

# Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion

An Analysis of Country Policies in Europe

T P L 4 I



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# TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR INCLUSION

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An Analysis of Country Policies in Europe



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Editors: Simoni Symeonidou, Annet De Vroey and Amélie Lecheval

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education gratefully acknowledges Lani Florian's contribution to this report.

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You may cite this publication as follows: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2020. *Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion: An Analysis of Country Policies in Europe*. (S. Symeonidou, A. De Vroey and A. Lecheval, eds.). Odense, Denmark



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With a view to greater accessibility, this report is available in accessible electronic format on the Agency's website: [www.european-agency.org](http://www.european-agency.org)

ISBN: 978-87-7110-936-8 (Electronic)

ISBN: 978-87-7110-935-1 (Printed)



The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) is an independent and self-governing organisation. The Agency is co-funded by the ministries of education in its member countries and by the European Commission via an operating grant within the European Union (EU) Erasmus+ education programme.

The views expressed by any individual in this document do not necessarily represent the official views of the Agency, its member countries or the European Commission.

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Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.





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## ABBREVIATIONS

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**Agency** or **European Agency** refers to the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.

**CPD** or **continuing professional development** refers to all formal and informal learning opportunities for in-service teachers, such as participation in school conferences or professional learning communities.

**ECTS** stands for the **European Credit Transfer System**. A bachelor's and master's programme involves a certain number of ECTS credits, usually 180 and 120 credits, respectively. Higher education programmes in Europe have modules and courses that are compatible with the ECTS.

**ITE** or **initial teacher education** refers to all formal learning paths for pre-service teachers, such as higher education initial or post-graduate teacher education programmes.

**SEN** or **special educational needs** are defined as 'a discrepancy between what a system of schooling ordinarily provides and what the child needs to support their learning' (Rouse, 2008, p. 6).

**TE4I** refers to the Agency's **Teacher Education for Inclusion** project (2010–2012), focusing on ITE for inclusion.

**TPL** refers to **teacher professional learning** and covers ITE, induction and CPD, as well as learning opportunities for teacher educators based in schools and higher education institutions.

**TPL4I** refers to the Agency's present **Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion** project (2018–2021), focusing on TPL for inclusion policy, its activities and outcomes.





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## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

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**All learners:** learners who attend mainstream or special schools, as well as those who are out of school. This includes at-risk learners, such as learners of migrant origins, learners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, learners with disabilities, non-native language speakers, refugees, etc. (Council of the European Union, 2018).

**All teachers:** early education teachers, primary teachers, secondary teachers, vocational teachers, adult education teachers, and specialists collaborating with classroom or subject teachers and teacher educators.

**Continuum of TPL:** the whole range of TPL opportunities across a teacher's career, including ITE, induction, CPD, and teacher educators' professional learning opportunities. The continuum of TPL for inclusion also includes all specialist staff and support staff involved in inclusive classrooms/schools.

**Diversity:** 'cultural, linguistic, ethnic, developmental and other aspects of human difference that represent' elements of identity characterising 'both individuals and groups' and accounting for 'differences between people' (Florian and Pantić, 2017, p. 1).

**Equity:** understood in terms of inclusiveness and fairness, equity requires education systems to 'ensure that all young people are able to develop their talents and achieve their full potential regardless of their background' (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020, p. 13).

**Induction:** the professional learning opportunities of beginning teachers.

**Policy framework:**

... brings together policies/policy elements that set out the requirements and processes for reaching policy goals in line with national/organisational values and principles. A policy framework outlines roles and responsibilities for policy development, stakeholder engagement, implementation, dissemination, monitoring/evaluation, governance and operational processes (European Agency, 2018, p. 17).



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**Specialists/specialist staff:** refers to specially-trained personnel involved in the assessment, education or care of learners with additional support needs. These may include learner support or special education co-ordinators, special educators or special education teachers, teaching or school assistants, educational psychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, social workers, etc.

**TPL for inclusion:** reflective practice and personal competence development of all teachers, specialists and support staff, in the areas of valuing learners' differences, learner support and working with others. This definition is in line with the Agency's *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012).

**TPL for inclusion policy:** the development and implementation of legislation, regulations and other policy aspirations and actions to enhance and support TPL for inclusion, in order to prepare all teachers to include all learners.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Teacher professional learning (TPL) for inclusion is a topic that increasingly attracts the attention of teachers, researchers and policy-makers. A range of TPL opportunities is available in different phases of teachers' careers, from initial teacher education (ITE), to induction, continuing professional development (CPD) and teacher educators' learning. These opportunities, which aim to prepare all teachers to include all learners, are at the centre of local, national, regional, European and international debates.

This report is one of the outputs of the [Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion](#) (TPL4I) project, by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency). Phase 1 of the TPL4I project started in autumn 2018 and was completed in 2020. This work aimed to identify the policy elements and framework needed to ensure all teachers, at each stage of their career, are prepared for inclusive education. It focused on TPL policies covering the continuum of professional learning throughout a teacher's career, as well as the professional learning of specialists and support staff working with teachers in inclusive classrooms and schools.

During the project, a [literature review](#) (European Agency, 2019a) identified key international and European policy and research issues in relation to TPL for inclusion. Based on the findings, the TPL4I project team developed a [policy self-review tool](#) (European Agency, 2019b) to help policy-makers record and evaluate their national policies on TPL for inclusion in three areas:

- Policy vision and main principles
- Goals and continuum of support
- Capacity building, funding and monitoring.



Using this tool, 26 countries<sup>1</sup> participated in a policy mapping activity. This report presents findings from the analysis of the policy mapping activity. It maps national TPL for inclusion policies along the three policy areas and elements of the policy self-review tool. It aims to address issues relevant to policy-makers who are interested in developing wider policy for inclusive education and for TPL for inclusion specifically.

In particular, this report's objectives are to:

- provide a synthesis of national-level policies in relation to TPL for inclusion;
- identify key issues and common challenges for policy-makers and providers of TPL for inclusion in different national policy contexts;
- identify recommendations for future policy development on TPL for inclusion that are linked with a wider inclusive education policy framework.

Based on the findings from the analysis of the [policy mapping grids](#) (European Agency, 2020a), the following trends emerged:

- There are international recommendations for comprehensive TPL for inclusion policies based on the concept of **equity**. Despite this, in national/regional policies, inclusion is understood as the need for separate policies for some groups of learners, such as those with special educational needs (SEN). Separate educational policies for specific target groups often lead to separate or specific paths in TPL. Therefore, the extent to which the principle of equity underpins TPL paths is debatable.
- The extent to which **inclusive education is part of the TPL policy continuum** varies across countries. Moreover, in many countries, there are gaps between the different phases of the TPL continuum. This is particularly so in induction for beginning teachers and professional development for teacher educators, including school leaders. The range of policies in ITE and CPD suggests that inclusive education is sometimes a component of TPL policies. However, in many cases, TPL opportunities cover learners categorised as having SEN without a clear view of competences for inclusion.
- The **implementation of TPL for inclusion** reflects a range of collaborative strategies and approaches for capacity building. However, these do not always promote collaboration between all teachers or between teachers with different roles (e.g. mainstream class teachers and specialist teachers). Additionally, in the areas of funding and monitoring of TPL for inclusion, there is little evidence of collaboration between diverse stakeholders (ministries, local authorities, universities and other agencies or networks) to strengthen TPL for inclusion policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), United Kingdom (Scotland) and United Kingdom (Wales).



The analysis of national policies and research literature led to recommendations for future policy development towards TPL for inclusion, as part of broader inclusive education policy. Findings were also connected with the Agency's ecosystem model of inclusive education systems (European Agency, 2017a; 2017b). The ecosystem model explains how different structures, processes and outcomes of inclusive policies and practice, at different levels of the system, interact with each other and impact on learners.

TPL for inclusion is considered a 'slice' of inclusive education systems development. Therefore, related policy development challenges can be situated across the ecosystem model. The analysis of country information indicated the following challenges at each level of the ecosystem model:

- At the **national/regional level**, TPL policies reflect existing national education policies and priorities. These promote the rights of particular groups of learners, instead of promoting equal opportunities for all learners and inclusive education principles. National TPL policies also lack clear direction for who should be prepared for inclusion and when. Therefore, the policies have gaps between different phases and types of TPL.
- At the **community level**, collaboration between school-based teachers and teacher educators in universities and university colleges offers a wide range of TPL for inclusion opportunities for all involved. Collaboration between schools and local authorities needs an alignment of policy vision, school strategic plans and teachers' TPL for inclusion needs.
- At the **school level**, policies for beginning and experienced teachers and for other staff with different qualifications and roles must support collaborative TPL opportunities. This includes teacher educators, such as mentoring teachers and school leaders.
- At the **individual level**, teachers need TPL for inclusion policies that offer the core values and competences to meet all learners' needs, ensure the availability of TPL for inclusion opportunities and enable them to follow flexible and adaptable TPL for inclusion paths.

