorgensen (1998) the following elements summarize well key points to consider for a constructive and inclusive learning environment:

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a) all students can learn well  
b) a caring classroom is a necessary foundation for learning  
c) diversity within the classroom is an asset not a liability  
d) students learn best when studying topics that have personal meaning  
e) learning is an interactive process between the teacher and the students and relies on  
student making personal meaning of information filtered through their values, past  
experiences, and new information  
f) students do their best work when it is publicly shared; and  
g) students often show what they know in unique ways that are not easily captured by  
traditional paper and pencil assessments.  

In this regard, the learning experience of the project engages the different abilities and  
learning styles that children have. In addition to this, making mistakes is an important  
part of a child’s learning and personal development. The goal is therefore to help the  
student to confidently encounter new learning challenges with a belief in his/her own  
ability to think critically and creatively solve problems.  

II. School, curricular and community contexts for a classroom project -  

When thinking of designing a classroom project, it is important to understand and take  
into account the school’s institutional and curricular context as well as the social  
community in which the project will be embedded. With variations across countries, the  
school is set in a context of local, regional and national education systems in which the  
administration and management of education can bring frameworks, guidelines and  
requirements (e.g. standards) on how to go conceive and implement school policies and  
practices. In some countries, centralized policy regarding curriculum may determine all  
details of content, objectives, practices and outcomes and assessment procedures for  
schools. In other countries, with more decentralized contexts of curricular policy and  
implementation, the national level may provide to municipalities and schools only  
general curricular guidelines to be further developed according to and with relevance to  
their local context and needs. In such case, municipalities, schools and teachers have  
more autonomy regarding the provision and the implementation of education. For  
example, schools and teachers may design their own curricula, deciding among other, on  
content, objectives, teaching methods, and the material used, including the use of ICTs as  
educational tools. Thus, the design and implementation of a GigaPan classroom project  
should take into account the various frameworks of accountability and degrees of  
autonomy in which the school and its curriculum are embedded in order for the project to  
be successfully applied and sustained.  

In particular, as the GigaPan project involves the connection of several schools around  
the world, curricular links among schools must be understood. For example, in addition  
to identifying shared curricular objectives, it is important to understand how national or  
local governments decide on the overall time allocation and number of lessons for core  
subjects during basic education and elective subjects in secondary education, and/or
about their combination. Thus, schools in some countries may have more time and flexibility in their curriculum for development of the GigaPan project through several consecutive lessons than other schools may be able to.

The community and its well-being:

The classroom project is not only set in educational contexts but also simultaneously within a social context. There are several questions that you could start to explore to help you conceive the project with sensitiveness, and relevance to the student’s life and community. For example:

Is this community a rural one? An urban one? What is the socio-economic and cultural background of the population? What is its main economic activity? Are all children and their family healthy? Are all children in school? Are children dropping out from school? Why? Are people in the community able to develop their full potential to lead productive, creative lives taking into account their needs and interests? Are people actively participating and interested in the life of the community? These questions point to a better understanding of the community’s well-being including that of the student.

Knowing if there are other social programs in the community that pursue objectives related to the GigaPan project could also help to coordinate and join shared efforts. Could the project be linked with service learning initiatives that help answer some of the above questions? There may be non-formal and extra-curricular educational activities also involving the community and the child. For a successful and sustainable classroom project, it is important to coordinate and take into account the development of an interactive dynamic that supports cooperation both within the school and with the home and the rest of society. Involving neighbourhood issues, for example, (needs and interests) to the life and projects of the school will contribute to develop the learning experiences of students with motivation and in meaningful ways to the well-being of their community.

**Who will participate in and benefit from a classroom project?**

A GigaPan classroom project implies a joint learning venture engaging both teachers and students. The student is at the centre of the learning process, the main beneficiary, at the same time that the teacher is jointly co-constructing and further developing knowledge (e.g. intercultural understanding) and skills with him/her and peers.

The project also represents an opportunity to propose ideas and activities that will result in benefiting not only the knowledge and skills of individuals in school communities, but also extending locally and across the world regions; as commonalities and differences across cultures are identified and reflected upon constructively through project themes that are common to all, social tolerance towards diversity will be increased.
At the school level, it is important to understand the extent to which the project will engage the participation of administration, teachers, staff and students, and parents and the community. Engagement may range from a level of approval to one of direct participation in the content and application of the project. As noted earlier, within a school and curricular context, students and teachers should be at a minimum, appropriating the project in its design and in its implementation with relevance to the student’s learning needs and his/her community. Nevertheless, this must be actively endorsed by the school administration with an end result of teachers having the opportunity to explore, propose, implement and follow-up the classroom project along with their students.

