TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR INCLUSION



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Further information about the Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion (TPL4I) activities is available on the <u>TPL4I web area</u>.

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SECTION 1: WIDER POLICY CONTEXT

Wider policy context

In accordance with Article 49: Teacher's Rights and Duties of the <u>Republic of Lithuania</u> <u>Law Amending the Law on Education</u> (17 March 2011, No. XI-1281), every teacher must:

4) upgrade their qualifications;

5) provide education on the basis of learners' abilities and vocations, strengthen the motivation to learn and confidence in one's abilities, render help to learners having educational, learning difficulties and with special educational needs, adapt a subject programme, content, methods to the said learners.

The <u>Government Education Strategy for 2013–2022</u> was approved by Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (23 December 2013, No. XII-745). The document reads that the success of the education system depends on its ability to attract young and talented people into the teaching profession. The first priority is the teacher's personality:

15.3 to enhance motivation of teachers and teacher trainers to upgrade their competences [...];

15.4 to stimulate constant collaboration and to share their positive experiences.

The aim is to develop a quality education community that consists of professional teachers who can reflect on their activities and constantly develop their professional skills, to ensure accessibility and equal opportunities in education.

In order to enhance the quality of initial teacher education, the <u>Regulations of Teacher Education</u> were approved (order of the Minister of Education and Science, 29 May 2018, No. V-501). Three teacher education centres were also created.

Comprehensive reforms to teachers' careers and training aim to increase the quality of education. Lithuania has been facing significant challenges in the demographic make-up of its teachers. This has been further aggravated by low rates of enrolment in initial teacher training programmes and a relatively discouraging system of salaries and career structure. This led the Council of the European Union to recommend that Lithuania improves educational outcomes by rewarding quality in teaching and in higher education. After two years of negotiation, a new collective agreement with teacher unions was signed in November 2017. A move from salaries based on teaching hours to a fixed salary model was introduced in the 2018/2019 school year. (European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2018: Lithuania, p. 7)

Additional contextual data can be found on the European Commission's <u>Education and</u> Training Monitor website.

Development and implementation of the 'All-day School' operational concept and financing scheme was planned in 2018. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour jointly implement this priority. The recommendations for setting up an all-day school and organisation of



Wider policy context

its activities were ratified by <u>order of the Minister of Education and Science No. 606</u> (26 June 2018).

The preliminary project of the all-day school concept involved research into all-day school modelling in foreign countries and the need and availability of these services in Lithuania. The projects for all-day schools in Lithuania were developed. All-day schools are aimed at learners who are less academically advanced, are from lower socio-economic status, or from immigrant families. Social pedagogical support for families, possibility combining work and family life, are the biggest advantages of the concept. Empowerment and inclusion in the education process through various community resources, possibility to better ensure equal rights to after school activities to raise learners' motivation, are also positive aspects of all-day school.

Teachers, teacher assistants, non-formal education specialists and social pedagogues work at all-day school. Important social partners include music schools, sports associations and various non-governmental organisations.

The <u>Code of Ethics for Educators (11 June 2018, No. V-561)</u> contains the list of key principles of ethical conduct and activity:

- Respect
- Justice
- Recognition of human rights
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Care and solidarity.

All principles are crucial for ensuring quality of inclusive education:

Adherence to the requirements of the Code is a personal commitment and the matter of honour of an educator who aspires to fulfil his/her duties properly and competently, to raise the prestige of the profession and to increase trust in the educational system of the country. The breach of these requirements entails responsibility stipulated in the Law of Education of the Republic of Lithuania and other legal acts regulating educators' activities. (Code of Ethics, p. 9)



SECTION 2: VISION AND MAIN PRINCIPLES OF TPL4I POLICY

2.1 Policy vision

Policy priorities		Findings	
2.1.1	Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers (i.e. student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, teacher educators) can access careerlong professional learning opportunities regarding the principles of inclusive education	 2.1.1.1 All teachers have the opportunity to attend in-service teacher training courses offered by regional teacher education centres, teacher professional development centres or higher institutions in order to enhance their knowledge or acquire a specialisation in special education (European Agency, Country information for Lithuania, Teacher education for inclusive education). 2.1.1.2 	
		In accordance with Article 49: Teacher's Rights and Duties of the Republic of Lithuania Law Amending the Law on Education (17 March 2011, No. XI-1281):	
		Every teacher must	
		4) upgrade their qualifications;	
		5) provide education on the basis of learners' abilities and vocations, strengthen the motivation to learn and confidence in one's abilities, render help to learners having educational, learning difficulties and with special educational needs, adapt a subject programme, content, methods to the said learners.	
		2.1.1.3	
		Every pre-primary or primary teacher or subject, vocational or informal teacher supplementing formal education must complete at least 60 hours of training in special needs education and	