Finally, the findings were linked to the core values and competences of the [Profile of Inclusive Teachers](#) (European Agency, 2012). The *Profile* highlights the essential core values and areas of competence necessary for all teachers to work in inclusive education. It focuses on reflective practice and the professional learning of all teachers in valuing diversity, supporting all learners and working with other professionals. The *Profile* was originally developed for policy development in ITE, but has been used as a tool for research and practice in teacher education and beyond.

Overall, the TPL4I project findings suggest that competence development for inclusion should continue throughout the continuum of professional learning. The use of separate competence frameworks – some that apply to all learners and others that apply to learners with SEN – reflects different understandings of inclusive education. This leads to gaps across the TPL continuum. The TPL4I project stresses the need for collaborative TPL for inclusion among teachers and specialist staff.



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The project's findings also suggest that the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* can be used across the continuum of TPL for inclusion. The *Profile* provides an understanding of the values underpinning TPL for inclusion and the essential competences for all professionals working in inclusive settings. Policy elements identified for capacity building, monitoring and funding of TPL for inclusion can enable policy development to meet these core values and competences.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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In order to meet every learner's right to a meaningful education and to ultimately achieve more cohesive societies, policy must ensure quality inclusive education for all. In line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006), this includes learners of migrant origins, learners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and learners with disabilities (Council of the European Union, 2018). This vision requires teachers to be able to manage diverse classrooms. It also requires national/regional teacher professional learning (TPL) policies to focus on inclusion as an integral part of the inclusive education policy framework.

To effectively prepare all teachers to include all learners, TPL policies must consider the whole range of learning opportunities, from initial teacher education (ITE) to induction, continuing professional development (CPD) and teacher educators' learning. TPL policies should ensure these learning opportunities cover competence development for inclusive education.

This report aims to reach policy-makers interested in developing wider policy for inclusive education and, in particular, policy for TPL for inclusion. It is an output of the [Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion](#) (TPL4I) project, which was developed in response to Agency member countries' requests in a 2018 survey on the topic. The project addresses international and European calls for a greater focus on TPL to support inclusive education.

These calls are outlined in key documents, such as:

- *General Comment No. 4 on the right to inclusive education* (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016)
- the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* – particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UNESCO, 2017)
- the *2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training* (Council of the European Union and European Commission, 2015)



- the *Proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching* (European Commission, 2018).

International literature has raised the need to examine inclusive principles and practices in TPL to inform TPL policies (Cosier and Ashby, 2016; Florian, Young and Rouse, 2010; Robinson, 2017; Symeonidou, 2017; Waitoller and Artiles, 2013). The TPL4I project addresses this need.

TPL4I also builds on previous Agency work in [Teacher Education for Inclusion](#) (TE4I), which focused on ITE, [Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education](#), which addressed CPD, and [Country Policy Review and Analysis](#), which identifies policy measures for developing an inclusive education system. This project aims to outline policy recommendations towards TPL for inclusion, along the continuum of teachers' career-long learning.

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## 1.1 About TPL4I phase 1

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In phase 1, the TPL4I project identified international policy priorities for professional learning to prepare all teachers to include all learners. The project focused on policies to address the full continuum of TPL: ITE, induction, CPD and teacher educators' learning.

In particular, it aimed to set out the policy elements and framework needed for TPL for inclusion. This refers to the professional learning that supports teachers in reflective practice and personal competence development in inclusion. TPL for inclusion covers the areas of valuing learners' difference, learner support and working with others, in line with the Agency's [Profile of Inclusive Teachers](#) (European Agency, 2012).

Building on this knowledge, the project mapped national/regional policies for TPL for inclusion along key policy elements. The aim was to reflect on the strengths and challenges of TPL for inclusion as part of the development of inclusive education systems. This report provides an analysis of policy information on TPL for inclusion gathered from 26 Agency member countries. Additionally, it identifies opportunities and challenges related to further policy development.

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## 1.2 Phase 1 project activities

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Activities included a [literature review](#) (European Agency, 2019a), which set the research context for the project and outlined the main project terms. Following the literature review, the [TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool](#) (European Agency, 2019b) was developed based on the analysis of international policy and research literature, as well as previous Agency policy analysis work. The self-review tool is presented as a grid outlining different policy



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priorities for policy-makers to consider. These priorities address policy elements identified to support TPL for inclusion:

- Policy vision and main principles
- Goals and continuum of support
- Capacity building, funding and monitoring.

The TPL4I project team initially used the tool to identify and record how national policy documents, accessible through [Eurydice](#) and other online country information sources, meet the policy priorities of TPL for inclusion. To ensure up-to-date and reliable information, the TPL4I team also invited all Agency Representative Board members and National Co-ordinators to participate in the project. The project team collaborated with 26 countries<sup>2</sup> to develop comprehensive grids containing national policy information. These are referred to as the TPL4I [policy mapping grids](#) (European Agency, 2020a).

The completed grids show the extent to which national and/or regional policy frameworks reflect the priorities that the TPL4I Literature Review highlights (European Agency, 2019a). The grids offer countries a view of their strengths and areas for future policy development. Each country grid provides a snapshot of progress towards national TPL for inclusion policy.

Policy-makers and other stakeholders across Europe can use the grids to identify policy areas that already meet research-based recommendations and consider areas for future policy development. An in-depth analysis of the completed grids and overarching policy priorities led to the TPL for inclusion policy elements presented in this report. A methodology report (European Agency, 2020b) provides more detailed information about the TPL4I project approach.

### 1.3 About this report

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This report provides a synthesis of TPL for inclusion policy development based on findings from across Europe. It categorises the findings based on the identified policy elements. By illustrating policy development, it aims to inspire European policy-makers to take further steps towards TPL for inclusion. Following the introduction in [Chapter 1](#), [Chapter 2](#) summarises the key issues for TPL for inclusion policy development raised in research literature.

Chapters 3–5 elaborate on the findings of the analysis of national policies for TPL for inclusion. All references to countries and country examples presented in those chapters are excerpts from the participating countries' TPL4I policy mapping grids (European Agency, 2020a). Therefore, they are treated as data and referenced with the country name in the text.

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<sup>2</sup> Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), United Kingdom (Scotland) and United Kingdom (Wales).



[Chapter 3](#) discusses the concept of equity in TPL for inclusion. It provides evidence to suggest that national policies do not adequately address it.

[Chapter 4](#) discusses inclusive education within the continuum of TPL policies. It suggests that there are gaps between the different phases of TPL for inclusion opportunities available to teachers and differences in the inclusive education competences that apply to teachers at each stage of their careers.

[Chapter 5](#) presents the findings on capacity building, funding and monitoring of TPL for inclusion. It highlights the need to move towards collaborative approaches to capacity building, improve funding mechanisms and monitor the implementation of TPL for inclusion policies.

[Chapter 6](#) summarises all findings and links them to previous Agency work. First, the findings are connected with the Agency's ecosystem model of inclusive education systems. This model has been adopted by other Agency projects: Inclusive Early Childhood Education (European Agency, 2017a), Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education (European Agency, 2017b), Supporting Inclusive School Leadership (European Agency, 2019c) and Preventing School Failure (European Agency, 2019d). The TPL4I project uses the ecosystem model to identify challenges for TPL for inclusion policy development at the national/regional, community, school and individual levels.

At the [end of Chapter 6](#), the findings are linked to the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012). The chapter explores the impacts of applying the *Profile's* core values and competences to all stages of the continuum of TPL for inclusion. The quality of inclusive educational opportunities depends on teachers' knowledge, attitudes and skills, which are gradually developed throughout their careers. Without a sufficient continuum of TPL for inclusion opportunities, teachers are not equipped to provide quality education for all learners. This section highlights the idea of inclusive education as an approach to high-quality education for all learners. It clarifies that TPL for inclusion is not focused on learners categorised as having SEN, disabilities or belonging to other specific groups. Instead, it is about the need to include **all** teachers (i.e. student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, specialist teachers and teacher educators) in professional learning for inclusion. This will prepare them to reach **all** learners.