II. **Proposing a classroom project**

Having already considered in the first part of this handbook the kind of learning, and learning environment that are expected to be developed by the project; the possible school, curricular and community contexts in which it could be situated, will allow you to turn project ideas into practice. Upon careful review of the next five steps, you will be able to design with flexibility a GigaPan Classroom Project as a learning experience.

Step 1. Why do we want to do this project? *Engagement: Presenting the Purpose and Main Features of the Project.*
Step 2. Preparing the Launching Pad: *Connecting an interdisciplinary concept to an adventurous question or problem.*
Step 3. How far and where should we go? *The Curricular Objectives and Scope of the project*
Step 4. How are we going to get there? *Learning Activities Based on Active Guided Pedagogies*
Step 5. How do we know that we have arrived to our destination? *Assessment of Learning Outcomes*

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**STEP 1. Why do we want to do this project?**
*Engagement: Presenting the Purpose and Features of the Project*

As a first step, you should be able to introduce the overall learning purpose of the classroom project.

- Why is it so important for you and your students to develop this project?
- What significance does the project have in relation to the student’s learning, emotional and social development?
- How is the purpose of the project related to concept/s of cultural diversity, learning to live together, and sustainable development?
- How is the project related to the student’s life, to his/her local and global community?
- How will the project engage dialogue with young ones in other cultures and for what purpose?
Who will participate and benefit from the development of the project?

To help you introduce the learning purpose of the classroom project, as part of the GigaPan School Dialogues: Diversity and Inclusion in the Community, we suggest that you link such purpose to key inter-disciplinary concepts, such as those on which the GigaPan project is based. For example: cultural diversity, education for sustainable development, learning to live together, or community.

Here are some conceptual definitions that you can consider when thinking on how to introduce the purpose of the project:

**Learning about Cultural Diversity**
*(UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity)*\(^{18}\):

Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

**Learning to Live Together**

“The concept of learning to live together is centred on the development of understanding, consideration and respect for others, their beliefs, values and cultures. This is considered to provide the basis for the avoidance of conflicts or their non-violent resolution and for ongoing peaceful coexistence. Beyond that, it implies recognizing difference and diversity as opportunity rather than a danger and as a valuable resource to be used for the common good”\(^{19}\)

**Education for sustainable development**\(^{20}\) is about learning to:

- respect, value and preserve the achievements of the past;
- appreciate the wonders and the peoples of the Earth;
- live in a world where all people have sufficient food for a healthy and productive life;
- assess, care for and restore the state of our Planet;
- create and enjoy a better, safer, more just world;

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\(^{18}\) UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity
Adopted by the 31st Session of the General Conference of UNESCO, Paris, November 1, 2001:


\(^{20}\) Vision & Definition of Education for Sustainable Development
be caring citizens who exercise their rights and responsibilities locally, nationally and globally.

Or as stated at the World Summit on Sustainable Development by the *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, 2002*:

“...We assume a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection — at the local, national, regional and global levels. [...] We reaffirm our pledge to place particular focus on, and give priority attention to, the fight against the worldwide conditions that pose severe threats to the sustainable development of our people, which include: chronic hunger; malnutrition; foreign occupation; armed conflict; illicit drug problems; organized crime; corruption; natural disasters; illicit arms trafficking; trafficking in persons; terrorism; intolerance and incitement to racial, ethnic, religious and other hatreds; xenophobia; and endemic, communicable and chronic diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.”

The purpose of the project and its main lines of action should be conceived and presented in a way that is engaging to students and others in the school community. In doing this, you would also highlight the main characteristics of the project’s development. Which kind of learning activities will support the development of the project and its main learning goals? Which are the expected outcomes of the project? Keep in mind that when presenting the purpose of the project this should be linked in its approach to the kind of learning and learning environment noted in Part II. In this regard, for example, the project would present a purpose that ties to learning objectives of critical thinking, communication, participation, research, technological skills, and social tolerance, etc.

Along those lines, the purpose of the project would also have connection to the overall GigaPan project objectives:

- Empowering students to use new technologies (tools and processes, i.e. GigaPan; using the web for group reflection and sharing) in the context of motivating, participatory and productive learning experiences;
- Exploring local and international issues pertaining to inclusion and LTLT with a view to foster constructive exchanges, cooperation and solidarity;
- Developing inquiry and research skills in students and teachers;
- Promoting inclusive school settings;
- Encouraging exchanges and sustainable networking.

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Step 2. Preparing the Launching Pad

A Concept and a Question: Connecting an interdisciplinary concept to an adventurous question or problem

The second step is to propose along with students a simple, exciting and motivating question or problem as the launching pad of the project. This should be done in connection to one of the interdisciplinary concepts introduced by the purpose of the project (step1). The question or problem should be conceived with relevance to the life of students and useful to be compared to the lives of other children around the world. Questions and concepts should be co-constructed with the student in a way that there is space to bring in students’ prior knowledge, emotions, senses and beliefs as an individual and as part of a community.

