

2 The Project School-In – an Overview

*Jorunn H. Midtsundstad, Inger Marie Dalehefte,
Stefanie A. Hillen, Kirsten Johansen Horrigmo &
Grethe Ingebrigtsvold Sæbø*

In 2017, five municipalities in Southern Norway initiated the project School-In (Iveland, Lillesand, Songdalen, Søgne, and Vennesla). They invited researchers from the University of Agder (UiA) to investigate why their research-based efforts to develop inclusive learning environments in their schools and kindergartens as part of the programme 'Inclusive Learning Environment' (Knutepunkt Sørlandet, 2012) turned out very differently in the participating schools and kindergartens. The challenge that measures and reforms have different effects in different schools and locations is of international relevance (OECD, 2015) and became the starting point for the project School-In. In cooperation with the University of Agder, the five municipalities applied to the Research Council of Norway (RCN) (ref. no. 260539) for funding for a research project that could contribute to explaining this phenomenon.

Researchers from the University of Agder had prior experience from a research project named Learning Regions (also funded by the Research Council of Norway). The findings from this project showed that school culture develops through the school's relationship with expectations from the local community (Horrigmo, 2015; Langfeldt, 2015; Knudsen, 2015; Aasebø, Midtsundstad & Willbergh, 2017; Midtsundstad & Langfeldt, 2020; Midtsundstad, 2019).

The Research Council of Norway aims to encourage communities to play a more significant role in developing more knowledge-based research in the innovative public sector. Many reasonable education and research efforts target public sector responsibilities, but it is a common perception in the public sector that research efforts fail to actually meet municipal, regional, national, and state actors' needs for new knowledge. Thus, the innovation project School-In aimed to meet the needs of the public sector, in this case the five participating municipalities, and also to base the research on the newest knowledge within the research field of inclusion (Ainscow, 2005; Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, & Shaw, 2000). This chapter presents central concepts, terms, goals, and research questions in the project.

2.1 Inclusion – a desired goal of the education system and aim of the project

Inclusive education and its egalitarian approach are well-rooted in Norwegian society (Werler, 2010). The principle ‘one school for all’ establishes inclusion as the purpose of education policies (Midthassel, 2003). The Norwegian education system offers almost no special needs schools and is requested to support *all* children according to the children’s abilities and aptitudes throughout their schooling (Hillen, 2019). Regardless of special education needs, low socioeconomic status, and other impairments, all children have the right to be taught adaptively in the classroom. This inclusive practice is requested in the Norwegian Education Act (Opplæringslova, 2021). Despite this approach to inclusion, resources for special education are one of the largest cost drivers in schools, and the organisation of special education, despite the intention, often involves removing pupils from the class community (Haug, 2015).

The five municipalities involved in School-In were, in a way, representative of the nationwide situation. Their percentage of teaching hours devoted to special education was on par with the national average of 17.3 per cent of the total number of hours. The percentage of pupils who received special education was, on average, 9 per cent – slightly above the national average of 8 per cent (KOSTRA, 2017). Also, the challenges faced by these municipalities reflected the situation nationwide. The focus on special education was why the five municipalities conducted a four-year project called ‘Inclusive Learning Environment’ in the first place (Knutepunkt Sørlandet, 2012). In this project, the municipalities implemented new research on inclusion in all their schools, with the help of experts, to stop this trend of exclusion and become more inclusive at a system level. Despite their efforts, they stated that equal measures showed different effects in different schools.

Through examining the effects of reforms in 480 countries, the OECD showed that reforms work differently because the context is of decisive importance (OECD, 2015). The project School-In presented in this book addressed the questions of municipalities of why the effects of the measures differed from school to school, and aimed to provide new answers to what it takes to increase their ability to ensure good academic and social learning opportunities for all students.

2.1.1 Considering inclusion from a systemic perspective

International research has focused on the collective capacity of schools for inclusion (Leithwood, 2010; Fullan, 2010), with a great deal of research being carried out both in schools and on systems around them (Fullan, 2010; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

Collective capacity is often described as educators’ collective effort to build capacity for system-level change (Fullan, 2010; Hargreaves, 2012; Levin, 2010; Dinham, Crowther, & Harris, 2011). Building collective capacity requires (1) engagement and commitment by the adults in the system; (2) effective collective processes for educators to continue to improve their practices (often referred to as professional learning

communities); (3) aligned, coherent, and supportive system policies; and (4) practices and appropriate allocation of resources (Levin, 2008, p. 120). The project School-In has considered the structural aspects of the learning environment, which have turned out to be of importance (Hattie, 2009), and focused on creating change through networking (Rincon-Gallardo & Fullan, 2016).