Policy development in TPL for inclusion can be considered an integral part of the policy framework for inclusive education (Kefallinou, Symeonidou and Meijer, 2020; Watkins, De Vroey and Symeonidou, 2016). With this in mind, the TPL4I project aims to contribute to the realisation of the [Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems](#). It states the need to ensure that 'all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers' (European Agency, 2015, p. 2).



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## 2. KEY ISSUES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN TPL FOR INCLUSION

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This chapter first presents key issues from the international and European policy context. It then outlines key issues stemming from the research literature. The chapter concludes with an overview of policy and research recommendations that formed the basis for the TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool (European Agency, 2019b). The recommendations are also referenced in the subsequent chapters that present national policy findings.

### 2.1 Key issues from the international and European policy context

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According to international and European organisations, a lack of TPL for inclusion policies prevents teachers from implementing inclusive education. International and European policy documents have pointed to several key issues in TPL for inclusion policy development. Most importantly, they call for comprehensive systems of national TPL policy in which education systems aim to reconcile high quality with high equity (European Commission, 2017a). The Council of the European Union reinforces this in its Conclusions on *Inclusion in Diversity to achieve a High Quality Education For All*, stating that member states should:

... support teachers, educators and other teaching staff and foster their motivation and competences, including for example emotional intelligence and social skills, to deal with diversity through initial teacher education programmes and continuous professional development, including digital education, practical tools, ongoing support and guidance, while also encouraging a more diverse teacher force (Council of the European Union, 2017, C 62/5).



### 2.1.1 Empowering teachers to manage diversity

Policy documents reiterate the need for measures that support and empower teachers to manage diversity. Policy recommendations stress that TPL should promote equity and reflect the vision of inclusive education. They give special attention to the needs of learners with disabilities and other SEN. In general, they promote TPL as a way to contribute to narrowing inequalities in learning.

For example, to address inequalities, the OECD report *Equity in Education: Breaking down barriers to social mobility* highlights that policy needs to assure 'that teachers are qualified and well-trained' (2018, p. 40). UNESCO's *Teacher Policy Development Guide* (2015) invites policy-makers to develop TPL policies that include Education for Sustainable Development principles. Education for Sustainable Development promotes the 'understanding of problems such as poverty, wasteful consumption, environmental degradation, population, health, conflict and human rights' (ibid., p. 22).

The *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching* stresses the need for:

... measures to empower educational staff helping them convey common values, and promote active citizenship while transmitting a sense of belonging and responding to the diverse needs of learners (Council of the European Union, 2018, C 195/4).

A joint report by the Council of the European Union and European Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European co-operation in education and training highlights the need for TPL to meet diverse learners' needs. It states that teachers should:

... be trained to deal with learners' individual needs and growing diversity in terms of their social, cultural, economic and geographic backgrounds, to prevent early school leaving and to use innovative pedagogies and ICT tools in an optimal manner (2015, C 417/29).

The Council of Europe's *Tool to Upgrade Teacher Education Practices for Inclusive Education* (Hollenweger, Pantić and Florian, 2015) also underpinned this view.

Similarly, the report *Preparing Teachers for Diversity: The Role of Initial Teacher Education* notes:

There is an increasing need to prepare future teachers to build on the benefits of diversity, shifting from compensatory to inclusive learning approaches. A comprehensive system of teacher education is crucial to equip teachers with the intercultural competences necessary to respond to and manage the evolving diverse school environment (European Commission, 2017b, p. 20).

In relation to TPL for inclusion, the report concludes that 'national education policies in Europe need a paradigm shift in their approach' to diversity (ibid., p. 102). It also emphasises the 'need for a supportive culture for change' to successfully implement policies on ITE for diversity (ibid., p. 105).



In addition, a Commission Staff Working Document about school development and excellent teaching recognises the importance of inclusive education and the need for schools to take into account significant differences between individuals (European Commission, 2017a). *General Comment No. 4 on the right to inclusive education* expresses profound concern regarding the quality of educational provision for persons with disabilities. It highlights the need for TPL opportunities, e.g. to acquire sign language skills (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

### **2.1.2 Supporting career-long TPL for inclusion**

Policy documents acknowledge the need to support TPL throughout a teacher's career and for all staff involved in inclusive education.

This issue first requires sufficient provision of staff. European reports discuss the lack of teachers in general and the particular need for teachers from diverse backgrounds. The Eurydice report *Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support* suggests that TPL policy needs to include forward planning for:

- teacher supply and demand;
- entry to the profession;
- teacher mobility between schools;
- CPD and support;
- career structures;
- the use of teacher competence frameworks;
- appraisal systems (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018).

A European Parliament study (2014) also points out the need to support change throughout teachers' careers. It recommends viewing TPL needs as a continuum that involves all teachers, starting from ITE and moving to CPD. In regard to recruiting diverse teaching staff, a European Commission study notes that: 'Attracting and retaining teaching staff with a migrant and/or minority background in the profession are ... important' (2016a, p. 127).

UNESCO (2015), UNICEF (2015) and OECD (Barrera-Pedemonte, 2016) call for a coherent teacher education framework that includes three inter-related stages (ITE, induction and CPD) to increase policy support for TPL provision. Similarly, a communication from the European Commission on *Improving and Modernising Education* emphasises the need to support school leaders and teachers:

... in giving support to pupils who come from a vulnerable socio-economic background ... [which] requires strategic investment in ... a teaching profession that is based on excellent initial education, teamwork, and career-long professional development (European Commission, 2016b, p. 5).



*OECD Education Working Paper No. 141* (Barrera-Pedemonte, 2016) recommends that country policies encourage TPL throughout a teacher's career. This includes providing diverse TPL opportunities, such as classroom-based, individual or collaborative research, teachers' participation in professional networks, etc.

When it comes to inclusion of learners with disabilities, policy stresses the value of TPL for inclusion for all staff. This can increase classroom support and sharing of responsibilities.

A Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training (NESSE) report on European Union (EU) disability/special needs education policy and practice states:

Learning support teachers and classroom assistants play a vital role in making inclusion work well in practice. ... National and local governments should ensure that funding is available to employ sufficient support staff, and teachers should be trained in the management of such staff, ensuring in particular that learning support assistants help pupils without having a negative effect on their social integration (2012, p. 2).

The *World Report on Disability* (World Health Organization and World Bank, 2011) states that inadequate training and support for teachers is one of the barriers to equal opportunities for learners with disabilities:

Teachers may not have the time or resources to support disabled learners. ... In resource-poor settings classrooms are frequently overcrowded and there is a severe shortage of well trained teachers capable of routinely handling the individual needs of children with disabilities. ... The majority of teachers lack sign-language skills creating barriers for Deaf pupils. ... Other supports such as classroom assistants are also lacking. Advances in teacher education have not necessarily kept pace with the policy changes that followed the Salamanca Declaration (*ibid.*, p. 215).

### **2.1.3 Competence development for inclusive education**

International and European policy documents stress the importance of developing competences for diversity and inclusion. As mentioned earlier, the report *Preparing Teachers for Diversity: The Role of Initial Teacher Education* refers to the inter-cultural competences needed to respond to the diversity of learners in today's schools. It recommends competence-based ITE systems to prepare pre-service teachers for this. Competences for diversity should be well-defined and teacher educators should also be well-prepared (European Commission, 2017b). More specifically, the *World Report on Disability* (World Health Organization and World Bank, 2011) recommends sign language skills for teachers.

Furthermore, the *Training of Trainer Modules on Inclusive Education* used the Agency's *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (2012) and emphasised the need for professional development for teacher educators (UNICEF, 2015).



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## 2.2 Key issues from research literature

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Three key issues were found across research literature on TPL for inclusion. First, there is a lack of a clear vision for TPL for inclusion. Second, policy needs to set goals and objectives for TPL for inclusion. Finally, there is a need for clear guidelines to implement TPL for inclusion.

### 2.2.1 Envisioning TPL for inclusion

The vision for TPL for inclusion can include multiple elements. First, research literature emphasises that diverse equity issues should be part of TPL for inclusion, to avoid narrowing inclusive education to SEN (Deppeler, 2017; Humphrey, 2014; Waitoller and Artiles, 2013). It is also important to avoid a deficit approach to inclusion, which focuses on addressing learners' needs or challenges rather than aiming for equity. To do this while shaping transformative cultures for diversity, TPL must:

- provide situated learning experiences;
- integrate diversity topics across courses;
- offer a repertoire of culturally-responsive teaching practices.