“Essential questions probe for deeper meaning and set the stage for further questioning, fostering the development of critical thinking skills and higher order capabilities such as problem solving and understanding complex systems. A good essential question is the principle component of designing inquiry-based learning. In general, the best essential questions center around major issues, problems, concerns, interests, or themes relevant to students’ lives and to their communities. Good essential questions are open-ended, non-judgmental, meaningful, and purposeful with emotive force and intellectual bite, and invite an exploration of ideas. Good essential questions encourage collaboration amongst students, teacher, and the community, and integrate technology to support the learning process” 22.

The main project question can be agreed upon in discussion with the students as a result of a few triggering questions that encourage deductive and inductive reasoning in the students.

Example/On Cultural Diversity:

Teacher: “What does culture or cultural diversity mean to you?” Children brainstorm perspectives about this justifying their answers. As they share their positions and perspectives as answers to the question, the teacher introduces a concept of cultural diversity (e.g. UNESCO, 2001) comparing it and highlighting relationships with the answers given by students. Following, Teacher: “How do you think this definition of cultural diversity applies to us?” More brainstorming by students will follow; breaking the Cultural Diversity concept into possible mapping sub-categories, the teacher will be able to conceptually map students’ answers into these. Finding overall connections between the mapping categories and students’ answers, and via participatory decision-making, a core project question (inductive reasoning) can be decided upon to be

addressed in the next lessons: For example - “What are the main cultural aspects that define us or not as Indonesian? Brazilian? South African? How different are we from young people living in other countries?”

As will be detailed in Step 4, another sub-set of questions and/or sub-themes can stem out of this core project question, which could serve to organize the learning activities of the project. In this sense, students organized in groups will be studying a part, a component of something, a concept, in order to understand the whole with relevance to their lives.

Example/Cultural Diversity:

Using the above inductive/deductive conceptual exercises, the themes below were identified by groups of teachers and students in one of our project sites (Trinidad and Tobago) as being of interest to address with other schools in relation to the concept of cultural diversity:

The Question: “What would you like to share with other societies (e.g. U.S.A. and South Africa) about your own culture?” School A - Religion/festivals; artistic expressions (ex. dance, music, food; architecture); social diversity; environment/Geography/tourism; economy; spiritual/history; recreation. School B - Migration patterns; social interactions; spiritual (rituals/celebrations; festivals, food); arts (drama, visual arts, music (soca); ways of living together: changes in social interactions/racial interactions; traditions and beliefs (food).

Example/Sustainable Development:

By introducing the definition of sustainable development presented earlier, students can brainstorm answers on how this kind of development applies to their community. “Which of all these kinds of “development” (social, economic or environmental protection) are more important today for our community? Why?” Depending on the answers given, mapping categories can be identified showing the students’ choices. The most prevalent category – the most discussed- could be selected to prompt another set of questions: For example, if environmental protection was found to be the most relevant and appealing then: “How and why is the sea port and sea life affecting me and the life of others in my community?” “Are sea ports similar or different in other parts of the world?” These questions can prompt answers that can further examine the topic of environment by yielding a set of sub-themes such as commerce, employment, tourism (as related to the issue of environmental protection and sea ports).
Step 3. How far and where should we go?

The Curricular Objectives and Scope of the Classroom Project

In this step, you will explain how the classroom project is linked to your national and curricular learning objectives. This can be done by introducing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours (Table 1 in Part I) that students will learn with the GigaPan project to indicate, most importantly, how these will help you develop the curricular objectives in your school. Following, more specifically, as an example, you can continue to detail how the purpose, selected concept and learning question of the classroom project is related to the learning objectives of your class.

It is also important to note in which subject/s the project will be situated and how it can have cross-curricular applications as several of the learning objectives of the GigaPan project have cross-curricular relevance. In this regard, the core project question can be used as a basis to explore interdisciplinary themes (across subjects) that refine the structure and scope of a classroom project, as well as the school dialogues that will take place through the project’s website. When choosing where to embed the project; coordinate and discuss with other teachers how to share cross-curricular objectives related to the project.

Overall, please take into account the following questions:

- Where in your curriculum do you think you will be able to incorporate knowledge of and interaction (dialogues) with another culture? Why?
- What knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours will be developed by your GigaPan project?
- How are these related to national and local curricular objectives/standards?
- How does the project contribute to your subject area and learning objectives?
- How does the classroom project relate to other subjects and cross-curricular goals?