Policy priorities		Findings
		psychology. This requirement is stated in the Requirements for Qualification of Teachers, approved by the order of the Minister of Education (29 August 2014, No. V-774, par. 9) if the teacher has not studied the subjects before.
2.1.2	Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their role and collaboration in and contribution to inclusive education	2.1.2.1 In order to enhance the quality of initial teacher education, the Regulations of Teacher Education were approved (by order of the Minister of Education and Science, 29 May 2018, No. V-501) and three teacher education centres were created. The most qualified teacher educators/trainers are employed in the centres. New study programmes are to be introduced.
2.1.3	Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their pedagogical responsibility to promote the interaction, learning, participation and collaboration of all learners	2.1.3.1 The 17th Government Programme 2017–2020 and Government's Implementation Plan 2017 provided measures for strengthening and developing inclusive education until 2020. One of the goals is to create equal conditions for early and general education, including nonformal education, to seek the diversity of educational institutions, taking into account the specific needs of the local community and learners. It aims for educational programmes to: • meet different educational needs; • ensure equal opportunities and accessibility for different social groups (bilingual people, people with disabilities or special needs); • apply flexible measures, such as mobile laboratories and groups of learning advisers. (European Agency, Country information for Lithuania, Legislation and policy) 2.1.3.2 Mentoring and an induction period for teachers at the beginning of their career are indicated in the Regulations of Teacher Education. This aims to enhance the quality of initial teacher



Policy priorities	Findings
	education. Teachers will receive education regarding their role and collaboration in and contribution to inclusive education.

Evaluative comments for 'Policy vision'

After graduation from their Initial Teacher Education study programme, every teacher must acquire general and special competences which are necessary to be an inclusive teacher. (Regulations of Teacher Education approved by order of the Minister of Education and Science, 29 May 2018, No. V-501). The practice period of studies is worth at least 30 credits. This period should enhance the skills for being a quality inclusive teacher. Monitoring of lifelong learning for inclusion of in-service teachers is ineffective, therefore the system should be better developed in the future.

2.2 Main principles

Policy priorities	Findings
2.2.1 Teachers' professional learning is defined in policy as a prerequisite for inclusive education	2.2.1.1 The Ministry of Education and Science re-established the Department of Teachers' Activities (2015). It was responsible for policy and strategy to develop teachers' qualifications, in the context of the implementation of the Lifelong Learning Strategy (2001) and the Plan of Action for the Development of Inclusive Education for the period of 2014–2016 (approved by the Minister of Education and Science, 2014, Law No. V-808) (European Agency, Country information for Lithuania, Teacher education for inclusive education).



Policy priorities		Findings
		2.2.1.2 The Plan of Action developed teacher professional learning. About 5,000 teachers upgraded their professional competences in a number of projects in 2019.
2.2.2	Policy states that the principles and practice of inclusive education should be part of initial teacher education	2.2.2.1 After graduation from their Initial Teacher Education study programme, every teacher must acquire general and special competences which are necessary to be an inclusive teacher. (Regulations of Teacher Education approved by order of the Minister of Education and Science, 29 May 2018, No. V-501). The practice period of studies is worth at least 30 credits. This period should enhance the skills for being a quality inclusive teacher.
2.2.3	Policy states that beginning teachers should receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education	2.2.3.1 Mentoring and an induction period for teachers at the beginning of their career are indicated in the Regulations of Teacher Education (the order of the Minister of Education and Science, 29 May 2018, No. V-501). This aims to enhance the quality of initial teacher education. Teachers will receive education regarding their role and collaboration in and contribution to inclusive education.
2.2.4	Policy ensures that experienced teachers receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education	2.2.4.1 All teachers have the opportunity to attend in-service teacher training courses offered by regional teacher education centres, teacher professional development centres or higher institutions in order to enhance their knowledge or acquire a specialisation in special education (European Agency, Country information for Lithuania, Teacher education for inclusive education).



