

## **Perspectives on equity and social justice in education in four Nordic countries**

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As our societies become increasingly diverse in terms of their cultures, languages, and religions, educational institutions face the challenge of providing high-quality education for all children, who bring myriad experiences and knowledge to their educational settings.

In my lecture I will address three main issues:

Firstly, I will briefly discuss the fundamental values in education in the Nordic countries, such as equity, democracy, social justice and inclusion and examples of how these are addressed in educational policy documents. Recent changes in policy developments in these countries and political aspects of the changes reveal the vulnerability of educational systems and policies in relation to political developments.

Secondly, I will address inequity and marginalization of immigrant students in many schools in the Nordic countries which continue to exist in spite of increased knowledge deriving from research on diversity and school reform. Examples from a study on municipal educational policies related to immigrant children in four municipalities in Iceland will be given which highlight some challenges in policy implementation.

Thirdly, I will introduce the NordForsk funded project *Learning Spaces for Inclusion and Social Justice: Success Stories from Immigrant Students and School Communities in Four Nordic Countries* and present some findings from the project. Two main aims of the project are to 1) understand and learn from the experiences of immigrant students who have succeeded academically and socially and 2) explore and understand how social justice is implemented in equitable and successful diverse Nordic school contexts and other learning spaces. Findings from case studies in schools on three levels in the four countries and a survey have revealed a variety of examples from schools that have succeeded in creating inclusive and socially just learning spaces. However, the findings in all four countries also reveal a number of challenges. I will conclude by discussing these challenges and how they can be addressed.