Examples of cross-curricular goals could include:

Social and emotional development
Technological skills
Communication skills
Intercultural understanding and awareness
Citizenship skills
Environmental responsibility
Social tolerance
“Many schools engage in a curriculum mapping process where the standards to be taught for the year are organized into coherent units of study, organized under overarching themes, concepts, essential questions, or real-life problems”\textsuperscript{23}. As pointed out by Jorgensen, using a mapping process with other teachers to display and discuss curricular standards could be helpful in understanding how certain units of study, concepts, or questions in your curricula cut across subjects and relate to the GigaPan project.

- **Scope of the project: Where and how long?**

The school calendar and curricular context in which to embed the GigaPan classroom project will help determine the best moment and length for carrying out the project, including the dialogues with other schools. The GigaPan project is currently proposed to be implemented within the secondary education grade levels with an age group of students ranging between 11-18 years of age.

As international dialogues with other schools are part of the project, it is important to understand how secondary education is organized in the countries involved with attention to year classes/grades, age groups, class and/or subject instruction and the length of the school year and hours of instruction. As noted in part I, school curricula in the countries of the project may vary in their provision of all these elements. Schools may also have different arrangements for reasons of expediency by forming combined classes where students of different ages may be taught together in a multi-grade arrangement.

**School Calendars:**

Your school year is comprised of how many days? When does it begin? And when does it end? When do you have holidays? How many days a week are schools operating? What is the minimum and maximum number of lessons per week in your school? (this may depend on the grade level and number of optional subjects taken).

**Timing the project, topics and dialogues:**

When designing the classroom project, the proposal of the project’s question (step 2) and sub-themes to be addressed by student groups will have to take into account all the above to delineate the possible scope of the project. In this context, will the groups of students be able to address their topics in one lesson, as a unit with several lessons, during the whole semester? Also, the scope of the project will help you determine to a certain extent, how many dialogues you will be able to have with other schools and how to synchronize them within your school calendars and more importantly, in your curriculum.

Using information from the different student groups and their topics, your class should be able to overall establish a timeline for the planned learning activities. When are the projects in your class starting, with which activities, when are they expect to end?

**Step 4. How are we going to get there?**

*Learning Activities based on Active Guided Pedagogies*

In order to achieve the curricular objectives of the project, it is important to consider the kind of interactive learning activities that you will implement in your class to accomplish them. The following are some instructional methods (based on active guided pedagogies, see part II) that could be used to develop your classroom project. With these methods, students are encouraged to appropriate and critically use knowledge, information and resources to understand their own society and that of others as they interact around selected images using the GigaPan as an educational tool.

**Interactive group work:**

As a main component of cooperative learning, and inquiry-based learning, interactive group work\(^\text{24}\) is a useful method that you can use in your lessons when developing your project. When using group work methodologies, critical thinking, communication, participatory and problem solving skills are developed instead of focusing on the acquisition of rote memorization. Teamwork skills, including leadership, decision-making, trust building, communication and conflict management are also enhanced within groups working cooperatively and interactively\(^\text{25}\). As a way to contribute to a participatory and inclusive environment, interactive group work allows for students to get to know each other, to hear different perspectives, to share different ways of learning, and to develop more of a sense of community.

For interactive group work to flourish, students must feel comfortable with their different learning needs and rhythms; a group environment in which everyone feels motivated to openly participate, and building on his/her own knowledge, weaknesses and strengths, and experiences at the same time learning from taking risks and making mistakes.

The teacher’s role is to monitor, guide and facilitate students’ learning of the project skills and knowledge, providing assistance to strengthen individual and collective efforts to reach teamwork skills; he/she does this at the same time evaluating students’ learning and helping students’ self-assessment in how well their group functioned.


Forming the Groups in your class

Having already introduced and decided on the core project question with your class, supported by the particular concept on which the project will be based (e.g. cultural diversity), you can go one step further as previously described and have students reflect and brainstorm on possible answers that could help understand in more detail the proposed question. Students may do this individually (e.g. responding in writing to open-ended questions that are later shared\(^{26}\) with the class) or collectively; as answers to the questions are shared with the class, the teacher will start conceptually map them always keeping relation to the main working concept (e.g. cultural diversity).

In these kinds of exercises, students activate prior knowledge, use questions and answers to make connections, engage in collective sense making and draw upon the multiple perspectives in the room to explore the notion being discussed. As commonalities and differences are identified across students’ answers, these may be grouped into several conceptual sub-categories that help answer in an interdisciplinary way the core question.

As sub-categories are identified collectively, groups could be formed randomly or according to students’ interests in the proposed sub-categories and taking into account students’ complementary strengths and weaknesses; you would have groups of maximum 5 students. These groups would remain as such for the length of the classroom project. Each group would then be responsible for becoming an expert on the topic: carrying out research, backing it up and justifying it with relevant information including GigaPan panoramas, and sharing the main findings with their class and other schools.

