

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION IN CANADA

**A Particular Look at
the Quebec School
System**

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Every child.

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For UNICEF-Canada

March 1st 2013

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INTRODUCTION

Through their triple mandate – the transfer of knowledge, socialization of shared values, and professional qualification - schools play a central role in meeting the diverse needs and rights of the child. However, school systems in highly pluralistic and democratic societies face considerable challenges when they attempt to realize human rights, inclusion, equity and equal opportunity while adapting to social, ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity (Garcia, 2002; Banks, 2008 ; Inglis, 2008; OECD, 2006; Mc Andrew et al., 2008; Ontario, 2009). Training teachers and other stakeholders is particularly demanding (Banks et al., 2005; Gay, 2010; Potvin, 2013). A rights-based approach, and specifically human rights education, requires a holistic understanding of the meaning and scope of human rights, as well as of the systemic implications of applying human rights at all levels of the educational system, including the legal framework, institutional policies, educational projects, codes of conduct in schools, curriculum, class management, pedagogical activities, student government, and community life.

Human rights education in general, and children's rights education in particular, aims to help meet the considerable challenges of “living together” or community life¹, citizenship, equality, democracy, diversity and inclusion. For this reason, human rights education is often integral to many other approaches or models (in theory and practice) developed over more than thirty years in the field of education under various labels such as citizenship education, democratic education, multicultural or intercultural education, anti-discriminatory education, inclusive education, and global and peace education. Despite their sometimes divergent premises and goals, these approaches aim not only to develop the knowledge, behaviour and know-how (or skills) about human rights and active citizenship of educators and students, but also to provide strategies for changing structures and practices in schools to make rights effective and encourage an inclusive school culture (*ibid.* ; OISE, 2012 ; Potvin and McAndrew, 2010).

As we will see in this report, these approaches make children's rights, their needs and the development of their "capabilities" (Sen, 2000; Nussbaum, 2012) for equal opportunity (Potvin, 2011, 2013) more or less central. In some approaches, children's rights are integrated without distinction into general human rights, while other approaches put greater emphasis on meeting children's needs rather than on the effectiveness of their rights. However, these distinctions, especially between a needs based approach and a rights based approach, are important. An unfulfilled need generates dissatisfaction, whereas a right that is not respected (or not effective) is a violation, and reparations can be legally and legitimately demanded. A rights-based approach, and particularly one based on the rights of children, recognizes the existence of rights and responsibilities (and not just needs) and can strengthen the ability of rights-holders and duty bearers (students, adults, governments, members of public, para-public and semi-public institutions) to respect, protect and guarantee human rights through interventions and resources. Human rights education – meaning and scope, violations, assertion, responsibilities of rights-holders – should be central to all public institutions, especially schools.

¹ For the purposes of this document, the French term *le vivre-ensemble* is translated as *community life*, which refers to harmonious social relations within a community.

Written on the request of UNICEF Canada, this report draws on government and academic literature in the field to provide an overview of children's rights education in Canada and more particularly in Quebec schools. The aim is to integrate this report on Quebec into a pan-Canadian project in partnership with PREVNET (*Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence*)². This report presents what is said and done in Quebec schools about the rights of children to be informed of and know their rights. The term "children's rights education" or CRE refers to explicitly teaching children their rights and responsibilities, so that they become autonomous in the exercise of their rights. It focuses solely on Articles 29.1 (sub-sections b and d) and 42 of the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

This report does not attempt to assess the extent to which Canada and its provinces respect the entire Convention; exposing, for example, violations of children's rights in different sectors of Quebec society (health, food, housing, education, etc.). (See Canada's report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2008.) Many public institutions, such as the Commission on Human Rights and Youth Rights (*Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse*, CDPDJ) and several ministries (including the Ministry of Education) in Quebec have a broad mandate to measure, by diverse indicators, the ability of all children - without discrimination of any kind (Article 2 of the Convention) – to develop fully, access education and healthcare, grow in an appropriate environment and actively participate in society. There are a great number of laws and programmes addressing the various articles of the Convention, whether on fundamental rights, economic, social and cultural rights – education, health, poverty, etc – and it would be unrealistic in this report to pretend to assess whether or not these various laws respect the rights of children in Quebec. On the other hand, we do highlight, particularly in Chapter 2, the ways in which some rights of children (for example, the right to participate in decision-making, the right to obtain support for a special need, freedom of expression, freedom of opinion or (religious) conscience) can be violated in schools.

The first chapter introduces the importance of the UN *Convention of the Rights of the Child* or UNCRC to children's rights education, Canada's obligations, and children's rights education in Quebec laws, policies and official academic programme. We highlight all aspects of the Quebec Education Programme (*Programme de formation de l'école québécoise*) – covering programme, broad areas of learning, subject areas, cross-curricular competencies and subject-specific competencies – which have an explicit or implicit bearing on human rights (and children's rights where relevant) and, more broadly, on the values of community life in a democratic society (equality, rights, non-discrimination, socio-cultural diversity, social justice).

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This article is part of a larger research project on teaching educators about diversity – in Quebec and comparatively — funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) (Potvin et al., SSHRC, 2012-2014). It is broadly based on some of our previous or forthcoming publications on inclusive, anti-discriminatory, civil and intercultural education (Potvin *et al.*, 2006; Potvin, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013).

3

Human rights, equality and discrimination are inter-related concepts at the core of democracies. Equality is a fundamental principle of human rights (the assertion that all human beings

The second chapter examines the different approaches (theoretical and pedagogic) which, directly or indirectly, shape children's rights education as well as school materials and activities, including numerous NGO programmes. We did not have a mandate to carry out field research (through questionnaires, interviews, observing classes or school visits) to understand or assess teaching practices and concrete activities relating to rights, equality and discrimination in Quebec schools. Because there has been little empirical research on this question, we carried out a review of programmes on NGO websites and drew on research we conducted in 2006 on anti-racist, intercultural, and rights education policies and practices in Montreal schools (Potvin, McAndrew and Kanouté, 2006; Potvin and McAndrew, 2010).

We conclude with the main observations and a single recommendation, as well as challenges for implementing this recommendation. Our major recommendation, whose significance and scope we explain, is to implement an approach truly based on the rights and needs of students, starting with an inclusive, democratic and equity educational approach. This recommendation is directed at education stakeholders in general - decision-makers and practitioners, currently very much aware of this approach - with the aim of encouraging the broader implementation in policy, institutions, and at the systemic level of an inclusive approach based on the rights of the child in Quebec (Potvin, 2013).

are born free and equal). Equality assumes that all have the same rights and deserve the same respect. Non-discrimination is an integral part of the concept of equality. It ensures that no one is denied the protection of their rights on the basis of age, ethnic origin, sex, etc.

1. INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXTS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION

1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

After the Second World War, the international community addressed the specific needs of childhood by unanimously adopting the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in the UN General Assembly in November 1959. While the Declaration was based on the principles of the UN Charter – recognition of the inherent dignity of every member of the human family, equality and inalienability of our rights - the international community was convinced that the special needs of the child were urgent and called for a distinct and specific declaration.

Special protection for the child had already been articulated after the First World War in the 1924 Geneva Declaration. The United Nations created the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 1946, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War; at that time, UNICEF focused on emergency aid for child victims of war in Europe.

The *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* signaled the emergence of a new concept of the particular status of the child by reformulating many of the rights and freedoms articulated in the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man (1948) and previous texts. The text sets out 10 general principles, which set the direction for the future *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, as well as ideals for the protection of the child (Covell & Howe, 2005):

1. The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in the Declaration, rights which shall be recognized for every child, without any exception and without distinction or discrimination.
2. The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity.
3. He shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.
4. He shall enjoy the benefits of social security and, specifically, to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.
5. He shall be given special treatment, education and care if he is handicapped.
6. He shall wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and, in any case, in an atmosphere of affection and of security.
7. The child is entitled to free and compulsory education.
8. He shall, in all circumstances, be among the first to receive protection and relief.
9. He shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation and shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age.
10. The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, and in full consciousness that his energy and

talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

In 1989, the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child* is formally adopted by the United Nations. It was ratified by Canada in 1991, and then by every other country in the world, with the exception of the United States and Somalia. The rights of the child are defined as specific rights to protect everyone under the age of 18. Under the Convention, signatory states commit to respecting, protecting and applying the rights of children, which confers responsibilities and accountable obligations on signatories (Volpe, Cox, Goddard, & Tilleczek, 1997). Children are recognized as "persons in their own right, who have their own rights and are not second-class citizens" (CDPDJ, 2004: 2).

Its ratification by most states in the world accorded special protection and assistance to children around the world (UNICEF, 2012). All children's rights recognized by the Convention must be fulfilled. In order to respect, protect (through laws), and guarantee (through intervention and resources) these rights, signatory states must, according to the Convention, establish policies and programmes, adopt laws as necessary, and create mechanisms to monitor respect for these rights. Canada, because of its federal structure, does not have a national surveillance mechanism. However, eight of the provinces have created a defender or protector of children's rights under various names. In Quebec, the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* holds this responsibility (CDPDJ, 2004).

1.2 CANADA'S AND QUEBEC'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONVENTION

By signing the Convention, States mainly commit to integrating the rights of the child into new legislation, legal principles and court decisions (Covell & Howe, 2005). Canada has in this way reviewed all its federal and provincial laws to bring them into conformity with the Convention (UNICEF, 2012). In order to periodically evaluate signatory States' respect for and application of children's rights, states commit to providing a report to the UN Committee every five years (Article 44, part 2 of the Convention). The Committee assesses countries' efforts in upholding children's rights according to the four general principles which underpin the Convention: non-discrimination, superior interest of the child, rights to life, survival and development, and the opinion of the child (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2007).

Among the commitments pursuant to ratification of the Convention, Articles 29.1 (paragraphs b and d) directly concern children's rights education. Paragraphs 1b and 1d of Article 29 stipulate that signatory states agree that the education of the child is aimed at:

- b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

Article 42 stipulates that:

States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.

After ratifying the Convention, each province of the signatory country must therefore incorporate children's rights into their formal education programme. Since the beginning of the 1990s, more than half of the OECD member countries engaged in educational reform projects integrating, among other things, mandatory teaching on citizenship education in their official programmes. As we will see in the next section (1.3), human rights education at the elementary and secondary levels in Quebec is for the most part integrated into mandatory teaching on Citizenship Education and on Ethics and religious cultures in the Quebec Education Programme, specifically the mandate to "promote values of democracy and ensure that youth act, according to their level, as responsible citizens" (MELS, 2004: 3).