By taking a multi-dimensional approach, teacher educators can engage pre-service and beginning teachers in diversity and foster effective inclusive practices. The approach should avoid treating difference as something beyond teachers' control that requires needs assessment and management.

Additionally, evidence suggests that TPL for inclusion should be developed along a continuum of professional learning opportunities. This involves connecting ITE, induction, CPD and teacher educators' professional learning for inclusion. The aim is to encourage collaborative and career-long professional learning for all educators. In doing so, TPL allows more complex thinking about diversity and the adoption of a critical enquiry or practice-into-theory approach (Calvert, 2016; Cochran-Smith et al., 2015; Robinson, 2017).

For example, ITE must develop cycles of coursework and meaningful practice for pre-service teachers, rather than delivering isolated courses and experiential learning (Forlin and Chambers, 2011). Beginning teachers need structured induction and mentoring for inclusion, to expand the critical reflection of ITE in the context of daily practice (Beacham and Rouse, 2012; Bentley-Williams, Grima-Farrell, Long and Laws, 2017).

Effective models of CPD for inclusion involve action research, lesson study and other partnerships of ITE and CPD (Norwich and Ylonen, 2013; Robinson, 2017). These methods can help develop collegial support and establish shared responsibilities with other professionals involved in inclusion, such as teaching assistants or learner support co-ordinators. Collaborative on-the-job learning relates theory and practice in authentic contexts. It also enhances teacher agency to act purposefully while supporting collective professional development.



A continuum of professional learning opportunities must also include university teacher educators and school partners who may have a mentorship role in collaborative teacher enquiries. This includes school leaders, learning support co-ordinators and other inclusion facilitators. Teacher educators' professional development should be considered an integral part of the professional continuum for inclusion. Doing so strengthens a shared pedagogy for inclusion and new roles in the field. Finally, mobility programmes can offer international perspectives and experiences on inclusion.

The steps mentioned in this section represent parallel and consecutive professional learning pathways to inclusive education. Taken together, they help provide an overarching vision for TPL for inclusion.

### **2.2.2 Setting policy goals for TPL for inclusion**

The principles of a multi-dimensional approach and the need for a continuum of professional learning for inclusion form the basis for clear policy goals. Based on the research literature, the first goal for policy-makers to consider is ensuring a continuum of support for the professional learning of all teachers.

For ITE, values of inclusion and equity must be foundational to programmes, connecting courses with meaningful practice. In building a continuum, policy promotes a shared understanding of inclusion among teacher educators and schools. In addition to ITE and school collaboration, university departments must collaborate to include specialist programmes in broader diversity issues. It is beneficial to create cross-curricular links across higher education programmes on citizenship and inclusion. This can be done through immersion programmes or merged ITE and SEN, multi-lingual or other diversity programmes.

To create a continuum for TPL for inclusion, it is important to identify barriers to welcoming pre-service teachers and teacher educators as professional participants in all educational settings, irrespective of diversity challenges. A shared multi-dimensional approach is essential in all pathways into teaching and ensures collaboration among all educators (Bentley-Williams et al., 2017; Blanton and Pugach, 2011; UNESCO, 2015; Young, 2011).

Beyond ITE, the induction process should be reinforced by learning opportunities through supervision or affinity groups (Alila, Määttä and Uusiautti, 2016; Andresen, 2015). To reduce barriers to mentorship, TPL should include staff on temporary contracts and provide a culture of trust. Policy must also support the development of mentoring skills for school leaders and experienced teachers. This can lead to the development of leadership for inclusion and contribute to teams' professional learning for inclusion. Continuous work-based learning, competence development for diversity and diversification of the teaching staff follow from fostering teachers' identities as inclusive, reflective professionals (Beaton and Spratt, 2017; Carrington, Deppeler and Moss, 2010; Timperley, 2011).

The second goal for TPL for inclusion policy is that it must encompass all professionals involved in inclusive education. It should avoid isolating learning support professionals or teaching assistants. To do so, TPL for inclusion policy must ensure broad support within an inclusive education system. Support roles for inclusion must focus on preventive, in addition to compensatory, support. Therefore, support professionals should be included in



learning routes for inclusion professionals. These routes may include paths towards becoming a teacher. However, policy should identify and remove barriers (such as qualification requirements) to the full inclusion of schools' support staff in professional learning cycles.

Third, policy must ensure competence and curriculum development across the continuum of TPL for inclusion. Competence for diversity is understood as an ethical notion and cannot be reduced to skills management. It refers to responsiveness to change, reflection and adaptation and, in particular, true engagement and responsibility for others (Allan, 2011).

Competence frameworks ensure a shared language and represent essential values, attitudes, knowledge and skills, while being sensitive to social justice and diversity in local contexts. The *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012) and *Teachers' core competences: requirements and development* (European Commission, 2011) are examples of competence frameworks for teacher educators and teachers. These kinds of frameworks encourage capacity building for inclusion.

In addition, curricular frameworks for teacher education allow for core content covering inclusion. Examples include the *Framework for Inclusive Pedagogy* (Rouse and Florian, 2012; Florian, 2017) and the *Culturally Responsive Teachers Framework* (Villegas, Ciotoli and Lucas, 2017). These frameworks appoint learning outcomes and main content areas for TPL for inclusion curriculum design.

### **2.2.3 Implementing TPL for inclusion**

Research also recommends guidelines for policy implementation towards TPL for inclusion, covering capacity building, co-operation and funding, and monitoring.

#### *2.2.3.1 Capacity building*

Capacity building in this context requires targeted actions to support inclusive education roles or to inform TPL for inclusion. For example, when policy supports teacher educators in TPL for inclusion, it raises awareness of their role as change agents in the process towards quality education (Alexiadou and Essex, 2016; Stéger, 2014). In addition, standards for school leaders may stress their role in mentoring staff and implementing inclusive education (European Agency, 2019a). Similarly, support for specialist teachers and collaborative learning creates a multiplication effect across team members (Agalotis and Kalyva, 2011; Gavish, 2017). Finally, research support encourages TPL providers to develop new programmes and collaborative approaches between institutions and schools. This enables a greater understanding of the complexities of diversity and shared responsibilities in practice (Andresen, 2015; O'Gorman and Drudy, 2010).

#### *2.2.3.2 Co-operation and funding*

Cross-sectoral co-operation and funding for TPL for inclusion is the second area of policy implementation. This entails collaboration between ministries of education, health, welfare and others. Collaboration aims to maximise resources, cover participants' fees, provide substitute teachers and develop teacher support agencies (European Agency, 2016).



Furthermore, national and local co-operation on funding enables policy to respond to local needs and to enhance the commitment and sustainability of TPL initiatives.

### *2.2.3.3 Monitoring*

Monitoring of TPL for inclusion is a key aspect of policy implementation. Monitoring focuses on competence and quality assessment. It requires a clear operationalisation of competences, in line with diverse equity issues and collaborative learning processes. From there, it is possible to assess the perceived self-efficacy of teachers in inclusive practice. Expert groups can also perform qualitative monitoring procedures (Hick et al., 2018; Pugach and Blanton, 2009).

In addition, policy can identify benchmarks for teacher competences, aligning with agreed competence frameworks. This can be done by reviewing professional teaching standards, quality assurance cycles and accreditation procedures. In particular, there must be high standards for all education professionals involved in new inclusive education support roles.

## **2.3 Summary of key points**

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According to the international and European policy and research literature reviewed, the key principles for TPL for inclusion are:

- Including all education professionals in TPL opportunities. This involves:
  - approaching TPL as a continuum including pre-service learning, induction, experienced teaching, learning for mentoring teachers and learning for teacher educators;
  - addressing TPL as a broad area of educational professionalism, including all practitioners who work alongside teachers in inclusive learning environments. This entails providing professional learning opportunities for teaching assistants and support teachers. It also enables those in traditional learning support roles to grow into consulting or leadership roles in developing inclusive education.
- Strengthening all levels and areas of TPL for equity and inclusion by promoting a cross-sectoral discourse on diversity. This aims to enhance the understanding of complex diversity issues and boost efforts towards inclusion in varying contexts.
- Promoting reflective, enquiry-based collaborative trajectories that examine personal and collective beliefs, knowledge and skills.