Inclusive education has attracted extensive international interest for many years, and there have been many attempts to define and explain the concept of inclusion (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013; Göransson & Nilholm, 2014). Despite this, inclusion remains challenging to define. In School-In, the understanding of inclusion stems from an analysis of different studies on inclusion conducted by Göransson and Nilholm (2014). They discerned four distinct categories of definitions: (A) placement definition – inclusion as placement of students with disabilities, in need of special support in general education classrooms; (B) specified individualised definition – inclusion as meeting the social/academic needs of students with disabilities/students needing special support; (C) general individualised definition – inclusion as meeting the social/academic needs of all students; (D) community definition – inclusion as a creation of communities with specific characteristics (which could vary between proposals) (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014, p. 268). The last category enjoys special focus in the project School-In. Thus, the research in School-In was not based on special education research in particular, where the special needs child tends to be at the centre of attention. Instead, we wanted to apply a systemic and organisational approach to inclusion in schools, aiming to develop an understanding of inclusion connected to schools as communities with specific characteristics of inclusion. To create and strengthen communities with inclusive characteristics, whole communities should be in focus and not only children with specific needs.

2.1.2 Expectations as a key determinant for school culture

School culture is often described as one of the most critical factors in school improvement (Berg, 1999; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008), but international research says little about how school culture develops based on local expectations. In the project School-In, we based our approach on research showing that teachers lower their expectations for different groups of students (Diamond, Randolph & Spillane, 2004). Research shows that expectations are embedded in the school organisation and schools, thus, differentiate their responsibility for students' learning (Diamond et al., 2004). The project established the concept of *expectation structures* to describe a system of expectations, at different levels inside and outside the school, that shape the school culture, the teacher, paraprofessional and student roles, the community, instruction, and understanding of responsibility (Ingebrigtsvold Sæbø & Midtsundstad, 2018). However, expectation structures can also hinder the development of a school's collective responsibility for all students' learning. Therefore, the education sector needs answers to how school culture develops locally and how school culture can be modified to increase the school's collective capacity, improve inclusive practices, and reduce inequalities within and between

schools. Hence, School-In aimed to determine how individual expectation structures of schools develop as a result of the school's adjustment to local community expectations (Luhmann, 2000; Midtsundstad, 2010; Midtsundstad & Langfeldt, 2020).

2.2 Local school development in School-In

The process of local school development in School-In was considered a three-step process: (1) schools adjust to local expectations that are important to them and that influence decisions; (2) these local expectations have an impact on the school's internal expectations for the roles of teachers, paraprofessionals, and students; and (3) these internal expectations form the roles of teachers, paraprofessionals, and students and, thus, also the school culture (Midtsundstad & Langfeldt, 2020; Midtsundstad, 2019).

Innovative research is needed to determine how expectation structures are developed and how they can be identified and changed by creating synergies within the school organisation, outwardly in the school's local community, and across municipal boundaries. By comparing the change in expectation structures of different schools, we sought to identify working methods that school owners (the municipalities) can use in achieving collective capacity building.

The main goal of the project was to develop research-based knowledge on the importance of local expectation structures for school culture and how these structures can be changed to expand the school's collective capacity for inclusion. We have, therefore, developed a model that shows how expectation structures can work together and create synergies in and around schools and between municipalities.

The model of expectation structures (figure 2.1.) illustrates the system of various stakeholders in the education sector and the local community and how their expectations work together and influence each other. The innovation intended to initiate synergies that could change entrenched expectation structures in three focus areas.

2.2.1 School-In's three focus areas for organisational and structural change

School-In focused on three areas, with the following assumptions:

Focus area 1 – mapping of expectation structures that constitute the foundation of school culture. In the project, a mapping procedure (pre-test in a pre/post control design) was developed to compare expectation structures of schools with research-based characteristics of an inclusive organisation with a learning environment that promotes good results. These characteristics included the staff members' practice, shared expectations for the student role, joint academic and social responsibility for all students, and a shared culture (Midtsundstad & Langfeldt, 2020; Aasebø et al., 2017; Dalehefte & Midtsundstad, 2019). The assumption was that this comparison would challenge the staff members' self-understanding and create opportunities for change.