However, reading Canada's last periodic report to the UN on the application of the Convention (Canada, 2007) – in particular the section on Quebec, in the subsection entitled, "Education, leisure, and cultural activities" (Articles 28, 29 and 31)" – we note that there is no mention of any specific measure about rights education in the official education programme in Quebec; this constitutes a worrisome gap. These reports only present the standards adopted by Canadian officials (and by each province) and not rights violations exposed by inquiries and research. Only some general measures on the intercultural education of some sectors of the population are cited in the section on "General Principles (Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12)" and refer to non-discrimination (but not on rights education for children), including:

- A measure of the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities (MICC)'s Governmental Action Plan (2004-2007), *Shared Values, Common Interests*, which aims to foster intercultural learning among youth at school, and MICC's Programme to support civil and intercultural relations, which supports projects on pluralism in Quebec society, including some targeting youth.
- A training module to raise youth awareness about prejudices relating to sexual orientation has been developed for teachers and non-teaching staff of Secondary Cycle Two.
- Implementing recommendations from the 2007 report of the Advisory Committee on Integration and Reasonable Accommodation in Schools, *Inclusive Quebec Schools: dialogue, values and common reference points*, notably the production of a reference guide to accommodation, establishing a team to support institutions, and the organization of training sessions for school staff on reasonable accommodation.
- The 2008-2011 Action Plan of the Ministry of Education (MELS), *Violence in the schools: Let's work on it together!* to anticipate and deal with violence in schools: intimidation, bullying, racism, homophobia, sexual violence, physical violence, and street gangs.

In contrast, a 2007 report by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) on the implementation of an entirely different convention, the *Convention against Discrimination in Education*, is far more precise about the measures adopted by all the provinces on education relating to "human and democratic values," including human rights and the rights of the child. But even here, the section on Quebec does not present the orientations and contents of the Quebec Education Programme, which has

been implemented since 2004. In Quebec, the report mentions that in 2002 the Minister of Education adopted measures far less significant than the mandatory teaching of the official programme, such as the strategy for the internationalization of education (*To succeed the internationalization of education ... a mutually advantageous strategy*), which attempts to integrate human and democratic values into the content of teaching programmes and activities, in order to facilitate student exchange. There is a vague reference to increasing the number of teaching hours devoted to second language, geography, history, and citizenship education.

Because these reports from Canada remain somewhat superficial and fail to provide specific information about concrete education practices in the provinces, the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (CCRC)'s criticism of the federal government are understandable. CCRC is a network of Canadian organizations created in 1989 to promote respect for the rights of children. It condemns the gaps in children's rights education in schools as well as the insufficiency of awareness-raising and training projects aimed at educating the public and, more specifically, decision-makers in schools and other sectors affecting the lives of youth (health, security, leisure, etc.). While this organization has not carried out a detailed analysis of the official programmes in place in each province, its report notes the disturbing conclusions of a study carried out by Environics for War Child in Canada in 2006, which indicates that children and adults in Canada know very little about human rights and children's rights (quoted in CCRC, 2011). Most children had never heard anything about international treaties on human rights, at school or anywhere else. To "Guarantee education-related rights within the teaching system" (CCRC, 2011: 19), CCRC (2009) proposes as a target that, before 2015, 75% of children aged 7 and up know their rights and responsibilities and be capable of respecting the rights of others, and also know what they can and can't do in case of rights violations.

To meet this goal, the CCRC formulated diverse recommendations for different stakeholders (CCRC, 2009). It advises the Federal government to educate the public about the rights of the child, by integrating children's rights into educational systems across the country and mounting information campaigns. The interministerial working group on the rights of the child is asked to adopt measures to educate civil servants and educators. Finally, it recommends that provincial ministries of education:

Expand the development and use of resources for children's rights education programmes as well as educational initiatives integrating children's rights knowledge and practice into programmes, policies and school practices. [...] Ensure that all educational programmes cover the rights of the child in Canada as well as issues relating to the children's rights in less developed countries (CCRC, 2009: 28).

In Quebec, no measures relating to rights education flowing from the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* appear to have been implemented, at least according to Canada's Third and Fourth reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2008). We also note that these reports are completely silent about initial and continuing teacher training programmes aimed at the integration of rights education and respecting children's rights in the classroom.

1.3 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION IN QUEBEC LAWS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

In Canada, education is the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces according to Article 93 of the 1867 Constitutional Act. The Ministry of Education of each province and each of the three territories is responsible for adopting laws, policies and programmes as well as the organization, provision, and evaluation of education at all levels. The provincial and territorial Ministries approve the curriculum and learning materials, and make all decisions about education laws and policies. Canada thus has no federal Ministry of Education but in 1967 it created the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. This aimed to allow the provincial and territorial ministers to exchange on common issues and work collaboratively to improve education in Canada (CMEC, 2008).

In Quebec, the Public Education Act (*Loi sur l'instruction publique*) (2012) does not explicitly reference child rights education but emphasizes, in several places, the importance of human rights education in schools. In the section about responsibilities of the teacher, article 22 stipulates that "it is the responsibility of the teacher [...] to adopt appropriate measures to help develop students' respect for human rights."

In our exploratory cartography of anti-racist and human rights education in francophone schools in Montreal (Potvin, McAndrew and Kanouté, 2006), we noted that rights and responsibilities, non-discrimination and democratic practices were often embedded in general institutional policies as well as educational projects and codes of conduct, the official programme, curriculum and courses, continuing education for practitioner school or para-school activities at the elementary, secondary, college and teacher training at university. We present below an analysis of the place that rights education holds in general institutional policies, in education projects and codes of conduct, as well as all in the Quebec Education Programme at the pre-school, elementary and secondary levels. In this we draw on our study of anti-racist/anti-discrimination education in Quebec (Potvin, McAndrew and Kanouté, 2006; Potvin and Carr, 2008; Potvin and McAndrew, 2010), which relied on a set of key words⁴. We also analysed the new Ethics and Religious Cultures component, added to the official programme in 2008.

In terms of the general policy framework, the *Policy on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education* of the Ministry of Education (1998) comprises three components: equality, mastery of the language, and citizenship education, with recognition that compensatory measures are necessary for minority and migrant youth. Looking at some school boards on Montreal island, it seems that the struggle against all forms of discrimination, exclusion, racism and injustice is central to the Montreal School Board's intercultural policy (CSDM, 2009). Although the Pointe-de-l'Île School Board (CSPI) does not have a policy, the Marguerite-Bourgeoys School Board's (CSMB) policy seems to make the success of new immigrants central.

4 Racism, rights, freedoms, discrimination, prejudices, democracy, equality, duties, race, tolerance, diversity, pluralism, intercultural.

However, diverse educational projects and codes of conduct in schools (particularly secondary⁵) integrate many aspects of rights education, as indicated by the key words. This is the case for 8 out of 13 secondary schools at the Marguerite Bourgeois School Board's CSMB, 15 out of 47 at the CSDM, and 5 out of 12 at the CSPI in our 2005 survey. The (explicitly) predominant and recurrent aspect is that of "attitudes and behaviour", such as codes of conduct in schools, understood from the perspective of "harmonious intercultural relations" (tolerance and acceptance), in order to diffuse potential conflict.

The Quebec Education Programme (MELS 2008) – hereafter the Programme – gives significant place to rights education, but not explicitly the rights of the child, as we shall see in greater detail below. Emerging from the important reform of the 90s (*Renouveau pédagogique*), it is the official education programme in place in Quebec, forming the basis of initial teacher training and all teaching at the pre-school, elementary and secondary levels, both private and public, francophone and anglophone.

The Programme gives importance to democratic citizenship education in a pluralist society. Its objectives are, among other things, to learn how to live together and to act as responsible citizens through acquiring knowledge about democratic values, pluralism, inter-group relations, human rights and equality on one hand, and diverse cognitive, ethical, social and relational skills on the other.

The next section looks in detail at the Quebec programme.

1.3.1 OFFICIAL PRE-SCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY PROGRAMME

In the pre-school and elementary programme, we have identified several aspects of education in human rights, equality and democracy in most of the programme's "Broad Areas of Learning" – Environment and Consumption, Media, Citizenship and Community Life, Personal and Career Planning, Health and Well-being – as well as in the subject areas, aimed at acquiring subject-specific and "cross-curricular" competencies of an intellectual, methodological, personal and social, and communication nature. For example, Environment and Consumption includes a development focus on "Consciousness of social, economic and ethical aspects of the consumer world" and Media includes development focuses on media representations of reality (recognition of sexist, stereotyped and violent messaging) and on knowledge and respect for individual and collective rights and responsibilities relating to the media (freedom of expression).

However, it is in the area of Citizenship and community life that human rights come into their own. This area contains several development focuses relating to respect for rights: Promotion of the rules of social conduct and democratic institutions (rights and responsibilities relating to democratic institutions);

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Those used by elementary schools are rarely accessible on the internet. It is also important to note that a school's academic project does not necessarily reflect the full scope of its activities.

Participation, cooperation, and solidarity (establishing relations of equality); Contribution to a culture of peace (interdependence of individuals, peoples and their achievements, equality of rights and the right of individuals and groups to be different, peaceful conflict resolution, the fight against stereotypes, discriminations and exclusion) (MELS, 2005). All of these topics serve as a starting point for learning opportunities.

The programme also outlines a number of “Subject Areas” including *Social Sciences*,⁶ which focuses on diversity, tolerance and openness to the world and offers important opportunities for rights education. In Elementary Cycle Two and Three, this area consists of three subjects: geography, history and citizenship education. The main subject-specific competency targeted is “to be open to the diversity of societies and their territory” by discovering the co-existence of different ways of organizing, thus inviting the student to understand, be open to, welcome and respect the other, all while strengthening personal and social identity.