* Example/Cultural Diversity:

After an initial brainstorming and conceptual mapping exercise related to the definition of Cultural Diversity, students in School 1 can decide collectively to address the following question as their core project question: - “What are the main cultural aspects that define us or not as Trinidadians/Brazilians/S. Africans?” Students reflect and brainstorm once more on possible answers that could help understand the proposed question. As their answers are shared and conceptually mapped, identifying trends and associations guided by the teacher, the following sub-categories can result to be addressed by four different groups: a) religion, b) race, c) family relations, d) friendships.

Groups can then adopt each one of these topics to undertake research on such topics towards a useful application in their school and/or community.

Example/Sustainable Development:

Students decide to address a core project question: “How does sustainable development apply or not to our community?” After brainstorming and conceptually mapping answers (hint: using definition of sustainable development) the following sub-categories may be

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\(^{26}\) The answers may be collected and read out from the bag; as the teacher does this, he/she can proceed to map the answers within the selected conceptual definition (cultural diversity).
identified by the discussion for groups’ research: a) environment b) economy c) health d) education.

- **Group Roles:**

Following, it is important for the groups to consider who, on a rotation basis, will be responsible for what within the group. Cooperative learning implies being able to work together, individually and collectively, with responsibility towards a common goal. Thus, for example, one student could be responsible for keeping the group’s diary, another would be in charge of taking care of the equipment, another would take care of keeping order of the group’s tasks and plans; another would be the spokesperson for the group. The roles should be rotated during the duration of the project so that every student has a chance to try each role. You would emphasize to students that the success of their group will depend on the each of them being successful in his/her role, in helping each other and supporting each other’s efforts to learn. In this regard, an invaluable resource for successful group interaction is to trust and support peer-to-peer teaching about the strategies the student has been using to collect information as well as about the collected information on the group topic. Overall, also as a group, they should keep track of their group progress in reaching the project and learning objectives (see Step 5 for learning outcomes and assessment).

**International dialogues:**

As your class will be in dialogue with another class in another school in another country, it is important to start to consider how to synchronize this. In the other school, children of the same age group will also be working in groups focusing on sub-categories relevant to a selected classroom project question; though the project questions may be different, all classroom projects will have stemmed from GigaPan interdisciplinary concepts such as cultural diversity or sustainable development. Therefore, the conceptual boundaries of all projects will guarantee containing the various angles of students’ queries and interests across schools.

Examples:

Continuing with **school 1** as an example, prompted by a general project question related to the concept of cultural diversity - “What are the main cultural aspects that define us or not as Trinidadians/Brazilian/S. Africans?” - students may form 4 groups; each group will address a different aspect of related to the question: a) religion, b) race, c) family relations, d) friendships.

Similarly, in **school 2**, with a project question also related to cultural diversity – “Is culture in Brazil/the United States of America an essential part of young people’s lives?” groups will be formed to address sub-categories that could help answer the question: a) sports; b) school; c) arts; d) festivals.
Synchronizing Dialogues:

At one point, these two schools will be communicating about cultural diversity through the website. Teachers will be essential in moderating such dialogues. That is, in guiding students on how to comparatively identify relationships, similarities and differences, and trends in the conversations.

For example, School 1 group(a) religion could interact with School 2 group(d) festivals to find out * how religion is related to festivals and * how religion and festivals are similar or not in the cultures of these two countries.

These conversations or dialogues as part of a research project will be accompanied and strengthened by GigaPan images depicting the particular sub-categories of interest to each group in the class. Each image can be further broken up in snap-shots (selected details) that would represent further cultural details.

For example, if a panorama of a commercial sea port is taken with very lively activity as a way to depict sub-categories of economy or commerce as part of environment/sustainable development, snap-shots can help to further explore various aspects related to the sub-category in question.

For example, a snap-shot of a particular action in which people are trading or selling/buying (trade); a snap shot of a group of people (social interaction or racial diversity or social group involved in commerce; a snap shot of a vessel (transportation related to commerce).

When tagging the snap-shot, that is, when given a title to your snap-shot, try to be creative and go beyond the fact of description. What does the snap-shot mean or represent in the context of the panorama? Example: if there is a snap-shot of a child playing using a kite go one step beyond from a tag title “child with kite” to “games of children in X country”.

* Role-playing Example/ Snapshots and role playing to build life stories:

Let’s suppose there is a panorama aiming to depict social diversity. This can be further broken down by the group to consider aspects of society within the picture as represented by individuals in the image. That is, snap-shots of people involved in diverse activities can be associated to different roles in society. Based on these roles, the stories of people’s lives can be imagined to construct life stories from the panorama. To do this, each student in the group can appropriate a role (snap-shot) in the panorama and to do this, further investigate it; when sharing it with his/her group, impersonating the role, the group can further construct a fictional story around the image to be shared with another school.