Focus area 2 – change in school culture as a result of collective expectation structures in the school organisation. Comparisons between schools motivated discussion and

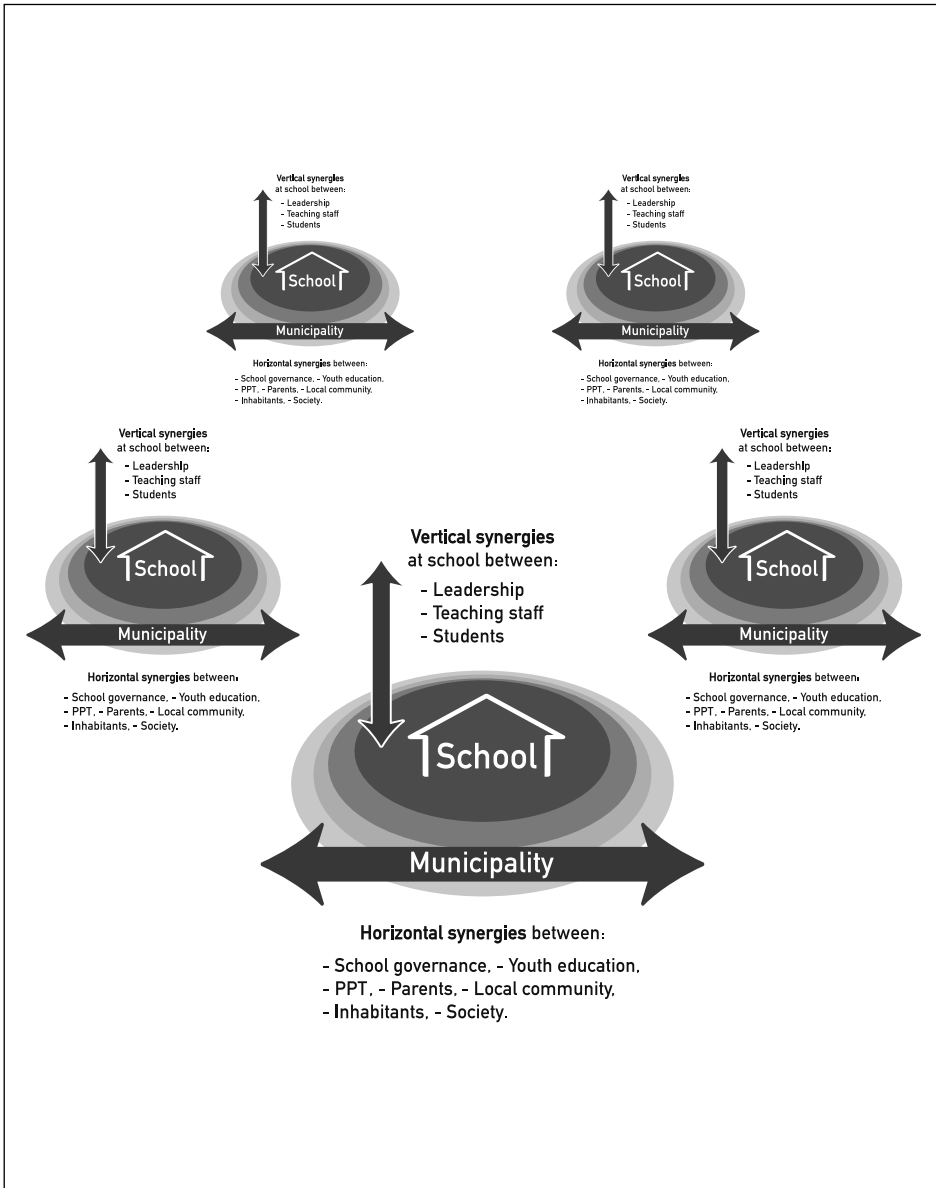


Figure 2.1: Model of expectation structures

joint work through the Mental Mapping Response method and in focus group conversations, Dialogue Cafés, and Reflection Cycles. The whole staff worked to change individual perceptions into common expectations for the student role, relations with local communities, dialogic teaching, and a culture of sharing. The project's working methods aimed to create synergies to develop a collective understanding of the individual school that contributes to collective practices.