Finally, the Personal Development subject area directly broaches human rights. It aims to have the student discern and act on values such as participation, solidarity, equality, dignity and respect for the self, others and the environment. This area has included the ethical and religious culture programme since 2008, which helps promote better community life and encourage the construction of a real communal public culture (MELS, 2008: 280). It aims at the acquisition of three subject-specific competencies: *Reflect on ethical questions*, *Demonstrate an understanding of the phenomenon of religion*; and *Engage in dialogue*. The two components – ethics and religious cultures – are specific but provide a common place for dialogue and share the same ends: recognition of the other and pursuit of the common good. Human rights education explicitly cuts across the description of these two ends. In fact, the programme notes that: “The recognition of others, which is intrinsically connected to self-knowledge, is also linked to the principle that all people possess equal value and dignity. MELS, 2008: 296). The pursuit of the common good breaks down into three main actions: search for common values with others; promotion of projects encouraging community life, and the promotion of principles and democratic ideals of Quebec society. Learning situations treat subjects directly related to human rights, such as relations between human beings (differences, prejudices), freedom, equality, responsibility, sharing wealth, friendship and mutual aid, but also social transformations, such as the role of media, environmental protection and the impacts of scientific and technological advances on community life. In Cycle Three, there is a more marked attention to rights, while one of the six elements of the “ethical” component, called “Values, norms and responsibilities which chart social life”, suggests creating learning situations on rights and responsibilities as well as respect for the rights of the child.

Many school manuals include capsules and activities relating to rights. For example, the social sciences manual *Voyages*, devotes a unit to the idea of rights by explaining the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but without mentioning the rights of the child.

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This field of learning is not included in the subject-time allocation for Elementary Cycle One. Learning must fall under mandatory programme subjects at this level.

1.3.2 OFFICIAL SECONDARY PROGRAMME

Secondary Cycle One and Two of the Programme contain all aspects of an inclusive approach founded on rights, in four broad areas of learning, including explicit aspects and numerous rights education opportunities: Health and well-being, Environment and consumption, Media, Community life and Citizenship. They overlap and are inter-linked in many ways.

In the general area of *Health and well-being*, the programme notes the importance of helping students identify harmful potential consequences of behaviours such as exclusion, discrimination and abuse. Similarly, in the general area of *Environment and consumption*, the consequences of globalisation on cultures, ways of life, distribution of wealth and the fair distribution of resources are examined. In *Media*, the student must produce media documents respecting individual and collective rights and grasp the meaning of freedom of expression and its limits.

As in the elementary level, History and Citizenship Education contains the greatest number of explicit elements and opportunities for rights education, without specific mention of the “rights of the child”. The program has two educational aims: “to enable students to develop their understanding of the present in the light of the past and to prepare them to participate as informed citizens in the social life of a democratic, pluralistic society that is receptive to a complex world ». (MELS, 2001: 295). The programme focuses here on the promotion of the rules of living in society and democratic institutions, Charters and fundamental laws, rights and responsibilities, democratic institutions, ideologies and political forms of organization), on participation, cooperation and solidarity (establishing egalitarian relations, community action projects), on contribution to the culture of peace (notions of power, rights equality, negative consequences of stereotypes, and other forms of discrimination and exclusion, struggle against poverty and illiteracy, awareness about situations of cooperation and aggression, peaceful resolution and power relations).

In History and Citizenship Education in Secondary Cycle One, the student must question and interpret social realities (past and present) within their complexity, relativize its interpretation and “build their consciousness as a citizen with the help of history” (MELS, 2011 :294). The student will thus be lead to identify values and principles from social realities, to recognize the spaces in which the principles and values underpinning democracy are exercised, to recognize the rights and responsibilities of individuals and the usefulness of public institutions. The content of this education includes many aspects of rights education, including: recognition of freedoms and civil rights, American and French revolutions, experience of democracy, European and industrial expansion.

In Secondary Cycle Two, the subject *Contemporary World*, included in Social Sciences, also touches on the issue of human rights. Notably, this subject area suggests the theme “Tensions and conflicts” which invites the student to consider the concept of intervention, examining concepts of human rights, diplomacy, ideology, intervention and demands. The other themes (environment, population, power, wealth) refer to rights indirectly.

Just as at the elementary level, the area of personal development includes the subject ethics and religious culture. During Secondary Cycle One, students continue to study diversity and transformation of institutional, social, cultural and religious values and norms. At Secondary Cycle Two, they examine

new aspects, looking at complex subjects relating to values and norms such as tolerance, the future of humanity, justice, and the ambivalence of the human being.

The programme thus provides space for understanding human rights, both at elementary and secondary levels, as well as in teaching manuals. There is, however, no specific mention of children's rights in the entire programme at elementary or secondary levels which, according to the commitments Canada made under the Convention, should appear. Moreover, the choice of teaching manual and the issues addressed in the classrooms are left up to each teacher. Teachers thus have a lot of discretion over the extent to which children's rights are taught. Without data from field research, it is impossible to know what is actually happening in the schools and the specific content in rights education addressed by educators.

1.4 THE FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES⁷

In Quebec, all educators are tested throughout their initial training at university for their mastery of fields of knowledge, know-how, and social knowledge as defined in the *Framework* of 12 professional competencies developed by the Ministry of Education (MEQ, 2001). Several of these competencies are directly related to respect for the rights of children and their diverse needs. These include competency 1 (critical look at cultural origins and practices), competency 2 (taking social representations and differences into account to adapt teaching practices), and competency 12 (act in a responsible and ethical way, without discrimination). The Quebec Education Programme repeatedly stresses the central importance of teacher competency in diverse issues or subjects, including “awareness of the values they impart” because of the determining influence these values can have on the educational and professional orientation of their students.

Many researchers in the field conclude that, in order to meet democratic challenges and inequalities they encounter, all educators must develop a keen awareness of factors contributing to inequalities and exclusion (migration, socio-economic, family, linguistic, handicaps). In this way, they can take into account the differences in cognitive, physical and affective needs in their schools (Dei and Calliste, 2008; Gay, 2002; Inglis, 2008; Potvin, 2011, 2013). To this end, the training of teachers and others working in the school is central. According to Krappman (2006), children in Elementary school and in Secondary Cycle One are too young to take full responsibility for rights and require support. They must thus be guided by a teacher who orients them and helps them to realize their understanding of rights.

Educational systems must therefore consider certain areas of knowledge, linked to local and global realities, and develop a holistic, intersectional and systemic understanding of human rights and the rights of the child as factors, processes and practices affecting these rights throughout the socio-educational course and the specific experiences lived by the students, especially those from minority groups (for example, immigration, colonization, racialization, war, handicap, academic delay). Banks et al. (2005) refer to understanding the interdependence between unity and diversity, the global and the local, inequalities and human rights, cultural, economic, political and technological changes,

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This section draws broadly on this article (Potvin, 2013) and this presentation (Potvin, 2011).

understanding democracy and practising it. Some competencies thus concern all actors and are a matter of transferring “capabilities” (Nussbaum, 2012): cognitive skills (knowledge of the world as it is, human rights, democracy), intercultural and ethical skills and those relating to choosing values, social and relational skills linked to capacities for action (living with others, cooperating, conflict resolution, intervening in a democratic debate) (Audigier, 2000; OECD, 2007), critical, reflective, active and transformative skills for countering exclusion, acting against its causes and barriers, respecting and applying fundamental rights, and implementing means for creating equity.

Teaching human rights, and children's rights in particular, requires educators to develop and master numerous innovative skills. These include: diverse democratic, cooperative practices based on common goals, sharing decision-making power, a community of belonging and learning, higher expectations for all students and school personnel, teaching and methods which “speak” to youth (slam, cinema, comics, etc.) allowing understanding of the world, and indicating the goals of their efforts. These skills are interdependent with behaviours and affective skills such as:

- Have self-awareness, awareness of social position, authority, cultural achievements and effects of practices/decisions;
- Have awareness of rights and needs of children; offer opportunities to develop youth capabilities;
- Value each person's unique strengths and styles; act as an example of justice; understand joint responsibility and participatory democracy.
- Encourage accountability and transparency over concealing problems and failing to intervene;
- Develop capacity for empathy, critical judgement, questioning assumptions/prejudices, capacity to act (empowerment), and for overcoming fear of being challenge; develop flexibility and adaptability.

Normand and Hohl (2000: 1) add that the practice of rights education includes two interdependent dimensions for teachers, which are a matter of both know-how and behaviour:[...] 1) capacity to create a psycho-relational climate favourable to self-expression and recognition of the student as a subject; b) (sic) mastery by the teacher of institutional dimensions of academic situations .

Future teachers are particularly engaged in this, because of the critical look they should bring to the institutional dimensions of teaching the knowledge they will transmit, the relationship to knowledge they will promote, and the role of the school in relation to the students and in society. According to professors and lecturers interviewed in the context of our broad study on the training of future teachers on ethnocultural diversity in all Quebec universities (Potvin *et al.*, CRSH 2012-2014; Audet, Borri, McAndrew and Potvin, 2013), future teachers must, throughout their theoretical and practical training, integrate and consolidate essential multidisciplinary knowledge, as well as positive, ethical and democratic attitudes, an openness to diversity, and inclusive pedagogical and didactic strategies. These latter must be flexible, varied and take into account student experience. Teachers must also gain a relationship to knowledge (critical, developed, integrated, reflective) that they will inculcate in their students; particularly the awareness that institutions have at once a potential for oppression and marginalization and for emancipation and empowerment. These competencies can be acquired from theoretical and formal training *about* immigration, global issues, rights, citizenship, but primarily through daily experience *of* equality, cooperation, diversity, solidarity, joint responsibility, “learning community” and struggles against injustices that educational situations provide to future teachers and their students

during their placements and which should aim to expand children's "capabilities" (Nussbaum, 2012). However, the initial teacher training is not enough and must be extended by continuing education on the roles and responsibilities of different educators in order to install a perspective based on the needs and rights on the child in schools at all levels of intervention (governance, administrative, complementary or educational services, etc.).

2. APPROACHES TO CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION

2.1 THEORETICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL TRENDS INTEGRATING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION⁸

Human rights – and children's rights - education – is an integral part of several perspectives and educational (theoretical and pedagogical) models developed over more than thirty years in the field of education. These are known by diverse names which we classify into four broad categories according to their basic features (Potvin, 2011, 2012, 2013; Potvin, Audet-Larochelle and Campbell, 2013): a) intercultural (in Quebec) or multicultural (in Canada and anglo-saxon countries) approach; b) transformative, anti-oppression, post-colonial, anti-racist perspectives and their variants (Critical Race Theory, critical pedagogy, afro-centric perspective); c) democratic citizenship education and its variants (global or planetary education, peace education, human rights education); and d) inclusive approach, centered on equity and distinct pedagogy. These currents aim to help educators and students develop knowledge and “competencies” relating to democratic values in pluralistic societies (inclusion, equality, non-discrimination, and social, ethnocultural, religious and linguistic diversity) as well as strategies to transform structures and practices in schools.