This led to the following goals for TPL for inclusion policy development:

- integrate inclusion and diversity topics across ITE and CPD courses;
- strengthen professional learning for diversity in induction courses;
- include teacher educators in the professional curriculum of TPL for inclusion;



- 
- shift the roles of specialist teachers, learner support co-ordinators and other professionals involved towards roles of collaborative-consultative teachers and inclusion facilitators;
  - include teacher educators of special needs education teacher programmes in the professional continuum of TPL for inclusion;
  - enhance reflective collaborative practice for all teaching staff and educators involved in inclusive learning environments;
  - strengthen teacher leadership competences as a process of providing direction and applying influence;
  - underpin all professional learning for inclusion with competence frameworks, curriculum design and core content. These foundational elements reflect the values and assumptions needed to develop inclusive learning environments.

These principles and goals formed the basis for an exploration and analysis of national/regional policies for TPL for inclusion, discussed in Chapters 3–5 of this report.





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## 3. THE CONCEPT OF EQUITY IN TPL POLICIES

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The next three chapters discuss the main findings of the mapping activity of national/regional TPL for inclusion policies. Policies were described in relation to essential policy elements derived from the principles and goals outlined in [Chapter 2](#). While exploring trends across national policies, each chapter presents select examples of policy components. These are introduced as trends across ‘some countries’, ‘other countries’ or ‘many countries’ and do not suggest a complete view of the emerging trend.

This chapter elaborates on the first policy elements listed in the TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool (European Agency, 2019b): the wider policy context surrounding TPL for inclusion, and the vision and main principles of TPL for inclusion policy development.

### 3.1 Wider policy context

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Countries differ in their understanding and/or adoption of equity and inclusive education. It is necessary to consider this wider context when exploring TPL for inclusion policy development.

One policy approach is to have a **basic education law that addresses all learners’ rights**. According to the Swedish Education Act, the main principle guiding education in Sweden is to provide equal access to education for all:

This means that pupils in need of special support should not be treated differently or defined as a group that is any different from other pupils. Their rights are not stated separately, but the obligation for schools to attend to all pupils’ needs is emphasised. Social services, schools and healthcare are obliged to collaborate for children at risk. The social services have main responsibility for ensuring that the collaboration is enacted (stipulated in the Social Services Act, the Health and Medical Services Act and the Police Act).



Portugal has taken another approach by introducing Decree-Law No. 54/2018 on inclusive education. This law aims to respond to the diversity of learners and promote increased participation. It does not use categorisation labels such as ‘special educational needs’. The law establishes a continuum of provision for all learners. The continuum starts with universal support for all and continues with selective and additional support measures for some learners.

Some countries combine these approaches. For example, Malta has **both general policies to regulate basic education and specific policies to support all learners**. The laws of Malta regulate compulsory education, while the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act safeguards equal opportunities for people with disabilities in different areas, including education. The ‘National Inclusive Education Framework’ explains how to remove barriers to education and increase all learners’ participation. Other laws refer to particular groups of learners, such as the Trans, Gender Variant and Intersex Students in Schools Policy (2015).

Cyprus has **general policies to regulate basic education and specific policies to address the rights of learners categorised as having SEN**. In Cyprus, the Law on Education and Training of Children with Special Needs 113(I)/1999 safeguards the right of learners categorised as having SEN to attend mainstream schools. At the same time, it offers the option of special education provision in special schools or special settings in mainstream schools (e.g. special units or special classes). The law regulates how special settings function, addresses the assessment process and explains how placement decisions are made. It also explains the roles of specialist staff (e.g. special education head teachers, special education co-ordinators and special teachers) in special education provision.

Many countries are **in transition, working towards inclusive education policies while maintaining the special education track**. Slovakia’s Government Programme for 2016–2020 depicts an intention to move towards inclusive education while supporting a dual system of education:

- to support pre-primary education, with a special focus on learners from a socially disadvantaged background;
- to create conditions for inclusive education;
- to improve service of professional psychological and special educational counselling and diagnosis;
- to promote vocational training in the system of so-called dual education.

It should be noted that most countries maintain a dual system of education, allowing placement in mainstream or special schools, even if some policies acknowledge inclusive education.



## 3.2 TPL for inclusion policy vision

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In a number of countries, inclusive education principles guide policy development to ensure access to career-long professional learning opportunities for all teachers (i.e. student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers and teacher educators). However, TPL is not often driven by a vision of equity, aiming for equal opportunities for all learners. There are many dimensions that shape a vision for TPL for inclusion reflected in country policies. The following dimensions emerged upon analysis of the policy mapping grids.

The **TPL for inclusion policy vision is sometimes stated clearly; sometimes it is stated without naming inclusion specifically**. In addition, laws for basic education, TPL-specific laws or policy documents and even national curricula include a TPL for inclusion policy vision.

In Norway, the ‘National Curriculum Regulations for Teacher Education’ suggest that:

All pupils have a right to education adapted to their abilities, interests and needs. The school shall be an inclusive learning environment, and this must also apply to pupils who need additional support and help. Such education is best developed through cooperation between teachers of different backgrounds who, by means of teamwork, support each other in planning and carrying out the education. Teacher education must provide the students with a knowledge of how they as teachers can make use of different resources within and outside the school when providing pupils with special help and support.

Latvia does not specify a policy vision for TPL for inclusion. However, general responsibilities of teachers prescribed by law include:

- to constantly improve their education and professional skill;
- to conform with the norms of pedagogical professional ethics;
- to ensure that educatees have the opportunity to exercise their rights at an educational institution;
- to observe the rights of a child; and
- to implement an education programme in co-operation with the family of the educatee.

According to Serbia’s Law on the Foundations of the Education System:

The task of teachers is to ensure that their competences achieve the goals of education and care and standards of achievement, taking into account the principles of education, interests and the specific potential of students and adults.



The task of pre-school teachers is to ensure that their competences respect the principles of education, to achieve the goals of education and to promote educational work with children.

Part of the vision of TPL for inclusion is to **enable teachers to respond to diverse learner populations**. This includes learners categorised as having SEN/disabilities or learners with a migrant background. Several countries' policy mapping grids refer to the need to prepare all teachers to meet diverse learners.

In Germany, the 2015 Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs recommendation on 'educating teachers to embrace diversity' states:

At any school, it is the teachers who will create an environment in which diversity is acknowledged and appreciated as normality and as a strength. Teachers need professional competences to allow them to recognise pupils' special gifts and any disadvantages, impediments and other obstacles that they might exhibit or experience and to put in place appropriate pedagogical measures for prevention or support.

The Czech Republic's policy mapping grid suggests that TPL for inclusion is about equipping teachers with skills to support diverse learners: 'In order to support inclusion, teachers should participate in in-service training to acquire the skills to deal with the diversity and various needs of pupils'.

Sweden's policy mapping grid states:

The school has a special responsibility to those learners who, for various reasons, have difficulty in achieving the goals of education. Therefore, teaching can never be designed the same way for everyone.

It is the school's task to provide all learners with guidance and stimulation they need in their learning and in their personal development so that they can develop as far as possible according to their educational needs. ... The rules on guidance and stimulation mean that the school has a compensatory assignment. Education should take into account the different needs of all pupils, with the aim of balancing differences in their prerequisites.

In the United Kingdom (UK) (Wales), policy states that the values and dispositions accompanying professional standards for teaching, leadership and assisting teaching should recognise that learners' needs and rights are central. It emphasises that teachers should prioritise these needs and rights in their work. Furthermore, it states that practitioners should exhibit high expectations and a commitment to all learners' achievement.

Other participating countries describe a vision of TPL that focuses on learners with disabilities or migrant backgrounds.



Lithuania states that TPL policy for inclusion is guided by a vision for teachers to:

... 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.

Meanwhile, Switzerland applies TPL to ensure teachers can:

... support and encourage students with special educational needs who attend a regular class in accordance with the principle of inclusive education in their learning and in their participation in school life.

Additionally, UK (Northern Ireland) highlights 'the need for teachers to meet the needs of all learners in their care, including those who may have particular or special needs'.

To support learners with migrant backgrounds, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute:

... co-ordinates the work of the Interdepartmental Committee for the integration of learners with migrant background. In addition, and in accordance with the officially recorded policy, it organises a variety of training activities (conferences, experiential learning workshops, optional seminars, school seminars, etc.). The aim is to raise awareness and support primary and secondary education teachers on matters regarding the integration of learners with migrant background.