Focus area 3 – implementation of new expectation structures in schools and support systems. Working groups were established in each community to create synergies within and between municipalities. These working groups consisted of the school owners, the leader of the Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (PPT), the head teachers of the participating schools, the coordinator, and the project manager (UiA). The schools met for a symposium twice a year to facilitate experience sharing, capacity building, and improvements using available resources. The aim of the symposium discussions was to support the implementation of and continuing efforts to promote the School-In innovation. The municipalities employed a coordinator in a twenty per cent position to ensure relevance, anchoring, and implementation.

School-In's ambition was to create a basis for improving quality through capacity building in service areas – 'horizontally' between a given school and its context, and 'vertically' within the school organisation. The innovation aimed to extend opportunities to develop an inclusive organisation (figure 2.1.).

2.2.2 Research questions

The main research question for the project was: How can awareness of and change in the expectation structures of schools contribute to an inclusive school culture rooted in the local community?

The aims of the project were:

1. To explore how to change the school culture through changing the school organisation's ties to the local community
2. To explore how teachers' participation in work to create change can enable the development of collective capacity for inclusion
3. To explore the potential impact of locally anchored school development on the capacity of schools for change and implementation

The first aim focuses on exploring *how to change the school culture through changing the school organisation's ties to the local community*. When it comes to changing school culture, there is a need for new knowledge on how expectation structures impact local communities and school culture. Even though school culture is an imprecise term, several studies have shown that school culture is one of the most critical factors in school improvement (Berg, 1999; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Schoen & Teddlie (2008) define school culture as a construct of four factors: (1) attitudes; (2) communication;

(3) student views; and (4) student involvement. Research has shown that a school's expectation structures are decisive for the evolution of school culture (Midtsundstad & Langfeldt, 2020). Thus, teachers' expectations of themselves, other colleagues, students, and student's parents influence their attitudes, communication, student views, and student involvement (Midtsundstad, 2015). The importance of expectations for the internal school organisation is internationally known (Diamond et al., 2004; Sammons et al., 2006). It is also known that the local culture influences school development through the students (Pritchard, Morrow, & Marshall, 2007), but there is little research on how the link between internal and external expectations shapes school culture.

School-In aimed to create new knowledge on how school culture develops as a result of school adjustment to local expectations. Because of this link between school culture and adjustment to expectations, raised awareness of a school's relationship with the local community can contribute to freeing a school's potential for development. By exposing and comparing expectation structures of school organisations, the research provided answers to how school culture is established and how it can be altered. The questions asked were based on theories regarding the anchoring of schools in their local communities from the Learning Regions project (Horrigo, 2015; Knudsen, 2015; Aasebø et al., 2017; Midtsundstad & Langfeldt, 2020).

The second aim was to *explore how teachers' participation in work to create change can enable the development of collective capacity for inclusion*. International research has focused on the collective capacity of schools for inclusion (Leithwood, 2010; Fullan, 2010) and shows that the teaching staff at schools are essential when it comes to bringing about change (Stoll et al., 2006; Timperley, 2008; Hopkins et al., 2014; Hargreaves, 2002). Several researchers are concerned about the necessity to exert a certain degree of pressure on teachers, referred to by Michael Fullan as *positive internal pressure* (Fullan, 2012) and as *internal accountability* by Elmore (2003). Other researchers, however, have criticised the pressure placed on teachers, as it is likely to force teachers to participate against their will (Stoll et al., 2006; Hargreaves, 2014).

School-In sought to encourage teachers to work towards change by concretising the strategy called *interruption to thinking*, which is recommended by research on inclusive practices (Ainscow, 2005, p. 109; Hargreaves, 2002, p. 196). School-In challenged the teachers' mindsets by comparing the teachers' schools to schools with characteristics of inclusive practices. This comparison was decisive for enabling the teachers to see their own professional practice and assess its quality. In School-In, we invited the teaching staff to evaluate and discuss the research findings during the innovation, which allowed participation and inspired engagement in collective efforts for change (Dinham, Crowther, & Harris, 2011). This democratic method is unique in international research. Thus, the School-In innovation advocates the impact of the democratic method on the school's collective capacity for inclusion (Dalehefte, Kristiansen, & Midtsundstad, 2017).