2.1.1 MULTICULTURAL OR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

The first steps in rights education in elementary and secondary schools in Quebec and Canada were taken under the name of multicultural or intercultural education (McAndrew, 2001). This approach traditionally emphasizes inter-group harmony and opposition to prejudices, mutual enrichment through the celebration of diversity and intercultural exchange, as well as strengthening the self-image of minority students by valuing of their cultural heritage (Banks, 2010). However, many researchers, including anti-racists, have criticized this approach for failing to fulfill promises of equality and social transformation (Sivak, 1998). Focused on changing individual attitudes rather than on group or systemic analysis, it does not succeed in changing power relations. It has a greater impact on majority group awareness of prejudice than on social equality for racialized and minority groups (Dei et al., 2008). It has also been criticized for reflecting the perspective and interests of dominant groups, thus strengthening the status quo, weakening resistance of minorities and reproducing inequalities (Troyna, 1993). Multicultural education rarely includes a critical examination of the historical role of economic and political exploitation of certain groups and the systemic nature of racism, even though human rights education has assumed an increasingly important place in this approach (Henry et al, 2005).

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This section on theoretical trends is taken from Potvin (SSHRC - 12012-2014) and Potvin, Audet-Larochelle and Campbell (2013).

2.1.2 CRITICAL, TRANSFORMATIVE, ANTI-OPPRESSION, POST-COLONIAL AND ANTI-RACIST APPROACHES

Starting in the 70's, the anti-racist approach was developed in reaction to the perceived limits of multicultural education. It was inspired by the work of Marxist theorists (Apple and Beane, 1995; Freire, 1973; Giroux, 2005; Sleeter, 1991), who argued for transformative pedagogies aimed at empowering and strengthening the autonomy of oppressed groups and minorities. Anti-racist theorists focused on developing active participation and a critical mind in order to create a more egalitarian society. They saw academic institutions as potential sites for the production of identities and not only knowledge.

According to Dei (1996), the challenge of diversity is not about managing or integrating one of introducing a new global understanding of our social world. He proposes an anti-racist theory defined as a pragmatic strategy for systemic and institutional change aimed at eradicating racism and interlocking systems of social oppression: sexism, classism, etc. Anti-racism is a challenge to the status quo, in that it explicitly addresses processes of social differentiation in terms of power and equity rather than as elements of “cultural and ethnic variety” of our world. Dei sets out ten principles of anti-racist education, including: recognizing social repercussions and mutations of racism; understanding overlap with other forms of oppression (class, gender, sexual orientation), arising from similar processes of domination; questioning power and privileges by challenging the rationality of dominance in society; problematizing marginalization and the delegitimization of knowledge, experiences and conceptions of subordinate groups; grasping the processes of identity construction; recognizing the role of the educational system in the production and reproduction of inequality. According to Giroux (2005), schools should not be seen as neutral or “objective”. As an institution participating in the production of social and political subjects, and the production of a vision of the future, the school's functions must be considered historical, critical and “transformative”. In addition, relations between knowledge and power at school place undue emphasis on disciplinary structures and individual success as “central values”. Teachers must develop an understanding of and teaching practice on the social construction of identities and differences across unequal power relations in the school, through interdisciplinary approaches capable of taking into account the dialectic and multivarious nature of daily lived experiences.

In short, anti-racist education aims to transform both attitudes and institutional practices, necessitating an analysis of the production and transmission of racism in each setting. Going beyond the meeting of individuals, it examines power relations and questions structures and the role they play in the production and reproduction of inequalities as well as the responsibility of all levels of actors. Within the school setting, it calls into question the definition of the academic mission and curriculum (role of the state), the organization of academic services (role of school boards), academic life (role of the school), and relations among teachers, students, parents and other actors. All aspects of the school's mandate – socialization, selection, instruction – are brought into question. Anti-racist pedagogy must therefore be integrated into the programme, modifying it profoundly, and with it the entirety of the curriculum and practices.

2.1.3 DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION

Democratic citizenship education and its variants (global or world education; peace education; human rights and children's rights education) puts greater emphasis on promoting human rights and democratic values in order to form future citizens of the same national collectivity. François Audigier (2006) and many others (Potvin, Audet-Larochelle and Campbell, 2013) have noted a paradigm shift since the end of the 80s, in which the importance given to multicultural questions has been displaced first by human rights education and then by citizenship education. In contrast to prior “civics” training, which “was thought of as relatively stable and lasting” with a vision of the future “in continuity with the present and with a more or less distant past” (Audigier, 2006: 26), today's citizenship education must be rooted in the fluidity of borders (identity, national, commercial) and on global issues. While identity and diversity issues are fundamental to citizenship education (Kymlicka, 1995), many theorists have criticized its essentially normative and non-transformative character and its tendency to confuse civic culture with majority culture and to obscure the systemic nature of inequalities (Troyna, 1993; Dei, 1996). For this reason, some writers (Audigier, 2000; Banks *et al.*, 2005) believe that from now on emphasis should be placed on globalization, peace, democratic values and institutions, social justice and human rights in order to “effective” in a context of “crisis”, when inter-group relations underpin and influence social cohesion. UNESCO's Delors Report (1996) specifically targetted the four pillars of citizenship education bearing on historical, cultural, sociological and political knowledge of the current world, know-how, life skills and a knowledge of 19th century community life, based on conflict resolution and cooperation.

Audigier (2006: 5) sees human rights education as essential and unavoidable knowledge for citizenship education because it contributes to “[...] building the knowledge and skills necessary for the citizen to best exercise his/her citizenship, exercise his/her rights and meet his/her obligations.” Expounding on skills or “know-how”, Audigier (2000) cites cognitive skills (legal, procedural and political; knowledge of current affairs; knowledge of principles and values of human rights and democratic citizenship), ethical skills and skills in choosing values, and social and relational skills relating to capacities for action (capacities for communal life, cooperative, conflict resolution according to democratic principles, entering public debate) (Audigier, 2000; OECD, 2007; European Council, 1999).

Across the various perspectives, researchers are relatively unanimous in saying that human rights education is essential to our societies and educational systems because “It contributes to equality, empowerment and participation, as well as prevention and resolution of conflicts” (Lenarcic, Boer-Buquicchio, Pillay, & Matsuura (2001: 7)). However, according to the CCRC (2011), simple human rights education is not enough; the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, while it applies to children, does not specifically treat the rights of the child. The CCRC thus proposes that the Convention support children's rights education to “give priority to the superior interests of children and guarantee all children the possibility of developing their skills and fully contributing to society” (CCRC, 2011: 1). Numerous authors stress the ethical, social, political and pedagogical importance of children's rights education and generalizing it in schools.

The first reason is legal: states and their institutions must respect their obligation to implement the Convention and to be accountable for the effectiveness of rights of the child - to parents, all citizens and national human rights and children's rights commissions (and not just to the UN Committee every five years).

Others highlight the socio-political and pedagogical benefits. Covell and Howe (2005), for example, see children's rights education as a means of training citizens with the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills necessary for building or rebuilding a democratic society, which respects human rights. Synott (2000, quoted in Covell and Howe, 2005) believes that it helps develop the social conscience of students as well as their understanding of democracy, globalization and economic, environmental and cultural change. Marshall (1950, quoted in Covell and Howe, 2005) sees this education as a means of transforming the child from a simple citizen, in the legal sense, into a normative and active citizen or community member who is aware of, enjoys and actively incorporates his or her rights and obligations. It allows the child to develop a critical judgement about the respect for rights, identify rights violations and understand the interdependence of human rights; in order to defend one's own rights and those of others (Covell & Howe, 2005; Krappman, 2006). Covell and Howe (2005) thus believe that generally establishing children's rights education in schools would constitute a recognition of children as real citizens rather than citizens "in progress".

In terms of pedagogy, Krappman (2006) believes that children's rights education must be taught in schools on the basis of the lived experiences of children, which assume meaning in concrete situations in which human rights should be exercised daily. This education should draw on examples of rights respected or violated in school and society, and provide a brief history of their emergence and theoretical teaching about rights charters and conventions (Pothier, 1997). It must also be implemented concretely through a democratic approach, so that students 'live' democracy in the classroom and understand that democracy is inherent to the respect for rights, especially the right of the child to participate. In order to learn, in the best way possible, how to exercise her liberty of conscience, opinion and expression in society, the child should constantly experience democracy at school (Giroux, 2005). According to Davies (2006), it is important to involve students in classroom decision-making on a daily basis, just as they will be called up to participate in society. Rights education therefore involves students exercising their rights in the classroom, in the school and in the community; because it is in living their rights that students appropriate them (OISE, 2008). Ouelle (2002) adds that, to do this, teaching must adopt a cooperative approach, allowing students to achieve common goals in full equality, to be involved in their learning, and to have as much control as possible.

As noted, most authors believe that children's rights education must be founded on (and strive for) two essential and independent conditions: formal and explicit rights instruction and an institutional framework that respects rights. The latter "condition" constitutes a "holistic" and systemic view of rights education, referring to school structures, codes of conduct and interactions, all of which have an impact on democracy and respect for human rights in a community (Pothier, 1997; Seaton, 2002; Covell & Howe, 2005).

According to a study carried out by the Children's Rights Centre at Cape Breton University (Covell & Howe, 2011), students who learned their rights and responsibilities in a school environment which itself respected the rights of the child have a better understanding of rights, are more inclined to respect the rights of others and fully assume their responsibilities, and show greater academic and personal commitment. The students participate more, show greater sensitivity to others and themselves encourage cooperation. The study stressed that schools which respect the rights of the child have an increased level of academic success of the students as well as lower rates of bullying and teacher-student conflict, yielding to a democratic environment (Dye, 1991).

Advocating a systemic approach, Priscilla Alderson (1999, quoted in OISE, 2009) distinguished five different types of approaches in schools that have incorporated rights education. This allowed her to

compare the level of engagement of the various schools in this project.