**Policies do not often clearly state the importance of the continuum of TPL for inclusion, although it might still be reflected. Occasionally there are policy statements that highlight the significance of TPL for inclusion in ITE and CPD.**

The Belgium (Flemish Community) policy mapping grid includes a policy statement that recognises the value of TPL for inclusion in ITE and CPD:

In the Policy Paper Education 2019–2024, the minister recognises the importance of teacher education, in-service training and initial guidance of teachers, in providing the abilities to deal with the many challenges ahead. In particular, the minister will intensify the attention for:

- professional knowledge and didactics;
- knowledge of Dutch;
- dealing with children with behavioural and learning problems;
- dealing with giftedness;
- dealing with diversity in the classroom;
- drawing up valid tests.



Some country policies reveal that **collaboration within school communities sets the context for the vision of TPL for inclusion.**

Estonia states this vision in its 'Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020':

Cooperation in all its diverse forms is the key to success in the education system: it is very important to have cooperation with teachers and educational institutions, the school and parents, but also between the school and the local government and the local private sector.

Furthermore:

This co-operation contributes to teacher professional learning for inclusion. In-service training of staff in educational institutions is guided by the priorities agreed with the stakeholders. Inclusive education has been a priority in every year of the strategy.

**The TPL for inclusion policy vision can reflect collaboration through professional networks within or across schools.**

According to Portugal's 2018 Decree-Law on inclusive education:

Each school shall have a multidisciplinary team to support inclusive education.

This team consists of permanent members (one teacher who assists the school director; a special education teacher; three members of the pedagogical council with functions of pedagogical co-ordination in the different levels of education and teaching; a psychologist) and of variable members (individuals related to the learner being discussed: the head teacher; the learner's other teachers; technicians from the resource centre for inclusion and other technicians who intervene with the learner; assistants; parents).

Germany's Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs 2015 report discusses the importance of co-operation among teaching professionals:

Professional cooperation between different strands of the teaching profession and/or professional groups is a crucial factor in the success of inclusive schools. It is therefore recommended that multi-professional teams be formed that will fulfil the complex professional duties when dealing with diversity, cooperation and networking within the school community and beyond. A professional attitude to the limits of their own competence, the knowledge of the potential offered by other professions and the readiness to work with colleagues are essential elements of a career in teaching. These elements are acquiring greater significance and university teachers must take account of them so they can set good examples themselves.



Another component of the vision for TPL for inclusion is recognition of the need to engage all teachers, including specialist staff.

Latvia's policy mapping grid suggests that support will be provided to teachers in various forms:

... methodological tools that are needed for integration of young people with special needs into the general education system will be developed, as well as improvement of the professional competence of teachers and support personnel. Development and implementation of the continuing education programmes are also planned for specialists (social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, etc.) regarding adjusted sports programmes foreseeing specific training methodologies for work with learners with special needs (Education Development Guidelines 2014–2020).

In Sweden, there are three main topics on the recent political TPL for inclusion agenda: raising the achievement of all learners, providing education for immigrant children and young people, and offering opportunities for all teachers to develop skills related to SEN and disabilities.

In some countries, the TPL for inclusion policy vision entails **establishing the teachers' role within an inclusive school culture**.

Estonia places the role of the teacher in a broader context and reflects on its school culture. The Estonian 'Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020' introduced the term 'approach to learning', which includes 'an understanding of the nature of learning, its goals, methods and the role of all the different parties in the learning process'. A background document about the approach to learning and how it is changing suggests reasons and objectives for it to change, based on the Estonian context and school culture. The framework aims to support practitioners (educational institutions and their partners) to understand the bigger picture their activities take place within.

### 3.3 Summary of key points

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Findings from the analysis of the country information provided in the policy mapping grids indicate that:

- A number of countries have already introduced the concept of inclusive education in their policies, although the level to which it is addressed varies. Systems of integration are evident in policies, referred to as integration or inclusive education policies.
- Many countries report that legislation and policy about basic education include policies for particular groups of learners, such as those categorised as having SEN/disabilities. Most of these countries have regulations, decrees or by-laws relating to the education of learners with SEN/disabilities.



- Only a few countries have a basic education policy that addresses equal opportunities for all learners. A number of countries are in the process of changing policies to be in line with inclusive education, although it remains to be seen whether new policies will be truly inclusive.
- Very few countries indicate a clear TPL for inclusion vision in their policies. However, most countries have policies that address some elements of a TPL for inclusion vision.
- An integral element of the TPL for inclusion vision is ensuring that teachers receive TPL for inclusion opportunities throughout their career. However, the data suggests that not all the parts of the continuum of TPL for inclusion are equally regulated in policies.
- In the absence of a clear TPL for inclusion vision, many country policies regulating TPL (without a focus on inclusion) do not reach teachers in different stages of their careers. Some countries have TPL policies in place for ITE and CPD. Most do not have policies on TPL for beginning teachers and teacher educators.
- Policy development should consider three vital elements of a TPL for inclusion vision:
  - the need to offer equal TPL for inclusion opportunities throughout teachers' career paths;
  - the need to engage all teachers, including specialist staff, in TPL for inclusion;
  - the need for TPL to enable all teachers to meet the needs of all learners, rather than focusing on the needs of particular groups (e.g. learners categorised as having SEN).



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## 4. A CONTINUUM OF TPL POLICIES ADDRESSING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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This chapter explores country policy approaches along the TPL continuum. Each section is dedicated to one stage of the continuum and describes TPL for inclusion opportunities available at that stage. The chapter starts with ITE and moves on to beginning teachers' professional development, CPD for experienced teachers and teacher educators' professional development. It describes the competences guiding TPL for inclusion policies at each stage, aiming to identify links across the continuum.

### 4.1 Initial teacher education

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This section presents findings on the qualifications and competences that country policies for ITE address. It examines the extent to which they reflect an inclusive education agenda.

#### 4.1.1 Qualifications that reflect an inclusive education agenda

Most countries that participated in the study have **policies stipulating that all teachers should obtain qualifications at universities or higher education institutions**. In some countries, policy requires a bachelor's degree in education and/or a subject area. Other countries require both a bachelor's degree and another qualification (e.g. master's degree or post-graduate certificate). Some countries allow teachers in pre-primary, primary and secondary education to hold the same or similar degrees, whereas in other countries each education level requires a different degree.

In Belgium (Flemish Community), all teacher education programmes (pre-primary, primary and lower-secondary) combine subject matter and pedagogical-didactical components. In



Norway, all ITE programmes entail a five-year master's degree programme. All programmes feature elements related to inclusion, such as:

- teacher-learner relations;
- relations among learners;
- learner participation in planning their own learning process;
- differentiation;
- providing an education for all learners that leads to intended results;
- classroom management;
- developing an inclusive learning environment.

In Germany, across states, there are six types of teaching careers corresponding to the different levels and types of schools: primary education, primary education and lower-secondary education, lower-secondary education, general education in upper-secondary education, vocational education in upper-secondary education, and special education.

In Sweden, teachers' qualifications are based on ECTS credits, which differ depending on the level of education they will teach. For example, qualified teachers require a degree of 210 ECTS for pre-primary education, a degree of 240 or 180 ECTS for primary education (depending on the age group or out-of-school activities they specialise in) and a degree of 240, 300 or 330 ECTS for subject education in compulsory and upper-secondary school.

Some country **policies suggest that specialist teachers should have qualifications in education with a specialisation in special and/or inclusive education.** In Italy, qualified support teachers and educational and cultural assistants hold a qualification in primary education. In addition, they hold a specialisation or master's degree in special education, developmental psychopathology, neuropsychiatry, psychology for disability and rehabilitation or special learning methods and teaching. Similarly, in Portugal, teachers recruited for special education are expected by law to have a teaching qualification plus specialised training in special education. The same applies in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France and Sweden.

In Cyprus, policy outlines that qualified special education teachers can have a bachelor's degree in special education or a bachelor's degree in primary education with a master's degree in special education or special and inclusive education. In Portugal, there are two conditions for becoming a special education teacher: professional qualification and specialisation training. In Latvia, the special teacher qualification can be acquired in several ways:

- 4- or 4.5-year professional study programme in special education;
- 2.5-year study programme (80–93 credits) for teachers who are already qualified;
- master's study programmes;
- in-service training courses for teachers with qualifications in some other subjects (at least 72 study hours).



In Germany, qualified special education teachers are not expected to hold a bachelor's degree in education. However, their degree of 240 ECTS covers discipline-specific and cross-discipline components, taking into account aspects of inclusive education. In particular, their degree includes:

- study of special education (120 ECTS);
- subject-related studies and didactics in at least one teaching area/area of learning;
- educational sciences and practical training in schools, with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion and fundamental support diagnostics;
- scientific work.