According to the School-In research design, development areas were identified based on an initial round of mapping, where focus group interviews and teaching

staff questionnaires (pre-test) were used. The identified development areas or topics to be worked on formed the basis for the intervention. The innovation started with a group session where the staff members discussed their reactions to the findings using the Mental Mapping Response method (chapter 4). They were asked to comment on what they thought was (1) wrong; (2) surprising; (3) recognisable; or (4) what they thought required action. The study showed that this approach started a process where staff members who initially understood the findings as ‘wrong’ or ‘surprising’ changed their minds when encountering perspectives and opinions from other staff. This exchange of opinions and ideas allowed different views to emerge and helped turn the discussions into areas believed to be worth developing. The teaching staff worked on the development areas using methods such as Dialogue Cafés (chapter 5) and Reflection Cycles (chapter 6). The discussions were audio recorded to analyse the teaching staff’s collective understanding and the change processes that were taking place towards collective capacity for inclusion. These analyses enabled us to find specific examples of and publish research findings concerning democratic methods in innovation efforts. The data from the discussions served as the basis for assuring the quality of professional and collective practices. Furthermore, we identified development, changes, and effects through a post-test.

The third aim of the research was to *explore the potential impact of locally anchored school development on the ability of schools to change and implement new knowledge*. In School-In, locally anchored school improvement was understood as involving both a change in the internal school culture and the development of support for the school’s inclusion in the local community. Several studies show that the relationship between schools and their communities is essential for bringing about change (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Harris, 2011). Research on capacity building for inclusion stresses the importance of local support (Fullan, 2010; Hargreaves, 2014; Dyssegaard, Larsen, & Tiftikci, 2014), but the question is often how local communities and networks can provide support on the terms of the school. The conclusion of a meta-analysis of international research on inclusive learning environments shows that forms of exclusion related to school culture are anchored locally (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Thus, the development of inclusive practices can be hindered by underlying restrictive expectation structures in the community. Research shows the need to study how the local community plays a role in developing inclusive school cultures, and how schools can obtain local support.

School-In contributes new knowledge in the field by applying findings from Learning Regions showing that schools which adjust to local community values have more inclusive practices and better results than other schools (Kvalsund & Hargreaves, 2009; Horrigmo, 2015; Cresswell, 2015). Adjusting the School-In reference to the local community values in support of an inclusive community creates recognition, trust, and support on the part of parents and other community members (Horrigmo & Midtsundstad, 2020). By using local values and existing networks and structures in the education sector, the innovation creates synergies vertically and horizontally

(figure 2.1.). Thus, this provides good opportunities for implementing innovation in the schools.

2.2.3 Research design

The pre-post control group design allowed us to measure the effects of the innovation on the school organisation's expectation structures. The design is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Pre-post control group design (Dalehefte & Midtsundstad, 2019, p. 86)

	Pre	Post
School-In (7 schools)	Focus group interviews – teaching staff Questionnaire – teaching staff Questionnaire – students* Focus group discussions – students* Multimapping of the context* Video study – instruction + questionnaire – students	Focus group interviews – teaching staff Questionnaire – teaching staff Video study – instruction + questionnaire – student
Control schools (6 schools)	Questionnaire – teaching staff	Questionnaire – teaching staff

* These methods were used to map the school but did not contribute to the pre-post design

All teachers and paraprofessionals in the innovation schools were asked to fill in a questionnaire in the beginning (pre) and at the end (post) of the semester. The same was done in parallelised control schools. Thus, the purpose of the pre-post control group design was to investigate the extent to which the intervention between pre and post showed an effect. In addition, the teaching staff in innovation schools participated in focus group interviews in the beginning and at the end of the innovation. Also, one to two teachers at each innovation school participated in a video study based on recordings of mathematics lessons and a student questionnaire directly after the lessons. Before the innovation started, the local context was mapped using documents, local experts, and student group interviews (chapter 7). The schools also provided School-In with results from national student tests and surveys. In this way, we collected data at different levels (teacher, class, and student level). We also audio recorded the discussions of the teaching staff during the Mental Mapping Response method sessions, Dialogue Cafés, and Reflection Cycles to gain knowledge on how the staff members shared their knowledge and how the process developed, and to better understand the benefits and pitfalls of our working methods.

Because the teaching staff influenced the development area, the innovation was carried out differently in each individual school. Therefore, the outcome differed from school to school, depending on the area the school needed to develop given the pre-mapping results, and on the concrete topic on which the teaching staff decided to work after discussing the pre-mapping results. Despite these differences in the content

of the School-In intervention, we were able to investigate whether the measures implemented in the different schools affected the corresponding variables and scales in the questionnaires, and whether effects were noticeable in the focus group interviews. Regarding implementation of the intervention in instruction, the video study enabled the identification of interesting aspects of the classroom situation; for example, if and how the teacher linked the content of the instruction to the local context, and how the students perceived the instruction (chapter 9).