- The first approach “Not Yet”, is characterized by a rather minimal and general teaching about human rights, in which the student is considered a citizen 'in progress' and is taught about her future roles and responsibilities without yet being treated as a holder of rights and a citizen. This is the most frequent approach in schools and is the most superficial according to Alderson.
- The second approach “Constrained Rights” gives lip service to the rights of the child but believes that it is not yet appropriate to understand or practice them. The child is taught about Convention rights but these rights are not recognized or respected by the school as a whole.
- The third approach, “Limited Rights Education” focuses on how lucky children are to have their rights protected by a convention, but has little impact on attitudes and behaviour of children to prepare them to mutually respect each other's rights. It also puts little emphasis on preparing them to actively ensure the respect and effectiveness of the rights of all children.
- The fourth approach, “Rights Violations Education”, focuses on the violation of the rights of children elsewhere in the world – such as the exploitation of children's rights – often by conveying a homogenous view of “developing countries”. While children learn that the Convention exists to protect their rights, it is limited in terms of making these rights effective in diverse societies. This approach does not teach students how they can themselves exercise influence over respect for the rights of children, nor how these rights are currently violated in their own communities. It has little impact on the students. Moreover, this approach risks making it seem as though rights are only important when they are violated (negative rights) and not when they are respected (positive rights).
- The final approach, “Full-blown Rights Education” is the least practised, although the only one that moves towards a children's rights education as envisaged by the Convention. It reconciles theory and practice, discussion and action, content and pedagogical approaches in the teaching of rights bearing on the convention. This instruction takes place through a process of democratic, participatory and cooperative learning. Rights are not simply taught, they are respected and fully integrated into the class-room. Students are considered active community members, capable of participating in decisions which affect them and capable of critically discerning attitudes, behaviours and practices of domination which contribute to the violation of their rights and those of other children at the local, national and global levels. This approach alone promotes social responsibility and contributes to developing the values and attitudes necessary to democratic citizenship. It constitutes the very definition of “education of the rights of the child”. Though the most complete, it is also the rarest.

2.1.4. INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION

The inclusive approach aims to build an inclusive society in which all individuals, with all their differences, needs and rights, can participated and contribute. It is an approach based on equity and rights (human rights based approach). It aims to take into account the various socio-cultural issues and

“zones of vulnerability” (Conseil Supérieur de l’éducation, 2010) of each academic system and of the history of each society (Potvin, 2013).

Mostly developed in the field of academic and social accessibility – by researchers working with handicapped youth with “special” needs – the inclusive approach adopts three positions (Prudhomme et al., 2011):

- a) An ethical position, requiring knowledge and recognition that the diversity (of needs) of students is legitimate, constitutive and constructive and belief in the specificity of experience of each individual, as well as their educability and perfectibility (“everyone can succeed”);
- b) An epistemological position, drawing on socio-constructivism, which situates contextual dynamics, and the role of the environment and interactions, within the construction of knowledge, thus allowing student diversity and rights to take on meaning within a lived/perceived learning context.
- c) A political position, adopting a full educational project based on justice, equity and student success in all aspects of school life.

Inclusive education marks an important paradigm shift in equal opportunity: it is no longer only about equality of access and treatment but also about equality of educational results, acquisition and success (Potvin, 2013). It is the very basis for equity, rights and the fight against discrimination. The student’s “performance” is no longer the sole focus; also under scrutiny are the school, the educators, and the equity measures established according to the differentiated needs and rights of students to develop their “capabilities” (Sen, 2000). This reversal requires starting with the needs and rights of students to change services and practices of the system to ensure the success of all students, particularly the most vulnerable. These principles affect all activities related to the three broad mandates of the school: transmission of knowledge; socialisation into common values; and professional qualification. They thus affect all knowledge, know-how and social skills mobilized or developed at the school, at all levels of action (Potvin, 2013): governance; policies and programmes; curriculum; educational and complementary services; administrative, specialized and pedagogical practices; relations between peers, relations with families and the community; environment; respect for rights; participation; school democracy; school and extracurricular activities; continuing education of educators.

Because of the numerous social and cultural issues that justify this approach, the inclusive perspective enjoys international and national recognition. In the 2000s, the World Education Forum in Dakar (UNESCO) developed a plan of action on inclusive education based on the goals of Education for All (EFA), the Development Millennium, and Lifelong Education. Starting in 2005, a set of guidelines was developed for inclusive education and in 2008 UNESCO’s 48th International Conference on Education addressed the same concerns (Inclusive Education: the way of the future) (UNESCO, 2009).

After UNESCO’s study, many regions around the world, particularly Europe, through the European Commission and various organizations (such as *Inclusion Europe*), developed studies, training and documentation on inclusive education. This perspective was included in the European Social Charter. In Great Britain, the first policy statements on inclusive schools date back to 1997. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) developed a website highlighting the basics, institutional obligations, research and good practices in inclusion. In Canada, Ontario adopted its Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy in 2009 and schools followed suit. The Ontario Teachers’ Federation (OTF) drafted a guide for teaching staff. The Centre for Urban Schooling (OISE, U of T) produced various tools, such as the *Framework for Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy*, inspired by American works, and

a guide to set up a inclusive and equitable approach for schools (*Center for Urban Schooling*, 2011). In Quebec, a recent report by the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation* on current needs in education 2008-2010 explicitly addresses inclusive education. During a time when there are campaigns to keep students in school (school retention) and against bullying and violence in schools, the Quebec Ministry of Education has also launched several studies on inclusion and equity. Furthermore, Quebec relies on important legal procedures, policies and programmes already including aspects of an inclusive approach, such as its *Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle* (1998) (School integration and intercultural education policy).

In conclusion, we will present (in sections 2.4 and 2.5) why, in our opinion, the inclusive approach, centered on equity and rights, is currently the most promising strategy for integrating children's rights education (and respect for those rights) into schools, as well as the most likely to develop in the coming years in Quebec.

2.2 OTHER CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION PRACTICES IN QUEBEC SCHOOLS

There are dozens of programmes or activities offered to Quebec schools by different organizations (generally non-governmental) which, more or less, deal with children's rights. These programmes, generally created by NGOs, are often carried out in or with schools.

UNICEF Canada is among the rare organizations in Québec which have designed full programmes specifically on children's rights education and based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) programme is certainly the most complete programme. Adopting “the Full Blown Rights Education” approach, to use Alderson (1999)'s classification, the RRS aims to “promote an inclusive and participatory school culture, respecting the rights of the child and human rights.” (UNICEF, 2011: 3). Schools who agree to participate in this initiative must put the Convention at the centre of their school culture, both in the classroom and school policy. The must offer:

- to children who are interested, the possibility of expressing their opinion in their school, participating in decision-making about the school and the classroom and contributing to resolving problems relating to teaching, learning and the well-being of students, especially the problems of violence and discrimination (UNICEF, 2011: 3).

These schools must progress towards their transformation into democratic and “rights respecting” schools, offering a space within which children and adults feel respected and encouraged to act responsibly towards each others' rights. Divided into seven steps, implementation takes place over several months, during which the school receives different training workshops and prepares a plan of action to transform the school. The following year, the plan of action is put in place and adapted throughout the school year. The final step consists of a progress assessment, which allows the school to critically examine the initiative. The programme seems to be taking off in Canada. In Quebec, the first anglophone school, Westmount Park School, in Montreal is in its second year of implementation and the first francophone school, Coeur Soleil, in Laval, is currently starting the first phase of implementation (UNICEF, 2012).

Among the pedagogical tools designed by UNICEF, *Global Classroom* consists of educational material aimed at elementary and secondary schools and includes activity guides, lesson plans and videos. It is

available on UNICEF's website or on demand. Some are directly related to children's rights education, notably when they deal with human rights violations in some countries. Teachers can access these resources on line.

Third Avenue is another non-profit organization involved in children's rights education. It is aimed not only at children but especially parents in Quebec and Canada, with particular emphasis on academic success, inclusion and social justice. This social innovation organization has developed a multimedia education kit which aims to improve the quality of life of students at school through children's rights education. Created with youth, the *Imagine Education* kit was specifically designed to be facilitated by an adult accompanied by an experienced youth speaking to a group of youth. All the material is supplied, including audio and video, for the interactive and multimedia kit. Through five workshops, it covers the theme of exclusion at school and introduces the Convention on the Rights of the Child to relate rights and school life. The workshop highlights four rights that are important at school and invites youth to identify situations in which these rights are not respected. Youth then try to find solutions to resolve the situation.

Equitas has developed different training and education programmes to advance democracy, human development, peace and social justice. The *Speaking Rights* programme is aimed at youth between 13 and 18 years old, and includes a toolkit for youth centres, community centres and recreational centres for youth. The programme invites youth to examine human rights problems, identify strategies to fight discrimination and exclusion, and promote respect for diversity. It involves actively engaging youth in order to develop their ability to speak about issues that are important to them and to cooperate in activities aimed at strengthening their sense of belonging and peaceful conflict resolution.

Another Equitas programme, *Play it fair!*, was launched in 2004 and is aimed at children between 6 and 12 years old. It was first used in summer day camps and daycares in Montreal and has now been taken up in many municipalities and by community organizations across Canada. The organization has worked closely with the Office of Intercultural Affairs of the City of Montreal since June 2003 to implement and improve the programme. Starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and through games and activities, children can gain awareness of human rights, learn to respect diversity, and develop peaceful conflict resolution behaviour. The games appeal to cooperation, inclusion, equity and collaboration. The *Play it fair! Toolkit* (2008), which emerged from this programme and can be used by teachers, includes interactive activities and games, which help consolidate positive values and fundamental principles of equality and human dignity enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These games and activities provide a starting point for children to talk about what is happening in their lives and encourage them to work together to find ways of promoting inclusion, respect, equity, acceptance and collaboration. Equitas offers workshops and materials to train instructors how to use the kit (Equitas, 2012).

Other human rights training programmes developed by Equitas are directed at adults, such as the International Human Rights Training Programme (IHRTTP). This brings together more than one hundred human rights activists from around 60 countries for three weeks each year in Montreal. In the context of this international programme, the Global Human Rights Education Programme (GHREP), created in 2008, trains "human rights defenders" and educators through activities in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Latin America, Indonesia, Haiti and within Canada. The GHREP includes:

- Specialized workshops in human rights education for "selected" alumni to develop

- specialized skills in design and delivery of human rights training sessions.
- National or Sub-regional sessions to meet the needs of emerging alumni networks interested in creating their own training programs using the Montreal IHRTTP model.
- Coaching, support and evaluation.
- An online forum which includes virtual conferences, online training courses and regional and thematic discussion groups.