Role playing gives students more liberty to call into question some of their classmates’ views that might be considered discriminatory, stereotypical or problematic without
being afraid of hurting someone’s feelings. Dramatizing roles based on real life situations allows the student to move from abstraction and put ideas into action. Students can better understand and share ideas through their roles with a better understanding about for example, assimilation, acculturation, and stratification in society when focusing and acting on particular snap-shots of a socially diverse panorama.

- **Undertaking Research:**

Research implies further understanding a problem or question on a topic by first finding out what others have said about it as a background; what information has been collected by others to explain this problem or question? What new information can your students collect to answer such a question? Moreover, can the students propose a new approach to understand the question by making it specific to their social context? As detectives they should collect enough information from inter-disciplinary perspectives and sources about the problem that help others have a new understanding of the topic they are addressing. Following, students should think how they will share this information with their peers and with peers in other parts of the world.

* For example/HIV/AIDS

If a group of students is working on the sub-theme of health/health issues (for example, HIV/AIDS) as part of sustainable development, they can find out basic information on what is HIV/AIDS. They could then inquire further on and apply such information to their own community. What is the status of HIV/AIDs in their community? Who is affected by HIV/AIDS and how does this have an impact in their daily lives? How can you prevent it? Perhaps prevention campaigns are taking place in the community and the student could take a GigaPan of such scene or workshop. Often dramatization (plays) of social situations and behaviours related to HIV/AIDS are used in prevention workshops. Snap-shots could focus on the various elements involved in the workshops.

- **Gathering Data/Information sources:**

As a key part of the students’ group research, they can organize themselves with tasks on how to find the necessary information they need to best address the question or topic of their group. They can distribute among each other who will take care of finding different kind of information sources that they consider useful to best understand address the topic. It is therefore important that the group identifies where the information is located and how they will be able to obtain it. Will each of them be able to access this information? To what extent will the school support the students in going out to find this information? For example, planning visits to the local library? Visiting particular areas of the community to gather information, for example, with interviews or taking panoramas?

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27 “Action is the test of comprehension. This is simply another way of saying that learning by doing is a better way to learn than by listening […] ideas which need action to make them real” (Dewey, John and Dewey, Evelyn. (1928). *Schools of Tomorrow*. London and Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., p. 120.
Will other groups in the class benefit from visiting a same site to find information on their particular topic?

Example of Going-out/ESD:

Environmental topics have the potential of addressing the extent to which social, economic and ecological aspects of our everyday actions and behaviours can affect the well-being of our community. On the other hand, when and how are our every-day lives affected by global climate change?

In relation to sustainable development topics, for example, as proposed by Kagawa, F., Selby, D., Trier, C. (2006)\textsuperscript{28}, a field trip could be done to explore [...] sustainable tourism, flood defence, nature conservation, and farming. “Meetings could be arranged with practitioners in these contexts...During the field visits, ethical and values issues underpinning environmental management could be discussed” (p.54) Following group discussions based on the information collected could further address how personal behaviours, values and dispositions of the group members relate to the environmental issues addressed during the field trip.

Primary and Secondary Sources:

When gathering information for their project, it is important for students to distinguish for example, between primary and secondary sources, including pictures or panoramas. Thus, what sources will help them answer their group’s question?

A primary source is a "source created by people who actually saw or participated in an event and recorded that event or their reactions to it immediately after the event. In contrast, secondary source is defined as a "source created by someone either not present when the event took place or removed by time from the event"\textsuperscript{29}.

Primary sources\textsuperscript{30} allow the researcher to get as close as possible to the truth of what actually happened during a particular historical event or time period. Primary sources are the evidence left behind in any form by participants or observers. They are a source of direct evidence that describes or documents an historical event from the perspective of someone who was there\textsuperscript{31}. As noted by the University of California at Berkeley, examples of primary sources include:

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\textsuperscript{28} Kagawa, F., Selby, D., Trier, C. “Exploring students’ perceptions of interactive pedagogies in education for sustainable development”, In \textit{Planet,} No. 17, December 2006, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{29} \url{http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/teachers/primary.html#definitions}

\textsuperscript{30} Tips for locating primary source material: \url{http://www.lib.berkeley.edu./TeachingLib/Guides/PrimarySources.html}

\textsuperscript{31} The Teaching Library at the University of California at Berkeley / Publication - "Library Research using Primary Sources" \url{http://ipr.ues.gseis.ucla.edu/info/definition.html}
• Diaries, journals, speeches, interviews, letters, memos, manuscripts and other papers in which individuals describe events in which they were participants or observers;
• Memoirs and autobiographies;
• Records of organizations and agencies of government;
• Published materials written at the time of the event;
• Photographs, audio recordings, moving pictures, video recordings documenting what happened;
• Artifacts of all kinds; and
• Research reports in the sciences and social sciences.