The findings from the study showed great consensus in terms of issues such as the local community's relevance for schools, views on the student role, legal obligations, and the school's reputation, as well as increased collegial cooperation after the innovation compared to the control schools (Ingebrigtsvold Sæbø & Midtsundstad, 2018; Horrigmo & Midtsundstad, 2020; Midtsundstad, Dalehefte, Hillen, Horrigmo, Ingebrigtsvold Sæbø, 2022; Dalehefte & Midtsundstad, 2022). The study showed a change in staff attitudes during the project, which is a prerequisite for further implementation of knowledge and actions (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2012).

An important part of the design was ensuring the protection of personal data. It was necessary to register the project with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), which is responsible for implementing the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Norway, and get their approval before recording interviews and classroom instruction. Before any of the interviews and the teaching staffs' conversations could be audio recorded and the mathematics instruction video recorded, everyone involved – students' parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and leaders – needed to sign a consent form confirming that they accepted and trusted our handling of the data. The university ensured full data protection; participants were free to contact the UiA Data Protection Officer for Research at their convenience to ensure that the data was stored safely according to current rules.

This mixed method design gave us a broad picture of the schools and their local contexts while providing good opportunities for realising the innovation and documenting the development of the school.

2.2.4 Plan for the realisation of the innovation

Table 2.2. below presents an overview of the schedule for the realisation of the innovation, with explanations for each of the activities.

A: Parallel activities: Simultaneously with School-In, the project owner (one of the municipalities), all the municipalities, and schools cooperated to continue the initiative 'Inclusive Learning Environment' (Knutepunkt Sørlandet, 2015). Achieved results from School-In were presented at meetings with the steering group. Once per semester, the research team arranged network meetings for the project owner, partners, and innovation schools for results dissemination and experience sharing.

B: Decision-making by the project group: The project group was responsible for the progress, implementation, and upcoming decisions to give the project direction and

Table 2.2: Plan for the realisation of the innovation

per	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		
	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	
Activities											
A: Parallel activities	[Solid grey bar spanning all 10 columns]										
B: Decision making by the project group	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
C: Implementation of innovation									[Solid grey bar spanning 2020 S and A]		
D: National conference/ Dissemination conference		[Solid grey bar]						[Solid grey bar]			

S=Spring, A= Autumn

develop plans for introducing and implementing the innovation. The project manager (UiA) presented results from School-In throughout.

C: Implementation of the innovation: Theories, results, and working methods developed and quality assured by the research team were prepared for implementation in other schools after completion of the project. The cooperation in School-In was based on established structures for collaboration between the project owner, partners, and users, providing good opportunities for further implementation and dissemination in the education sector. These collaboration structures enabled the school owners to provide implementation support for other schools in their municipalities, in cooperation with the University of Agder. A separate UiA website was recently developed to provide schools with information about this support for implementation and school development (uia.no/en/school-in).

D: National conference/dissemination conference: A national conference was planned in the autumn of 2020, for experience sharing and national dissemination of research findings and related publications. Due to COVID-19, this conference was held digitally.

2.3 Cooperation structures and partners

The cooperation in School-In was organised by using already established local structures from the ongoing project ‘Inclusive Learning Environment’ (Knutepunkt Sørlandet, 2015). Thus, we knew we were using structures that were familiar to the partners and more likely to appear less laborious for the participants. These structures were used to anchor all decisions at different levels in the project organisation. Figure 2.2. presents an overview of how the cooperation was structured.

School-In was embedded in a network consisting of (1) the project group from the municipalities, (2) the project manager, (3) the coordinator, (4) the municipal working group, and (5) the school working group.