The Tolerance Foundation and the *Institut Pacifique* are two other organizations which offer training in schools, by promoting community life and general human rights, without specifically targeting children's rights education. The Tolerance Foundation, now called "ENSEMBLE for the respect of diversity", draws on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms but does not specifically make human rights or children's rights education a priority. Its Tolerance Caravan, aimed at the secondary level, goes to different schools in Quebec to raise awareness among youth about tolerance, respect and openness to diversity. Students learn about genocides and discover situations of prejudice and racism and how certain human rights are violated (Potvin et al., 2006). Custom workshops are also offered to schools and the organization sells pedagogical tools for teachers (Tolerance Foundation, 2012).

Another organization, the *Institut Pacifique*, aims to provide youth with conflict resolution tools in order to avoid psycho-social problems and reduce violence in schools. The organization has two programmes to educate youth in schools: *Vers le pacifique* (Towards nonviolence) for the elementary level and *Différents... mais pas indifférents* (Different but not indifferent) for the secondary level. These are very broadly used in Quebec schools and run according to the school year. They aim to develop peaceful conflict resolution strategies and behaviours among youth. The *Institut pacifique* trains student mediators in schools, to help resolve conflicts which arise during recreation or in the classroom (*Institut pacifique*, 2012).

Many governmental and non-governmental organizations also carry out general human rights education using pedagogical materials available on the internet, training modules and very punctual activities. A very large number of kits are available for teachers and students on various Internet sites or on request, as well as numerous "good practices" (ODIHR, 2011), teacher trainings, and evaluation methods for diverse trainings. Whether they are on discrimination, racism, anti-semitism, equality, human rights or genocide, the vast majority of these kits and resources only reference children's rights indirectly.

The *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* (Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission, CDPDJ) organizes pedagogical activities relating to the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, the Youth Protection Act, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also offers trainings at schools, online modules and pedagogical tools on discrimination, Islamophobia, reasonable accommodation, Indigenous peoples, and human rights for teaching and non-teaching staff and students. Many online resources are aimed at elementary and secondary school teachers and offer ways of addressing rights through dialogue and role-plays (CDPDJ, 2012). The Commission has assembled an excellent collection of activities for students called, "L'éducation aux droits et aux responsabilités, au primaire et au secondaire" (Rights and Responsibilities Education, for elementary and secondary levels). This workbook suggests background and thought-provoking activities on different themes related to the Charter of human rights and freedoms, such as: teaching human rights

and freedoms; peer relations; democratic exercise of authority; defining and adopting rules of life; peaceful conflict resolution; reacting to discrimination, injustice, inequality; equality rights of youth, minorities and disabled people; and right to education. At the secondary level, issues like racism, homophobia and freedom of expression are addressed and their limits in given situations discussed, with reference to rights related to each. The activities are not based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

However, many workshops offered to educators by the CDPDJ explicitly and directly address the rights of the child:

- The “Many voices, common vision” workshop is aimed at teaching and non-teaching staff. It focuses on the growing diversity of the population and aims at changing attitudes and behaviours, increasing knowledge and understanding of the many aspects of the concept of diversity, clarifying the values at stake, and identifying prejudices and stereotypes. Participants are involved in a participatory approach to facilitate better conflict management and better action planning.
- The “Islamophobia: the myths that feed it” workshop is aimed at teaching and non-teaching staff. It deals with human rights and freedoms from the perspective of September 11th and its impact on inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations, questions that are of growing interest in schools. The goal is to foster a discussion on the definition of Islamophobia, its features, origins and the myths that feed it. The workshop provides participants with tools for demystifying social prejudices and the discussion takes place in the context of the fight against racism, anti-semitism, and all forms of intolerance.
- The “Stand out by keeping an eye on Racism” workshop is aimed at teaching and non-teaching staff. It aims to raise awareness among teaching and non-teaching staff about the consequences of exclusion and stigmatisation based on a perception of racial inferiority and superiority. Adopting the approach of Jane Elliott in the United States, the workshop uses role plays to allow participants to experience racism both as victim and oppressor. Participants must then testify about their experience, analysing group dynamics and expressing their own reactions and feelings, changes in perceptions and reactions after the experience and solutions. The exercise is then related to the articles of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and potential for implementing them in the participants' various spheres.
- A workshop offering a participatory approach to learning conflict resolution techniques in the context of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. The participants must collectively analyse physical and psychological violence in our society, in media and popular culture, interpersonal relations, etc. In the workshop, participants work on concrete strategies to resolve and manage conflict and promote human rights based on school experiences.

Amnesty International is a large international NGO which has broadly developed trainings, pedagogical tools and online modules. A wide variety of activities is available under the Human Rights Education section of the Amnesty International Canada francophone website. Some activities constitute medium and long term learning processes and are aimed at any individual or group wishing to develop a human rights culture, develop critical thinking and get involved in defending human rights. It also provides training material for teachers. This includes a pedagogical kit called *Parlons des droits humains* (Let's talk about human rights), which is aimed at youth and facilitators and contains information on human

rights, examples of countries where human rights are not respected and group activities. A large quantity of pedagogical materials, for all ages (youth and adults), addresses human rights through a multitude of issues. This includes dozens of videos, powerpoint presentations and training modules, each containing many sheets of pedagogical activities. Each module uses a precise topic to promote rights through varied activities and suggested discussions. Topics such as child soldiers, death penalty, dignity, freedom of expression, discrimination and the rights of the child are suggested. While most of the materials are focused on general human rights, one Powerpoint presentation and an entire module for youth deals with the rights of the child through the lens of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. (Amnesty international, 2012).

The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children has guides for communities, teachers and professionals on its website. These provide information and some suggested activities related to children's rights, based on the Convention. The organization suggests that people use these materials to organize information sessions and thus increase the pool of people who understand children's rights (CCRC, 2009).

The *Child Rights International Network* (CRIN) is a global network bringing together 2000 organizations working for children. A section of its website "for Children" which explains and offers games about the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRIN, 2012).

OXFAM-Québec (2011) was established to fight injustice and poverty in the world, issues indirectly related to rights. The organization has a wide variety of tools for all youth interveners (teacher, educator, community and cultural facilitator, etc.). These are aimed at global education and involving youth in solidarity and social action movements. Trainings on youth education for international solidarity are available to interveners. In addition, Oxfam-Quebec facilitates workshops for youth, dealing with issues relating to poverty and justice, food security, agriculture, the economy, consumption and child workers. A dozen educational toolkits dealing with similar issues are available on the Internet. All of the activities provide rights education indirectly through understanding situations of injustice and then trying to find a solution.

Finally, there are several *ad hoc* children's rights education projects such as the Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI) and its 65 members' *Projet d'éducation du public sur les droits de l'enfant* for the Global Day against Child Labour (12 June 2013). This aims to heighten Quebec's understanding of the problem of child labour and to make people want to know more and to act against this violation of fundamental human rights while increasing networking among and the visibility of participating NGOs (which work, locally and abroad, for sustainable human development). This public education project includes regional programming on the rights of the child on the Global Day against Child Labour on 12 June 2014 and a publicity campaign.

Other organizations (inafù, club 2/3, Jeunesse du monde) also carry out rights education through involvement in some schools.

2.3 STAKE-HOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF PRACTICE AND RESISTANCE IN MONTREAL SCHOOLS

Despite the explicit presence of rights education in the Quebec Education Programme and the mandatory subjects, we do not know enough about how teachers apply or fail to apply a rights-based approach, and how they teach the issue. Many studies carried out in the various Canadian provinces note some resistance among school administrations, teachers, parents and majority group students to programmes adopting an anti-racist perspective or ones more focused on social justice and inequalities. According to teachers, there were also a discomfort to teach about rights due to lack of formation (Sakyi *et al.*, 1994; Gillborn, 1996; Solomon and Levine-Rasky, 1996a et b; Harper, 1997; Covell & Howe, 2005; MacMath, 2008; UNICEF-Canada/OISE 2012; Holh et Normand, 2000). This resistance arises also according to them, from unfavourable working conditions, fear of touching on other subjects, or concerns about destabilizing the general atmosphere and “social cohesion” in the school. Other aspects of social identity (age, ethnicity, class) and personal values of teachers broadly affect their acceptance or refusal of a so-called anti-racist pedagogy. Teachers generally agree in principle with the objectives of children’s rights education but very few support it in practice.

In our exploratory and “cartographic” study of the totality of interventions against discrimination in Montreal schools (Potvin *et al.*, 2006; Potvin and McAndrew 2010), we noted many common perceptions among school actors interviewed about types of school practices, resistance from intervenors, and potential or desirable action. According to the people interviewed:

School practices:

- At the elementary and secondary levels, rights violations (racism, homophobia, intimidation, etc.) are generally perceived at school as “disruptions”, marginal and episodic and treated as “interpersonal” problems during a conflict, and are not considered from a broader, systemic perspective, linked to inter-group relations (for example, racist or Islamophobic prejudices). The focus is generally on individual behaviour (pathological or “psychologizing” perspective: good vs. bad). Moreover, the general tendency is to situate rights violations as belonging to a past reality or to elsewhere.
- From this starting point, attempts to address rights violations are characterized by prevention, “crisis management”, case-by-case resolution of problems, and do not arise from a “systemic” and institutional strategy. Few schools have set up an “institutional” programme to respect children’s rights; that is, a holistic and systemic rights-based approach.
- Issues related to academic pathways and the success (or failure) of youth from visible or religious minorities or immigrant backgrounds, or more generally youth with special needs, is not approached as a violation of human rights, from an anti-discrimination framework, but as a “remedial” problem, one of integration, which should be met with “compensatory” measures. A large number of school actors still seem not to make the

link between equity at school – taking into account the different needs of children – and violation of children's rights, through lack of support or professional services (thus by “omission”).