Policy priorities	Findings
	2.2.4.2
	The in-service teacher training system is undergoing further development so that teachers can access a wider variety of programmes on inclusive education. Each year, some financing from the Ministry for in-service and initial teacher education programmes is allocated to special needs education (European Agency, Country information for Lithuania, Teacher education for inclusive education).
	2.2.4.3
	Since 2019, teachers who work in vocational or informal education that supplements formal education must complete at least 60 hours of special needs education and psychology training before 31 August 2020 (all other teachers already had this obligation). This requirement is stated in the Requirements for Qualification of Teachers, approved by an order of the Minister of Education (29 August 2014, No. V-774, par. 9; also Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, 16 July 2019, No. V-831).
	2.2.4.4
	In accordance with Law on Education, Article 49: Teacher's Rights and Duties:
	A teacher shall have the right:
	1) to offer individual programmes; to choose methods and forms of pedagogical activity;
	2) to attend in-service training events at least 5 days per year;
	3) to be attested and obtain a qualification category in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Minister of Education and Science.



Policy	priorities	Findings
2.2.5	Policy states that specialist teachers and other professionals (e.g. speech and language therapists, multilingual education teachers and other professionals who work in schools) receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education	'All teachers and other specialists working in special schools have the necessary qualifications to educate learners with [special educational needs] and disabilities' (European Agency, Country information for Lithuania, Teacher education for inclusive education). 2.2.5.2 Five specialised programmes (40 hours) are available for teachers working in special schools/classes to develop necessary competences during the first year of their work. They are approved by the order of the Director of the Education Development Centre (2 December 2015, No. V7-1117/1.15). Each of the programmes has a special number. The programmes are available until December 2020.
2.2.6	Policy states that teacher educators working in university education departments or pedagogical institutes should be trained and committed to the inclusive education agenda in their courses, as understood in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Disability Strategy	2.2.6.1 During the 'Tęsk' ('Continue') project, teacher trainers from universities have an opportunity to upgrade their competences during study visits to foreign countries which are considered to be advanced in the inclusive education field (Finland, Ireland).



Evaluative comments for 'Main principles'

Policy regarding inclusive education training for teacher educators working in university education departments (three Teacher Education Centres), as understood in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Disability Strategy, is not currently clear enough. Nevertheless, teacher educators must be committed to the strategic documents of the Republic of Lithuania, e.g. <u>Government Education Strategy for 2013–2022</u>, which was approved by Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (23 December 2013, No. XII-745).



SECTION 3: GOALS AND CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR TPL4I POLICY

3.1 Goals

Policy	priorities	Findings
3.1.1	Policy states that all teachers should have qualifications that reflect an inclusive education agenda	3.1.1.1 A new concept of teacher education has been introduced. In future, each graduate from university or college will acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with the diverse learner body, including learners with special educational needs. The Special Education study programme was renewed to meet challenges for special needs teachers in inclusive education. It emphasises teamwork with other participants in the educational process and other institutions. 3.1.1.2
		The Specifications on the Education and Training Studies Course Group state which subjects have to be covered in all initial teacher education (ITE) programmes:
		 Education science theory; historical, philosophical, sociological and intercultural aspects of analysis of education and training
		Knowledge of the teaching subject or chosen educational speciality
		Personal development and personal maturity
		Motivational and teaching theories
		Group processes and their dynamics in the learning environment
		 Planning and management of the learning process (planning educational content, its purpose and tasks, in accordance with learners' experience and difficulties)



Policy priorities	Findings
	 Application of learning strategies, methods and technologies in the education environment Methods of assessment and self-assessment of achievements
	 Diversity of learners, taking into account the context of those with special educational needs (inclusive education) and those who are talented.
	3.1.1.3
	Since 2019, teachers who work in vocational or informal education that supplements formal education must complete at least 60 hours of special needs education and psychology training before 31 August 2020 (all other teachers already had this obligation). This requirement is stated in the Requirements for Qualification of Teachers, approved by an order of the Minister of Education (29 August 2014, No. V-774, par. 9; also Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, 16 July 2016, No. V-831).
	Each educational institution must have a yearly plan for professional development of its pedagogues.
3.1.2 Policy states competence areas for inclusive education for all teachers working at different levels of education (e.g. professional development of all teachers to facilitate their involvement in co-teaching, planning together, developing differentiated materials collaboratively, etc.)	3.1.2.1 The Regulations of Teacher Education (Pedagogų rengimo reglamentas) were approved by an order of the Minister of Education and Science (29 May 2018, No. V-501). They state that general and special competencies are needed to acquire a Teacher's Qualification. These are gained through a study process and then deepened and developed throughout the working years as an educator. General competencies: Leadership Creativity, problem solving and critical thinking



Policy priorities	Findings
	Social justice and public spirit
	Reflection and self-assessment, consistent development
	Management of organisations and changes
	Social and emotional
	Digital literacy
	Media literacy.
	Special competencies:
	Understanding of learners and their environment
	 Creation, management and implementation of educational content
	 Ensuring pupils' progress, evaluation of their achievements and feedback
	Research of professional activities
	 Professional partnership, networking, communication and co-operation.
	(Eurydice, National Education Systems, Lithuania, <u>Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education</u>)
	3.1.2.2
	All teachers must upgrade their social-emotional competence every four years (Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania).