The project group: The project group consisted of municipal executives in charge of childhood and youth services from the five participating municipalities and the coordinator and project manager from the University of Agder. This group was led by the administrative manager of the project – one of the municipalities’ leaders. The project

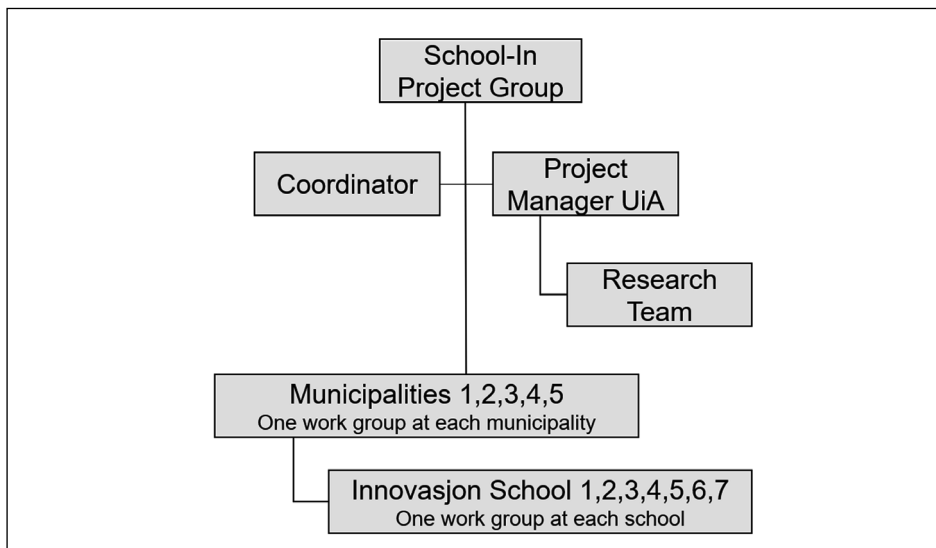


Figure 2.2: The project's cooperation constellations

group and the administrative manager were responsible for implementation of the innovation, in addition to progress, decisions, and budget issues. The group had three meetings per year, with the municipal executives also gathering for monthly meetings regarding continuing efforts on the initiative 'Inclusive Learning Environment'.

Project manager: The project manager was a professor in education at the University of Agder and was responsible for the innovation together with the research team. The research team consisted of five scientific employees at the University of Agder, two of whom were professors, two associate professors, and one an assistant professor. Together they provided the project with an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary background.

Coordinator: The municipalities engaged a coordinator in a 20 percent position. The coordinator had a master's degree in special education and was also experienced in implementing similar projects and familiar with cooperation between the education sector and research communities. For instance, she was in charge of coordinating the initiative 'Inclusive Learning Environment' in the five municipalities during the period 2013–2016 (Knutepunkt Sørlandet, 2015). In addition to being responsible for coordination, anchoring, and implementation in cooperation with the municipal working group, the coordinator collaborated with the project manager (UiA) to follow up on work with the innovation.

Municipal working groups: In each municipality, a working group was established, consisting of the municipal executive, the school academic adviser, the head of the Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (PPT), and the head teachers of the innovation schools. The tasks of the working group were to ensure anchoring, planning, and implementation of the School-In innovation in their municipality and to cooperate with schools on facilitating and implementing the innovation. The

working groups were chaired by the coordinator in cooperation with the municipal executive.

School working group: At the seven innovation schools, a working group consisting of the school management was established. Responsible for implementing the innovation in their school in collaboration with the project manager, the working group had two two-hour meetings with the project manager throughout the semester during which the school participated in the innovation. Each school had six three-hour staff meetings throughout the semester during which they participated, i.e., a total of 18 hours to implement the innovation.

Network meetings: Synergies associated with participating in School-In included networking with the other innovation schools to identify, describe, and discuss different expectation structures in and around the school, and how these exerted influence and were influenced, to reinforce the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The established cooperation structures between the project owner and partner municipalities were also used to disseminate and adopt results that emerged along the way. School-In sought to reinforce interaction between school owners and school leaders and between schools and the PPT (figure 2.1.).

Every semester, the School-In research team met with an emerging group of participants in the project. Here we presented the project to the new participants and introduced new findings from our ongoing research. We enabled the participants to discuss our findings so we could understand how these were perceived and what the participants experienced as valuable and useful for practical, everyday schoolwork. In the network meetings, the participants developed their own measures, and the school owners met all school leaders in the participating schools to discuss the actions they had tested and what they had learnt. After some of the network meetings, they sent their answers and notes to the project leader and coordinator. In the next network meeting, this valuable input was used to make the content relevant and useful for the participants. These notes were also used to prepare the implementation of the innovation in the remaining schools in the municipalities.