- Many after-school programmes organized by external groups are punctual and often approach human (or children's) rights in a superficial and hasty manner.
-
- Rights education activities (especially because of the mandatory programme) aim primarily at students, with little attention to the formation of teachers and other school actors, responsible for establishing a rights-based context/environment. There is little continuing education of teachers and academic staff about rights and all forms of discrimination related to equity, inequalities and democracy at school.
- Although the new Quebec Education Programme has been in place for several years now, teachers still underprepared to teach human rights and children's rights in courses on ethics and religious cultures or on citizenship education. They still have a poor grasp of “cross-curricular competencies”. Most teachers are far from mastering the knowledge and skills necessary to teach students to fight against discrimination, to assert their own rights while respecting those of others, and to eliminate ethnocentric perspectives in their teaching and encourage the equal participation of their students. This explains the resistance encountered among teachers.

Resistance in the schools:

- Respondents believe that, in general, elementary and secondary educators are afraid to speak about “sensitive” subjects in their classes (Éthier and Lefrançois, 2007), such as rights violations, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia and anti-semitism. They are afraid of creating an atmosphere of confrontation, conflict and guilt (perpetrator vs. victim). This fear comes in part from a misunderstanding of the meaning and scope of the application of children's rights, particularly freedom of conscience (religion), freedom of expression and opinion, and right to education in the most general sense, and thus of an education deemed insufficient in those regards. The dominant view that educators have of discrimination (that is, rights violations) – whether deriving from racism, sexism, or other grounds - seems to reduce the phenomenon to a matter of individual prejudices and marginal, excessive or violent exceptions. This makes it difficult to integrate a broader systemic and institutional approach to respect for and effectiveness of rights. This is why rights education is generally taught in theory rather than being put into practice.

Potential Action:

- Make rights education part of a broader, inclusive, intercultural, and democratic institutional strategy to avoid the perception of interveners that “children have the tendency to demand their rights too much and neglect their duties”.
- At the secondary and elementary levels, many after-school or extracurricular activities are focused on peace, human rights, understanding global inequalities, international solidarity, harmonious inter-ethnic relations at school, and youth participation, and come from an open-minded, anti-globalization perspective. They provide a space for

growth of critical thinking. These activities generally aim at a better understanding of international inequalities and rights violations (on what has happened elsewhere or in the past) but they do not always equip youth to act in their own contexts and defend their own rights.

- Respondants believe that there is a need for action at all levels of school intervention to develop an equity approach focused on rights and inclusion: policy, programme, curriculum, activities, teacher training, institutional management, family-school relations and so on.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 A FEW OBSERVATIONS

This report provides a general overview of the programmes, policy and interventions (governmental and non-governmental) on children's rights education in Quebec schools. A certain number of observations can be made. The first is that children's rights education in Quebec is generally implicit and integrated into mandatory History and citizenship education, and Ethics and religious cultures subject areas. The Quebec Education Programme offers many opportunities for children's rights education in many other subjects, just as in other Canadian provinces (Covell, 2011; OISE-UNICEF, 2008a). However, we do not know how teachers approach human rights and children's rights in their classes, because there are few detailed studies on concrete practices about these topics in schools (Hohl and Normand, 2000; Potvin and McAndrew, 2010). In fact, we don't know, among other things, the content taught, the pedagogical methods adopted, class activities, the amount of time spent on this subject, the extent of project or learning situations, the materials used, evaluations carried out, the skills and professional competencies of the teachers in this area. We need research to fulfill the gap.

Apart from the official curriculum, the second observation is that there are many opportunities for rights education in school and extracurricular activities, including school programmes offered by NGOs (also see Potvin et al., 2006). Here again we cannot assess how these school activities work in practice, their impact and the professional competencies of educators (knowledge, skills, etc) without carrying out field studies and evaluations.

Another observation is that while there are many resources on human rights education, democracy and discrimination (pedagogical tools and guides, modules, activities, websites, etc.), there are few resources that focus specifically on the rights of the child as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We have also tried to show in this report the diversity of educational approaches which make human rights a central focus, such as the multicultural or intercultural approach, rights and citizenship education, anti-oppression and anti-racist approach, and the inclusive and equity approach. However, children's rights are not central to any of these approaches with the sole exception, in our opinion, of the inclusive and equity approach, focused on the needs and rights of children. Our main recommendation relates to this issue.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS⁹

Our main recommendation is to encourage and implement an approach truly based on the rights and needs of the students, starting from an inclusive, democratic and equity strategy. Inclusive and equitable education, a rights-based approach, is generally defined as a continuing process involving the transformation of schools and other learning environments to take into account diverse needs and eliminate exclusion in education. This is understood here as:

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This entire section, to the end of the Conclusion, comes from Potvin (2013).

... one of the consequences of a negative attitude towards diversity of race, economic status, social class, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation and skills, as well as lack of response to this diversity (UNESCO, 2009: 4).

In our view, the inclusive approach is developed around seven central concepts: equity, needs, rights and capabilities, systemic approach, co-responsibility, accountability and performance (Potvin, 2010, 2011, 2012). We have summarized these as four broad “principles for action” tightly interwoven with each other in reality within structures and practice (Potvin, 2013).

The first principle of action is to make rights and diverse needs of students, as well as the development of their capabilities, central to the equity approach.¹⁰ This is a “diagnostic” principle, recognizing and concretely taking into account the diverse needs of the students at school – needs that arise from their different experiences and social realities (poverty, immigration, handicaps, etc). Taking the diverse experiences, realities and needs - whether temporary or permanent – of each student into consideration involves knowledge with these experiences and recognizing the fact that they are often at the roots of exclusion; whether familial issues, psycho-social problems, migration (pre- and post-migration), trauma and grief, linguistic, religious, ethnocultural and socio-economic factors, handicaps, styles and difficulties in learning, as well as discrimination, harassment and bullying. It requires carrying out a real diagnostic of the rights violation of children. The inclusive approach thus requires actively engaging in identifying, “the barriers which impede numerous learners to access educational possibilities and [...] taking stock of the resources necessary to overcome these obstacles” (UNESCO 2009: 8).

While physical, cognitive, affective and psycho-social needs, whether temporary or permanent (difficulty learning related to immigration vs handicap), are always specific (tied to unique life situations of each person), they often arise from universal needs underlying individual “capabilities” and rights (Sen, 2000; Nussbaum, 2012), which we summarize as “four broad needs” (Potvin, 2011, 2012, 2013):

- Need for security, trust and relations of trust: self-esteem, openness to the other, encouragement, high expectations, significant adults;
- Need for recognition as a “unique” being in life experiences, origins, cultural context, identities, projects, creativity, language, style and rhythm of learning, strengths and difficulties;
- Need for group learning: have friends, share intimacy, feeling useful in the classroom or at school, being co-responsible, participating in discussion, decisions and activities, sharing equal status, common goals, and cooperative learning;
- Need to understand, act, chose and project into the future: understand cultural codes, subject content, school rules, goals of learning (meaningful learning), through mastery of the language of teaching, which opens choices and possibilities for the future.

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Sen (2000: 76) defines individual “capabilities” to function in all areas of life as a person's constitutive “functionings” (doings and beings), their well-being, and their freedom to chose possible ways of life. Fundamental freedoms (conscience, expression, participate in the political ...) are part of these capabilities, which are central to a description of minimal social justice (Nussbaum, 2012).

These distinct needs have as much to do with the youth's experience and vision for the future, as they do with relationships with school staff, with family and between students; the learning, level, attitudes and well-being of each student; the atmosphere, curriculum and pedagogy; and not only with "academic results" in the narrow sense, even though the latter act as indicators of the socio-academic and affective needs of children. This does not mean treating all students in the same way but taking into account the distinct experiences and need of the students in order to respect their rights.

More generally, taking needs into account leads to the full realization of the rights of the child and, specifically, the right to education. These rights are enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Quebec Public Education Act, as well as Canadian and Quebec human rights charters. From a normative perspective, each need of a child corresponds to one or more rights of the child, which in turn engages an adult responsibility for the development of the child's capabilities as well as the child's responsibility to respect the rights of others. Different articles of these legal instruments support each other, such as:

- Right to equality and non-discrimination (CRC Art 2, 12, 13, 14 and Quebec Charter, art 10)
- Right to accessible and adequate infrastructure (Quebec Public Education Act)
- Right to professional, quality teachers (CRC and Quebec Public Education Act)
- Right to a safe, protective and nonviolent environment (CRC, Art 3, 19, 31 to 37)
- Right to an appropriate education (Quebec Public Education Act, art. 22)
- Right to know one's rights (CRC Art. 28, 29, 40; Quebec Public Education Act Art 22)
- Right to exercise one's rights and participate in decision-making (CRC Art. 4, 12-14; Quebec Public Education Act, Chap 1. and Art 22)

Article 22 of the Public Education Act (PEA) on the obligations of teachers echoes some these rights:

"A teacher shall:

- (1) contribute to the intellectual and overall personal development of each student entrusted to his care;
- (2) take part in instilling into each student entrusted to his care a desire to learn;
- (3) take the appropriate means to foster respect for human rights in his students;
- (4) act in a just and impartial manner in his dealings with his students; ..." etc.

The second principle of action refers to the centrality of a holistic concept and systemic approach to equity: making equity and social justice a continuing institutional and pedagogic project (UNESCO, 2009). A systemic approach to equity must identify inequalities and rights violations, the processes and practices which generate them, as well as their impacts on youth success and means to fight them. It's a new way to manage exclusion in the context of the education system (ibid, 4). Equity thus makes the system responsible for acquiring the resources, implementing means adapted to needs, making its services and resources accessible without discrimination and adapting practice and curriculum to render them meaningful and relevant in the larger social context, in order to follow, retain, support and accompany learners on their journey to success. This is a matter of four criteria or conditions of rights education effectiveness developed by UNESCO (Tomaševski, 2002) – acquiring resources, accessibility of services, acceptability of content and adaptability of practices of all kinds. These constitute bearing points to assess the "degree" to which an inclusive project is implemented in a

setting.¹¹ A systemic view, from diagnosis to recognition of needs, from normative assertion of equity to operationalization in practice and monitoring, affects the full range of education: governance (leadership, decision-making, policies, success plans, educational projects, rules and programmes, participatory democracy, indicators), services and practices (academic, complementary, reception, etc), curriculum, extracurricular and after-school activities, school-family-community relations, school environment, psycho-social interventions, pedagogical methods, initial and continuing education.