Policy priorities		Findings
3.1.3	Policy states that all teachers' professional learning opportunities consider teacher competences for inclusive education	
3.1.4	There is a formal strategy for promoting dialogue between ministries, regional/local authorities/municipalities and teacher educators to agree on the requirements of teachers' professional development opportunities for inclusion	
3.1.5	There is a mechanism to ensure that all professional learning opportunities available to teachers are aligned with national- and local-level policy goals for an understanding of inclusive education	Institutions providing teachers' professional development include methodological centres at schools, municipal teacher education centres and professional development providers at higher education institutions. Other institutions, such as non-governmental organisations and agencies under the subordination of the Ministry of Education and Science, can also arrange professional development events (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Lithuania, Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education).



Policy	priorities	Findings
3.1.6	There are strategies to ensure that local-level professional opportunities for teachers are flexible/adaptable to local school contexts and school development plans for inclusive education	3.1.6.1 Each school must have a yearly plan for professional development of its pedagogues. The plan must reflect the needs of the school, the needs of the region/municipality and the nation's teacher professional development priorities. Each pedagogue has a right to attend professional development courses/programmes for at least five days per year. The head teacher must ensure the teachers' possibility to exercise this right. The Code of Ethics for Educators was approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport (Order No. V-561, 11 June 2018). The principle of Responsibility reads that a teacher must regularly evaluate their competences, using feedback received from the management, colleagues, pupils and their parents/guardians, and must foresee their own professional development.
3.1.7	There is a medium- and long- term review strategy for teachers' professional learning opportunities to ensure they meet system requirements for an inclusive education system	

Evaluative comments for 'Goals'

Policy states the competence areas for inclusive education for all teachers. The system of professional development is very liberalised. Institutions providing teachers' professional development include methodological centres at schools, municipal teacher education centres and professional development providers at higher education institutions. Other institutions, such as non-governmental organisations and agencies under the subordination of the Ministry of Education and Science, can also arrange professional development events. In order to ensure more quality in professional development, monitoring should be better structured.



3.2 Continuum of support

Policy	priorities	Findings
3.2.1	There is a strategy to ensure a continuum of diverse professional learning opportunities for inclusive education – for pre-service, beginning and experienced teachers, as well as teacher educators and support teachers – across all levels where teachers work	3.2.1.1 Each school must have a yearly plan for professional development of its pedagogues. The plan must reflect the needs of the school, the needs of the region/municipality and the nation's teacher professional development priorities. Each pedagogue has a right to attend professional development courses/programmes for at least five days per year. The head teacher must ensure teachers' possibility to exercise this right. The Code of Ethics for Educators was approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport (Order No. V-561, 11 June 2018). The principle of Responsibility reads that a teacher must regularly evaluate their competences, using feedback received from the management, colleagues, pupils and their parents/guardians, and must foresee their own professional development.
3.2.2	There are strategies for developing leadership competences (e.g. school leadership or learning support leadership roles) for inclusive education in all relevant professional learning opportunities	



Policy	priorities	Findings
3.2.3	There are mechanisms to support schools/higher education institutions to develop strategic plans for teachers' professional learning in inclusive education	3.2.3.1 Consultants on inclusive education who were involved in the Nordic and Baltic project 'A School for All' disseminate their knowledge and experience. They work at different levels: school, local pedagogical-psychological service (PPS), regional and in-service teacher training programmes.
3.2.4	There are strategies to support effective collaboration and joint work between schools and higher education institutions/universities	

Evaluative comments for 'Continuum of support'

Universities and teacher training centres should ensure quality teacher education for inclusion.



SECTION 4: CAPACITY BUILDING, FUNDING AND MONITORING OF TPL4I POLICY

4.1 Capacity building

Policy	priorities	Findings
4.1.1	There are strategies to increase the capacity of all schools/higher education institutions to support all teachers to engage in professional learning activities on inclusive education	4.1.1.1 Since 2019, teachers who work in vocational or informal education that supplements formal education must complete at least 60 hours of special needs education and psychology training before 31 August 2020 (all other teachers already had this obligation). This requirement is stated in the Requirements for Qualification of Teachers, approved by an order of the Minister of Education (29 August 2014, No. V-774, par. 9; also Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, 16 July 2016, No. V-831). A number of programmes are available for in-service teacher training. Schools must prepare
4.1.2	There is a mechanism to facilitate dialogue between all teachers/leaders/other stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of inclusive education as an approach that ensures high-quality learning opportunities for all	yearly teacher's professional development plans. 4.1.2.1 The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is preparing a number of suggestions for changing the Law on Education and creating an action plan to push forward development of inclusive education in 2020–2023. If the Law on Education is changed (all general education schools without exception would accept all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs), the plan would be backed by additional funding from the State and municipal budgets. This measure would also serve as a mechanism to facilitate dialogue.