In our project, we were obliged to anonymise the schools participating in the innovation. In the network meetings, this was challenging and we, therefore, asked the schools not to reveal which were control schools and which were innovation schools. For the sake of anonymity, the schools were invited to the network meetings only after they had joined the project, to avoid influencing upcoming schools before participation. Therefore, the network meetings started only with the working groups in the municipalities, but the group grew from meeting to meeting as the number of participating schools increased. Table 2.3. gives an overview of the topics presented, discussed, and worked on in the network meetings during the project.

Table 2.3: Network meetings, presentations, and participants

Semester	Presentations	Participants
Autumn 2017	Project presentation by the research team Research focus presented by each researcher	The municipal working groups in five municipalities
Spring 2018	The project, including how expectations are influenced by how schools organise responsibility	The municipal working groups (5), the school working group in the pilot school, 2 school working groups in the innovation, and 1 control school
Autumn 2018	Local communities and schools	The municipal working groups (5), 3 school working groups in the innovation, and 2 control schools
Spring 2019	Our working methods and the effect on reflection in the school's professional learning communities	The municipal working groups (5), 4 school working groups in the innovation, and 3 control schools
Autumn 2019	Modelling the working methods: Dialogue Café and Reflection Cycle	The municipal working groups (5), 5 school working groups in the innovation, and 4 control schools
Spring 2020	Modelling the Mental Mapping Response method	The municipal working groups (5), 6 school working groups in the innovation, and 5 control schools
Autumn 2020	Local school development	The municipal working groups, 7 school working groups in the innovation, and 6 control schools

2.4 School-In's contribution to professional development and research

From a national perspective, the School-In innovation contributed to new, improved forms of organisation and management by providing knowledge on how local expectation structures shape school cultures and what measures are needed to achieve change. It showed that the structures linked to a school might have a sustaining effect on expectation structures and prevent the development of collective responsibility. Given this fact, the School-In innovation aimed to increase the competence of the teaching staff and other working groups in the education sector, including the Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (PPT) – an important player in hindering a growing diagnostic tendency and avoiding fragmentation of the student and classroom community. Furthermore, the innovation provided the education sector with expertise in selecting measures and working methods that support municipal efforts to strengthen public schools.

This innovation study was also of international significance, since it created new forms of organisation for inclusion and capacity improvement in the education sector. Its design represented an improvement on similar innovation designs in this area because it required an equal focus on all systems, best known through Fullan's 'all

systems go' (Fullan, 2010). It also streamlined and created new knowledge by looking at the individual school's relationship with the local community and identifying inhibiting expectations that sustain the school culture. Moreover, the innovation used the existing organisation of the national education sector to create a greater capacity for development. Streamlining and renewing this type of innovative design is of international interest (OECD, 2015).

School-In profited from experiences in other international intervention programmes. For instance, it drew on the innovation and methods used in the research conducted in the German school development programme SINUS for Primary School (Fischer, Kobarg, Dalehefte, & Trepke, 2013). In School-In, however, separate concepts were also developed, i.e., the new concept of 'Organisational Didactics' (Midtsundstad, Dalehefte, Hillen, Horrigmo, & Ingebrigtsvold Sæbø, 2022), to challenge and motivate teachers to work towards change. The findings from the comparison between the teachers' own schools and inclusively organised schools were used to invite the teaching staff to evaluate the research findings by discussing the need of their schools for development through the Mental Mapping Response method (chapter 4). Differing perceptions of the staffs' own schools marked the beginning of a collective, reflective process towards a common understanding and collective responsibility, which was addressed in Dialogue Cafés (chapter 5) and Reflection Cycles (chapter 6). These working methods are more thoroughly described in other chapters in this book.

Through our cooperation in the municipalities, with schools, in network meetings, and with the international reference group, we aimed to enhance school quality. Several measures were used. By focusing on the importance of expectation structures, School-In provided the education sector with new knowledge concerning how to improve aptitude of schools for change and development. Teachers gained new, relevant competencies, which were developed based on findings from their schools and local communities, enabling them to select measures more accurately. Teacher education programmes, staff in kindergartens, and municipal administrations can also benefit from the School-In findings in the future. The knowledge and methods developed in School-In are transferable to all schools and capable of strengthening existing strategies for enhanced quality.

In addition, a website was recently developed (uia.no/en/school-in), providing interested schools with information and enabling school owners and leaders to, based on a survey (chapter 10), improve their competence in choosing measures and working methods that are likely to be effective in each school. With this website, School-In has created opportunities for a more efficient, less resource-demanding organisation of school development.

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