**Policies rarely state that inclusive education needs to be part of ITE.**

Universities and higher education institutions usually have the autonomy to decide on the content of their ITE degrees. Findings from countries such as Cyprus, France and Iceland suggest that the areas typically covered in ITE degrees for primary and pre-primary school teachers are:

- Educational theory
- Teaching skills
- Theoretical foundation for education
- Didactics
- Methodology
- Information technology
- School practicum.

ITE degrees may include inclusive education issues. Countries describe them as issues related to developing skills to teach diverse learners or learners with disabilities.

**In a few countries, policy requires inclusive education to be part of ITE.**

Malta's 2012 'National Curriculum Framework' promotes 'initial teacher education and further opportunities for training and support in the use of pedagogies that are inclusive in nature and cater for diversity'.

In Switzerland, the regulation on the recognition of teaching diplomas requires teacher education universities to include inclusive education skills in their curricula. Similarly, the 'Initial Teacher Education and Training' framework in UK (Wales) prepares newly-qualified teachers with appropriate qualities, qualifications and skills. It is currently considering improvements to ensure it is more reflective and responsive to the needs of schools and learners. Improvements will further enable practitioners to become well-equipped and well-qualified to teach effectively. These improvements may include changes to the statutory framework.



The UK (Wales) policy mapping grid elaborates:

All programmes are now subject to accreditation by an independent Teacher Education Accreditation Board and must meet criteria specified by Welsh Government. These criteria include the requirement for programmes to, among other things:

- prepare new teachers to foster inclusive classrooms which meet the needs of all learners;
- ensure support for their aspiring teachers with developing effective approaches to safeguarding, supportive personal and school relationships, contributing to strong and inclusive schools, good health, personal security and creating healthy classroom environments.

In Austria, teacher education reform makes inclusion-related content mandatory in the curriculum for all student teachers. Students enrolled in TPL programmes for primary education are obliged to select at least one special focus (e.g. inclusive teaching, social pedagogy, early childhood education, multi-lingualism or a specialist educational area). Teachers of secondary-level general education choose two fields of study or one field of study and one specialisation (e.g. inclusive teaching, social pedagogy, multi-lingualism or media education). Austria also distinguishes between TPL for inclusion in ITE in primary and secondary education. The Federal Framework Act on the Introduction of New Training for Teachers (FLG I No. 124/2013) requires that inclusive education be included in new training for all teachers. There is an emphasis on TPL for learners with disabilities:

According to the specifications of the Act on the Organisation of University Colleges for Teacher Education (Hochschulgesetz), inclusive education has to be offered as a main focus for primary school education and as a specialisation in general secondary education at all university colleges for teacher education and on all initial teacher training degrees which are jointly established with universities. The Act on the Organisation of University Colleges for Teacher Education lays down that curricula have to observe the objectives of Article 24 of the UNCRPD. Furthermore, a particular emphasis on the needs of people with disabilities as defined by the Federal Disability Equality Act is laid down as a guiding principle in the Act on the Organisation of University Colleges for Teacher Education.

A number of **country policies require that ITE programmes have modules on SEN or special education**. This is evident in the policy mapping grids of countries such as Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia and France. In Sweden, new regulations on the degree objectives of pre-primary teachers, primary school teachers, subject teachers and vocational teachers aim to ensure competence in terms of neuropsychiatric difficulties.



Legislation frames expectations for professional competences. In some countries, **the educational institutions that offer ITE are responsible for adjusting their programmes accordingly**. In France, a July 2019 law states that educational institutions should organise ITE, following national principles:

Regarding common education, an order of the ministers responsible for national education and higher education specifies the terms of reference for the contents of specific initial training on the schooling of learners with disabilities.

#### 4.1.2 Competence areas for inclusive education

According to the findings, policy frameworks in some countries define competences for teacher graduates and for in-service teachers. In some cases, policy states **general competences that all teacher graduates are expected to have**.

In Norway, the competences for general teacher education are part of the national curriculum regulations and they are divided into five areas. The 'National Curriculum Regulations for Teacher Education' state that general teacher education aims to develop the following forms of competence:

- subject competence: familiarity with the content, theories and methods associated with the various basic subjects, knowledge of children, childhood and child education and knowledge of theories and working methods in and across subjects
- didactic competence: ability to analyse curricula and reflect over content and working methods and make provisions for learning and development processes for all pupils
- social competence: ability to observe, listen, understand and respect the views and actions of others, ability to cooperate with pupils, colleagues and parents and guardians and ability to function as a leader in a community of learners
- adaptive and developmental competence: ability to assess one's own activities and those of the school, contribute to development of the teaching profession, take part in local development work and strengthen one's own competence
- professional ethics competence: insight into one's own attitudes and the ethical challenges of the profession and ability to assess learning situations in the light of basic educational values.

In UK (Northern Ireland), ITE programmes enable student teachers to develop the professional competences set out in the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's 2011 publication *Teaching: the Reflective Profession*. The 27 competence statements can be considered as learning outcomes. They are grouped under three broad headings: professional values and practice, professional knowledge and understanding, and



professional skills and application. The competences cover a range of knowledge and skills, including those relating to cultural diversity, learners with SEN and teaching learners with different levels of attainment.

Other countries **distinguish between general and special/specific competences of ITE.**

Lithuania lists the general and special competences of teacher education. General competences include:

- Leadership
- Creativity, problem solving and critical thinking
- Social justice and public spirit
- Reflection and self-assessment, consistent development
- Management of organisations and changes
- Social and emotional
- Digital literacy
- Media literacy.

Special competences include:

- 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.

Bulgaria lists teaching competences that aim to include all learners and competences that expect teachers to reach individual learners. It states that the teacher:

- is able to identify level of competency, specifics and preferences in learning style of both the class and the individual student;
- is able to identify educational and developmental needs;
- is able to define in a clear and concrete way educational goals on all levels - curriculum, lesson sections, concrete lessons;



- knows various methods for planning the educational process; develops various educational materials and knows how to link goals to the educational process and the expected results;
- knows various educational strategies, methods and techniques for teaching, educating, learning and motivating students;
- knows how to assess the qualities and suitability of educational and teaching materials, developed to meet different educational needs;
- knows various forms and means for quality control and evaluation of both students' achievements and the results of the educational process.

Similarly, Hungary's EMMI Decree 18/2016 and EMMI Decree 8/2013 define competences for teacher training as follows:

- developing the student's personality together with tailor-made treatment, based on individual needs;
- helping and improving the development of students' groups and communities;
- having knowledge of the special methodology and the special subject;
- planning the pedagogical process;
- supporting, organizing and managing the learning process;
- assessing pedagogical processes and the students;
- communication, professional cooperation and career identity;
- autonomy and responsibility.

In Denmark, ITE for all primary and lower-secondary school teachers entails two types of competences. 'Pedagogy and the teaching profession' includes 'student learning and development; general teaching competence; special education and teaching bilinguals'. 'General education' entails 'Christianity, life enlightenment and citizenship'. Regarding inclusion, teacher education rules list the following academic objectives:

The student teacher can

- develop learning environments for students and groups, taking into account differences in learning conditions and learning objectives.
- observe, support and challenge students' social, emotional and cognitive development.



- use communicative frameworks and methods so that conflicts, social problems and bullying are the starting point for positive reformulations so that inclusion and socialization processes are optimized while supporting the development of the individual student.
- differentiate teaching according to students' prerequisites and potentials.
- reasonably choose specialised educational and inclusive efforts and collaboration with the school's internal and external resource persons.

Some countries **ensure that TPL opportunities are in line with national policy priorities**. In relation to ITE, policy frameworks for TPL in Norway and Sweden are guided by national policy goals. Norway's Education Act relating to universities and university colleges describes the purpose of teacher education as follows:

1. Through teaching, research and scientific development, teacher education shall provide the professional and educational knowledge and practical training needed for the planning, implementation and assessment of teaching, learning and nurture. Teacher education shall take as its point of departure the various requirements of children attending schools and kindergartens, and shall accord with the objectives of the level of education aimed at in the teacher education.
2. The education shall promote the personal development and professional ethics of the students, develop their capacity for reflection, rouse their interest in academic and educational development relevant for work in schools and kindergartens, and provide an understanding of the relationship between the teaching profession and the function of the educational system in society.