Panoramas, as photographs are a source as well to document present social realities or to capture sites that within change, still hold traces related to a particular event.

A secondary source is a work that interprets or analyzes an event or phenomenon; it interprets and analyzes primary sources. Secondary sources are removed from the event in time and space.

• Secondary sources\textsuperscript{32} may have pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources in them. Some types of secondary sources include: Textbooks, magazine articles, histories, criticisms, commentaries, and encyclopaedias.

Examples of secondary sources could include:

• A journal/magazine article which interprets or reviews previous findings
• A history textbook
• A book about the effects of WWI

\textbf{Resources for the project:}

Very importantly, the main resource for a classroom project as a learning experience is the students’ own experience in social interdependence with his/her peers, the school and the community.

"\textit{No book or map is a substitute for personal experience; they cannot take the place of the actual journey…(..) ‘Learning by doing’ in the sense that nearly all the school work centred around activities which had intrinsic meaning and value to the pupils, but most of the initiative for the work came from the children themselves}".\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} http://www.princeton.edu/~refdesk/primary2.html
Other resources needed by the project would depend on the design of the classroom project. What materials will students need to design, carry out and share their project? Are the schools able to provide them? Are they accessible? Can efforts be joined with other community programs or services? It is important to become very creative when developing projects in the context of limited resources. Please remember that creativity in the project is not defined by quantity or by necessarily using far-out materials but from the unique quality associations between meaning and action regarding ideas, objects, materials, people, situations, etc. that contribute to discover something new or different about who we are in relation to the Other in our local and global communities.

We would also like to make a note on the importance of textbooks or other teaching materials when using them in tandem to the GigaPan project. As a teacher you would help and guide students in being critical regarding the international content and discourse of textbooks and other written or visual material they use. For example, are historical events addressed from various social-economic and cultural perspectives? Whose point of view prevails and how and why is this justified? What are some of the political implications and consequences of certain understandings we find in books about other societies and their history? Are the textbooks and teaching materials used in tandem with the project gender friendly/unbiased, non-discriminatory?

A key resource of the project as an educational tool is the GigaPan equipment as this will allow students to take very detailed panoramas of the world around them in relation to the project topic they have selected:

A GigaPan Equipment- camera, robot and tripod (please refer to GigaPan Manual of Instructions for details).

The project also requires:

Computers of 1 GB RAM;
40GB hard disk space;
High-speed internet.

Please note that, depending on how the GigaPan classroom projects are organized at your school, sharing internet speed (bandwidth) in ways that do not decrease the speed at an individual level (300kibps per user) could be creatively explored depending on the times and activities that groups of students embark on when developing as teams different aspects of the project.

**Quality of Discussions/Dialogues in class and in the internet**

The following presents a few hints that you may find useful to “guide” and “mentor” quality discussions and/or dialogues that take place as part of the learning activities of the project including communication through the project’s website.
“What will mean if teachers become sufficiently courageous and emancipated to insist that education means the creation of a discriminating mind, a mind that prefers not to dupe (fool) itself or be the dupe of others? Clearly they will have to cultivate the habit of suspended judgment, of scepticism, of desire for evidence, of appeal to observation rather than sentiment, discussion rather than bias, inquiry rather than conventional idealizations. When this happens schools will be the dangerous outposts of humane civilization. But they will also begin to be supremely interesting places.”\(^{34}\)

- During all their learning activities, students should be encouraged to share with their peers how they are thinking about solving a particular problem or question; at the same time, they should reflect and share with each other what they are learning together as a group regarding new concepts, skills and strategies. They should do this in a supportive cooperative way in which each member participates and contributes building on their strengths and weaknesses.

- “Communication is a process of sharing experience till it becomes a common possession”\(^{35}\)

- Teachers should engage in an ongoing constructive dialogue with students by using students’ responses to estimate their needs and from this present other questions that help to develop their knowledge and skills further. As a teacher, you would be attentive to who is sharing or not in the discussions and/or who seems to be struggling with new concepts in order to provide support. In doing this, motivate and help students to draw upon their own knowledge and experience as a source for their understanding and explanations; dialogues should be based on experiences and situations that give students opportunities to construct on each other’s perspectives and to consider their ideas in relationship to others.

- Dialogues and discussions should address society in its diversity and with multiple approaches to encourage debates from different points of views. In this regard, the teacher as a facilitator and guide can help to frame questions that invite diverse cultural perspectives on certain topics.

- “To cooperate by giving differences a chance to show themselves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of the other persons but is a means of enriching one’s own life-experience, is inherent in the democratic personal way of life”.\(^{36}\)


Are teachers and students inviting multiple perspectives, or discouraging those perhaps found intolerable? “Toleration is not just an attitude of good-humoured indifference. It is positive willingness to permit reflection and inquiry to go on in the faith that the truly right will be rendered more secure through questioning and discussion, while things which endured merely from custom will be amended or done away with.”  