Policy	priorities	Findings
4.1.3	There is guidance on how teachers working in mainstream school settings/higher education institutions can understand and enact inclusive education	4.1.3.1 Every pre-school, primary or subject teacher in vocational or informal education that supplements formal education must complete at least 60 hours of special needs education and psychology if they have not studied the subjects before. This requirement is stated in Requirements for Qualification of Teachers, approved by an order of the Minister of Education (29 August 2014, No. V-774, par. 9). Teachers who attend the programme (60 hours) learn to understand and enact inclusive education. By the end of the programme they must introduce and defend their action plans for this matter using concrete examples.
4.1.4	There are guidelines that support all teachers to collaborate to support all learners	4.1.4.1 The concept of 'all-day school' was approved by an <u>order of the Minister of Education and Science (21 December 2015, No. V-1308)</u> .
		All-day schools are meaningful for children who are less advanced in academic achievements, have lower socio-economic status, or are from immigrant families. Social pedagogical support for families and the possibility of combining work and family life are mentioned as the biggest advantages of the concept. Empowerment and inclusion in the education process through various community resources and the possibility to better ensure equal rights to after-school activities that relate to raising children's motivation are also defined as positive sides of all-day school.
		Teachers, teacher assistants, non-formal education specialists and social pedagogues work at all-day school. Important social partners are music schools, sports associations, and various non-governmental organisations.



Policy	priorities	Findings
4.1.5	There are guidelines on how methods of quality assessment, school evaluation, inspections and other accountability measures contribute to planning/identifying priority areas of professional learning activities for inclusive education	
4.1.6	There are strategies to support schools/higher education institutions to build strong leadership teams that are aware of the inclusive education agenda	4.1.6.1 Activities for teacher trainers competence development in the European Union (EU) ' <i>Tęsk</i> ' ('Continue') project.
4.1.7	There are incentives stated in policy for all teachers to engage in professional learning activities for inclusive education	4.1.7.1 The requirement is stated in the Requirements for Qualification of Teachers, approved by order of the Minister of Education (29 August 2014, No. V-774, par. 9) (60-hour programme).
4.1.8	There are strategies stated in policy to develop the role of specialist teachers as a resource for mainstream schools	4.1.8.1 Six specialised education resource centres operate in the country. They work on national and regional levels. Specialist teachers (special pedagogues, etc.) provide consultancy for mainstream schools and parents.



Policy	priorities	Findings
4.1.9	There are strategies to promote professional learning for inclusion in teachers' common competence areas (e.g. experienced teachers and specialist teachers are expected to engage in professional learning activities that promote inclusive education pedagogies, such as co-teaching)	
4.1.10	There are competences for professional learning in inclusive education for all teachers	

Evaluative comments for 'Capacity building'

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4.2 Funding

Policy	priorities	Findings
4.2.1	There are financial incentives to encourage all schools/higher education institutions to develop policy and action plans for teachers' professional learning for inclusion	
4.2.2	There are mechanisms for systematic data collection on expenditure on teachers' professional learning that informs cost-effectiveness issues	
4.2.3	There are flexible resourcing mechanisms that foster teachers' professional learning at school level	_

Evaluative comments for 'Funding'

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4.3 Monitoring

Policy	priorities	Findings
4.3.1	There is a comprehensive accountability framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of teachers' professional learning for inclusion activities	
4.3.2	Monitoring mechanisms ensure that inequalities in access to professional learning opportunities at regional or organisational levels are addressed	
4.3.3	There are mechanisms to support schools/teacher education departments/higher education institutions to have ownership of review and improvement processes in relation to teachers' professional learning	



Policy	priorities	Findings
4.3.4	There are mechanisms to share and analyse data to inform improvement processes in relation to teachers' professional learning at national and local level	
4.3.5	There is data available on whether teachers are engaged in professional learning that is relevant to the level of education they teach	
4.3.6	There are mechanisms to ensure that teachers' professional learning contributes to improving inclusive education practice at school level/the level of a teacher education department or higher education institution	

Evaluative comments for 'Monitoring'

Clear mechanisms for monitoring teacher professional development should be created.