Moreover, the socio-cultural realities of the students as well as social debates and world socio-political issues must be part of what is learned and lived at school through the development of knowledge and skills (acceptability). This academic project depends on approaches allowing the development of “capabilities”, autonomy, conscience and critical academic thought, emancipatory and democratic in intent (Freire, 2006; Nussbaum, 2012). The socio-constructivist approach, transformative perspectives, empowerment, pedagogic differentiation, as well as an academic atmosphere based on the culture of exchange, participation in decision-making and commitment to respecting pluralism and rights all head in that direction.

From this systemic approach arises a third principle of action, with two aspects: (co-) responsibility and accountability of all actors (including youth) for academic success and realization of the potential of all learners. The inclusive project implies orientations and practices of equity as well as capacity of all school actors and specialized staff to integrate the students' diverse needs and rights at the various levels of intervention. The realization of this principle requires identifying and eliminating the causes, barriers, and processes which impede attaining these goals. Academic actors, including students, parents, directors, teachers, specialized staff and support staff are responsible for implementing a systemic approach; that is, from processes of diagnosis to processes of monitoring and results, for all the kinds of practices and interventions previously listed. Some questions need to be asked. For example: what are the needs and the most vulnerable groups? What are the barriers to success and their causes? What practices and services are effective and which should be changed or improved? What are the best means to implement (policy, codes, curriculum, professional, pedagogic, other) and adopt indicators to respond to these (see for example UNESCO, 2009).

The fourth principle of action is related to the performance of students and schools, and, from this, qualitative and quantitative indicators and high academic expectations for everyone. The school must ensure that, “every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning” (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2009: 10). The interdependence between inclusion and quality generally has two aspects, which:

... generally emerge from conceptual frameworks: the cognitive development of the learner on one hand and the role education plays in promoting values and attitudes for responsible citizenship and/or creative and affective development on the other (UNESCO, 2009: 10).

There are many (quantitative and qualitative) performance indicators for students (PISA, administrative data). These capture not only “academic” results in acquiring basic competencies or the graduation of students, whatever their background, but the totality of needs, capabilities, and cognitive, physical and

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These criteria and their indicators were developed to guide countries implementing the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights*, but we draw on them to develop a model of indicators that can be applied by schools themselves (Potvin, 2013, forthcoming).

affective progress (UNESCO, 2009: 10). There is a strong correlation between academic results and quality of teaching and support given to students. The indicators in this way concern all aspects of the “academic experience” involving co-responsibility of actors, practices, and services offered. Well-being at school, barriers, success factors and opportunities throughout school, support, participation in activities, feeling of belonging and social acceptance, “community life”, acceptance of diversity, cooperation, democratic participation in academic decisions, creativity, conflict management – these are not only the goals of the inclusive approach but measurable indicators, referring to universal needs, capabilities and children's rights.

To assess the 'performance' of an academic system's or a school's inclusive and transformative approach, actors must rely on an implementation strategy and certain 'indicators' to monitor changes and progress in needs, attitudes, practices and services. To realize each of UNESCO's four conditions (acquisition, accessibility, adaptability, acceptability), the inclusive approach requires indicators using diagnostic (needs and practices), monitoring (students, means of implementation, practices) and results (objectives, student capabilities, and school performance) (Potvin, 2013). These quantitative and qualitative indicators must be simple and accessible to school actors, so that they can be used for a flexible and regular monitoring, in the classroom, within an institution and at the level of the national academic system.¹²

At the national level, interest in quality and optimal use of resources lies in improving cost-benefit between input and results. The costs of school drop-out (between 5 and 40% in OECD countries) and failure have risen; both for those who can't attain skills to participate in social and economic life and for society (health, unemployment and social security, youth protection, civic participation, taxes, etc) (UNESCO, 2009 : 11). On the other hand, inclusive and quality measures do not always mean extra or excessive costs; rather they involve innovative practices aimed at support and success for everyone, such as peer teaching (co-responsibility), training of trainers, initial literacy in the maternal language, taking on board needs from the time families enter the school (such as immigrant families) and more.

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The indicators developed in Ontario (*Center for Urban Schooling*, 2011) and by UNESCO (2009) are markedly different. Without going into details, they focus on diverse aspects of the school or academic system, such as: governance and leadership in asserting inclusion; participation of students and parents in decision-making, safe, responsive and welcoming atmosphere; positive attitudes towards diversity; early interventions; relations between school and families and community; high expectations; partnership and cooperation by members of the school team; curriculum; meaningful learning activities and situations for youth; flexible, innovative and adapted pedagogical and didactic methods; work on 'transitions'; use of new technologies; initial and continuing training of staff and co-coaching, etc. A practical guide, produced in partnership with the Quebec Ministry of Education, is forthcoming (Potvin, 2013).

3.3 CHALLENGES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A RIGHTS-BASED AND INCLUSIVE APPROACH

From awareness to appropriation and then to implementation of an inclusive approach, based on children's rights, in schools, there is a continuous process, which encounters certain challenges. We will examine two of these.

The first challenge to introducing an approach based on the rights of the child, equity and inclusion in Quebec is one of assuming the position of a global framework of reference, to guide analysis and action in schools as well as their "accountability". A perspective based on the rights of the child must be recognized and promoted by the Ministry of Education, integrated throughout its policies and plans of action, made better known and appropriated by the different school actors. While there are several good practices aimed at equity, human rights education and inclusion in schools, such as UNICEF's programme Rights Respecting Schools, these initiatives appear very limited, *ad hoc*, little known and are not integrated into an overall strategy. This programme, which should be more widespread, is not sufficient to induce transformation at all levels of practice in the Quebec school system.

Moreover, the lack of clear recognition and identification of mechanisms of exclusion in schools show that they are far from committed to a broad perspective aimed at eliminating these phenomenon. People work in isolation, on school retention, poverty, immigration, or handicaps, in their own areas, wanting new government programmes but without always putting in place monitoring and continuity in accompanying youth and ensuring respect for their rights. This effectively inhibits the potential impact of existing initiatives in transforming institutions and the transfer of knowledge. The question of the academic success of minority or special needs students, which has generated many compensatory approaches, is in this way disassociated from unequal relations, whether in the curriculum, interpersonal or institutional, which can prevail in the academy. At the same time, the potential role that educational practices play in maintaining and producing unequal power relations and violating rights is seldom discussed. While research into various kinds of inequalities, both within teaching activities and initial teacher training, is regaining interest at the global level, this concern often stops at the border of Quebec, or at least of the school and university (Potvin and McAndrew, 2010). However, commitment to an inclusive and equitable approach, based on the rights of the child and democratic values does not only mean improving attitudes and inter-ethnic relations between individuals (or understanding 'other cultures') but aims to change pedagogical and governance practice and to strengthen autonomy, democracy, and rights awareness of all youth and school staff.

Related to this absence of a broad and coherent approach, educators in Quebec are still rather unfamiliar with the inclusive, rights-based approach. The second challenge is the understanding that all school actors have of equity and its relation to the needs and rights of the child. Some rights of the child, relating, for example, to the right of participating in decision-making, the right to support related to a particular need, freedom of expression, freedom of opinion and conscience (religious), are often violated in schools, in the name of adult authority, without school actors always being conscious of this fact. These violations arise from, in our opinion, what the *Conseil supérieur de l'éducation* (Quebec Higher Education Council) calls "zones of vulnerability" (CSE, 2010), whether violence or bullying, technological development, immigration and integration, the most vulnerable groups in terms of inequalities, experiences, drop-out or academic success, transitioning from one sector or school system to another, public-private competition, system of selection, openness to pluralism, and many

others.

This requires challenging certain erroneous ideas held by school actors about rights violations and discrimination related to racism and sexism, for example; viewed as phenomena from the past or from elsewhere, individual or psychological, and not as current, systemic phenomena linked to broader social mechanisms. The difficulty of naming these realities and the processes they generate in schools, and the fairly general tendency to adopt ad hoc, compensatory, or "catch-up" measures is part of this challenge (Potvin and McAndrew, 2010). Moreover, there is resistance from school actors related to this multi-layered problematic, notably in a context in which new forms of exclusion seem to be more related to religion and poverty (ibid). The specific reality of Quebec, where the majority group has difficulty conceiving of itself as a dominant group in relation to new minorities, is often evoked by school actors. Finally, structural factors (lack of time, scattered efforts, urgency of dealing with other academic subjects) plays an important role in creating resistance to this critical and transformative step.

The current context shows the growing necessity of taking into account issues of equity and inequality in initial and continuing teacher training and training of all educators, in the curriculum, and in activities for students. This growing need arises from global realities as well as the context in Quebec, characterized by a changing demographic, the fight for school retention, the rise of new solidarities as well as an ambitious reform of the curriculum aimed at "living together". There is a rise of a critical, anti-globalization, civic perspective, focused on social justice, reflected in the new Quebec Education Programme, in courses and activities at all levels of the school system (Potvin *et al.*, 2006). The centrality of the issue of academic success, as well as relatively worrisome figures about the academic, identity and economic situations of some visible minorities, leads in the same direction. In addition, the often hidden reality of racism in schools is present in debates in the news about creating afro-centric schools and the generally legitimate public discussions since the beginning of the 90s around religious diversity in schools. The social crisis occasioned by the reasonable accommodations debate from 2006 to 2008 not only highlighted the prior negative construction of groups exposed to debate but the misunderstanding of the public on the centrality of human rights in Quebec democracy and the need for education of public school actors, including teachers, about these issues (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008; Consultation Committee..., 2008 ; Potvin, 2008a, b).

In short, in order to develop an inclusive, rights-based and equitable approach within Quebec schools, a systemic and holistic perspective must be encouraged; one in which the institutional aspect of equity is interlinked with the fight against dropping out, poverty, and academic inequalities, throughout programmes and activities established by the reforms. To this end, it is important to foster a better understanding and appropriation of the concepts of equity, rights and multiple inequalities (and their manifestations in schools) among decision-makers, programme-designers, and school stakeholders, in order to increase the presence and coherence of this approach. Equipping staff, through initial and continuing education, is thus central, in a context in which it is far from obvious that teachers have themselves yet mastered the competencies about community life that they are supposed to cultivate in students. Finally, institutional change requires a strong commitment from all school stakeholders interested in furthering debates on the rights of the child, equity and inclusion.

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