In order to create a strong community in the classroom it is important to encourage students to talk about or wrestle with difficult issues in tandem to active listening skills with an overall goal of mutual support to understand a particular issue or problem.

Students should feel comfortable making mistakes as a constructive element of their learning process and development.

“Give a child freedom to find out what he can and cannot do, both in the way of what is physically possible and what his neighbours will stand for, and he will not waste much time on impossibilities but will bend his energies to the possibilities”

Try to go always beyond the description of the fact: “What is this?” Nurture dialogue and development with - “How and Why is this?”

Step 5. How do we know that we arrived to our destination?

Learning Outcomes and Assessment:

How do we know that we have arrived at the end of our educational experience with the GigaPan classroom project? That is, have the students’ critical understanding, sharing and constructive use of concepts of, for example - cultural diversity, learning to live Together, sustainable development, and community - been enhanced through active pedagogies with an overall impact on the development of the student’s knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours regarding intercultural understanding and social tolerance? How is the student applying new concepts, skills (e.g. critical thinking, teamwork and, technological skills) and attitudes to cooperate, engage and participate with his/her local and global communities?

If the project’s learning objectives propose that students analyze, synthesize, compare and evaluate, then one should highlight as an outcome if they can build, propose, justify and construct new approaches of understanding and action. For example: If their topic is addressing the environment and water systems - Can they collect water samples, test and

compare results, and propose and justify environmental measures to improve the water’s quality?

What is creative work?

“Every individual is in some way original and creative in his very make-up; that is the meaning of individuality. What is most needed is to get rid of what stifles and chokes its manifestation. When the oppressive and artificial load is removed, each will find his own opportunity for positive constructive work in some field. And it is not the extent, the area, of his work that is important as much as its quality and intensity” (p.17)\textsuperscript{39}

The purpose assessment is to guide, motivate and help students in their learning process. It is important that feedback is discussed and given to students in a positive, supportive and constructive way. With such feedback and guidance, students become aware of their thinking and action, understanding the purpose and application of their learning in their own personal development as well as in that of their community. Instead of requesting students to recite or reiterate information, engaging teachers motivate students to creatively address problems using the concepts and skills and attitudes they have encountered with the project.

Assessment of students’ learning should be also be flexible and inclusive in bringing forth with different means (e.g. visual, written, audio, multimedia along the lines of Howard Gardner’s proposal of multiple intelligences\textsuperscript{40}) the varied qualities and learning styles that children have in the context of their difficulties and strengths.

- The group process as a learning outcome:

In line with cooperative and active learning approaches, the group process that was involved in bringing out a project into fruition is a core and comprehensive outcome in itself. That is, for example, the students’

- putting into action the project’s concepts and skills by actively deciding and justifying in a participatory and reflective way among each other - why and how they would like to address a particular topic;

- planning of activities and distribution of tasks among each other in a supportive and constructive way (as a team building on each other’s strengths and weaknesses) to identify, find and collect the necessary information needed to further understand such a topic;


designing creatively at the end of the project how to share this knowledge and experience with their peers;

showing the project’s application with relevance to their needs and interests as well as to those of the community (e.g. developing behaviours of civic participation towards social change at local and global levels)

The above components are all key achievements of a student’s learning process as part of a cooperative group. As a way to document such process, each student can, for example, keep a journal, or a portfolio with images, related reflective pieces, and conceptual maps about their project’s experience.

Several project applications can also be considered. As an outcome of their project, students could present a proposal for the community on awareness about an environmental issue and suggested solutions; they could also design a proposal on how to share with younger children in their school or with parents about the most interesting aspects in their view about the participating cultures of the project. A recycling policy or plan for the school or the community could be considered; a plan to work with city authorities to develop playground areas for the city as a way to address the importance of play in children’s development and education. Based on their project’s research, students can give presentations to local officials as part of advocacy and public awareness campaigns on a particular issue. Plans for collaborative fundraising efforts in the community to bring change towards a common cause addressed by the project could also be pursued.

Finally, the group process as part of a classroom project should involve the important element of -

self-assessment as a learning outcome.

The group can identify and share with the larger group the challenges they faced when developing the project as well as their good practices when working together. What would they have done differently? What would they like to strengthen in the future? What are they proud of?

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You have now reached the end of this journey. This handbook relies on building on your own day-to-day experience as an educator and on the personal experiences, backgrounds, abilities, strengths, and knowledge of your students. All these will complete, tailor and refine the significance of the classroom project’s final, yet ongoing destination as a meaningful learning experience. In particular, we hope that this document reinforces your belief and experience in making diversity and social interaction key components of the education experience of your students; moreover, in contributing to make the experience of diversity a right of all children’s personal and educational development.