## 4.2 Beginning teachers' professional development

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In addition to policy for ITE, country policies depict professional development opportunities available for beginning teachers. Information included in the policy mapping grids on this topic was limited, which may point to the fact that induction does not clearly address inclusion. However, two general issues arise from the analysis: beginning teachers' right to professional development and the use of mentors for beginning teachers.



#### 4.2.1 Professional development as a right

Some countries suggest that **beginning teachers have a right to professional development**. Belgium (Flemish Community) has included this in the legal framework on the rights of school staff since 1 September 2019:

Each teacher is entitled to initial counselling and coaching during the initial phase of their career (temporary appointment of fixed duration). This right to initial guidance is also formally included in the teacher's job description. Successful completion of the initial guidance is also a condition for moving on to the next career phase: temporary appointment of continuous duration. The design, content and organisation of initial guidance are the responsibility of the school board or of the combined school for schools that are part of such a partnership.

In Sweden, beginning teachers are not obliged to engage in professional development activities, but they have the right to do so. According to Sweden's policy mapping grid:

Since 2014 it is no longer mandatory to complete an induction year in order to obtain the teacher registration (lärarlegitimation), but it is the right of a newly qualified teacher to get an induction year with a mentor from the employer. The responsibility to provide an induction year with a mentor lies with the employer, i.e. the municipality or the organisation managing the grant-aided independent school. Only half of all newly qualified teachers get an induction year from their employer. The induction period should offer support in using various teaching methods, to plan and carry out lessons, development plans for pupils, assessment and documentation. It is also important to develop the ability to lead, meet students and interact with others in the role of teacher.

#### 4.2.2 Mentors for beginning teachers

Some countries have **mentoring systems to support beginning teachers**.

In Lithuania, the 'Regulations of Teacher Education' indicate mentoring and an induction period for teachers who are beginning their careers. According to Lithuania's policy mapping grid: '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'.

In Malta, Theme 7 of the 'National Inclusive Education Framework' focuses on staff well-being, noting that: 'Mentoring for educators needs to be enhanced in the school, especially newly appointed staff. Hence, all new staff is helped to settle into the school'.



In Norway, the Directorate for Education and Training supported a recent project focused on providing qualified mentors to beginning teachers. According to Norway's policy mapping grid:

'Mentoring for Newly Qualified Teachers' is a national program on guidance for teachers. The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (KD) and The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) have agreed that both parts will work towards getting a good induction program for newly hired newly qualified teachers. ...

- The introduction programs can be organized at the individual workplaces in order to support the newly qualified teacher in practical matters.
- Qualified mentoring will assist the professional development. It can be organized at the individual workplace and across several workplaces. The mentoring can be individual or in groups. The local mentor should be a qualified mentor.

In Bulgaria, policy outlines the role of mentors in helping beginning teachers. In particular, 'senior teachers' guide 'junior teachers' to help them improve their skills and competences and adjust to their new role. Finally, according to Serbia's policy mapping grid, mentors selected for beginning teachers during their induction period are 'distinguished licensed teachers with at least 5 years' working experience'.

### **4.3 Continuing professional development**

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This section presents findings on policies for experienced teachers' CPD. It discusses policy requirements for qualifications, competence areas and competences. Additionally, the section elaborates on how policies regulate the following issues:

- dialogue between ministries, municipalities and other authorities to agree on TPL for inclusion opportunities;
- alignment of TPL for inclusion opportunities with national/regional and local policy goals;
- flexible/adaptable TPL for inclusion opportunities;
- review strategies for TPL for inclusion opportunities.



### 4.3.1 Qualifications that reflect an inclusive education agenda

Some countries mention that CPD should cover specific qualifications. These **qualifications sometimes include CPD on inclusive education or special needs**.

In Latvia, CPD is compulsory for all teachers (including school heads and their deputies) at all education levels and leads to a certificate. Latvia's policy mapping grid states that CPD includes content related to inclusive education competences:

The requirements for continuous professional development are identified by the Cabinet of Ministers. All teachers have to be involved in professional development. Every three years, the teachers have to acquire at least 36 hours of professional development. It could consist of different modules including modules of general competencies, content and didactics, administration of educational process and pedagogical experience. If there are learners with special needs in the educational institution, teachers should complete the module of general competencies which includes courses about inclusive education and work with learners with special needs. On the completion of the training courses, the teachers get a certificate which is recorded in the National Education Information System.

Lithuania recently began requiring additional training for certain teachers. As stated in the country's grid:

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.

### 4.3.2 Competence areas for inclusive education

Some countries' national policies clearly state **competence areas that apply to in-service teachers' CPD**.

In Portugal, the competence areas are part of the 'profile of the teacher', which is regulated by law. For example, the primary teacher's profile is defined as follows:

- The teacher develops the curriculum in an inclusive setting, integrating the scientific knowledge and skills necessary to promote pupils' learning.
- The teacher organises, develops and evaluates the teaching process based on the concrete analyses of each situation, namely the knowledge diversity, skills and experiences that each learner has when they initiate or continue learning.
- The teacher develops interest and respect in learners, other people and cultures, and promotes the learning of other languages, mobilising the available resources.



- The teacher promotes the active participation of learners and promotes collaboration, solidarity and respect for a democratic education.

In some cases, policies state that teacher competences apply to working with all learners. In other cases, specific competences are meant for working with learners with disabilities or those who have difficulties with the spoken language.

In UK (Wales), policy highlights teacher competences for meeting the needs of all learners. The 'Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership':

... require all teachers to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and experience of high expectations and effective practice in meeting the needs of all learners, whatever their different needs.

Policy in Belgium (Flemish Community) states the teacher's minimum skills and competences. One of the competences requires that 'the teacher can co-operate to organise inclusive education for all learners in the framework of the school's care and equal opportunities policies'.

Other countries have **policies on competences for teaching particular groups of learners**. In France, one competence area requires teachers to consider learner diversity by:

- adapting teaching and educational action according to the diversity of the learners;
- working with professional resources to implement personalised schooling projects for learners with special needs;
- identifying the signs of drop-out in order to prevent difficult situations.

Latvia's 'Education Development Guidelines' mention specific competence for linguistic diversity:

In order to ensure that educators are adequately prepared to work in a linguistically heterogeneous environment, teacher training for modern teaching and methodological tools will be organized. In addition, the professional competence of teachers in the methodology of integrated teaching of content and language will be ensured.

In other countries, **national policies do not directly state the competence areas for in-service teachers. Instead, they can be identified in policies relevant for teaching learners categorised as having SEN**. For example, in Greece, policy does not clearly state competence areas. However, it mentions the need for collaboration between mainstream teachers and special education teachers.



Similarly, in Belgium (Flemish Community), the minister determines a theme for in-service training. For the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 school years, the theme was:

The professional development of supporters for specific educational needs in mainstream nursery and primary education and secondary education and in the centres for part-time vocational secondary education.

According to the Belgium (Flemish Community) policy mapping grid:

Schools are required to develop an in-service training plan (Decree on the Quality of Education, 8 May 2009, article 8). The learner guidance centres are required to develop an education plan (Decision of the Flemish Government on the training of the staff of the learner guidance centres).

Both are free to add elements related to knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education.

**In some cases, inclusive education is mentioned as an area of TPL.** Portugal has made inclusive education a priority area for TPL, approved by Decree-Law No. 54/2018, 6 July. In Italy, the Ministry of Education indicates CPD on inclusion and disability as priorities. In Estonia, 25% of centrally-commissioned CPD focuses on inclusive education.

#### 4.3.3 Extending teachers' professional competence

Some countries have **policy statements considering teacher competence in TPL opportunities.**

Germany's policy mapping grid notes that 'in-service training serves to maintain and extend the professional competence of teachers'. Slovakia's grid states that 'teachers and specialists are obliged to maintain and develop their professional competences through continuing education or self-learning'. Latvia has a 'professional competence development' programme that includes general competences, competences relevant to the curriculum and didactics and education management competences.

Norway has a national strategy entitled 'Competence for Quality – until 2025 (CFQ)'. It defines the framework and resources for further education. The strategy aims to contribute to increased subject knowledge and didactic competence for teachers and increased professional leadership competence for school leaders.

In Serbia, policy clearly lists the competence areas that teachers are expected to have following their induction. These competence areas include tracking learner development and achievement, collaboration with colleagues, family and the community, working with learners with disabilities and professional development.

In most countries, **policy is not clear about the competences for inclusive education in TPL.** In countries such as Belgium (Flemish Community), Cyprus and Czech Republic, policy requires that schools organise TPL. It is often combined with opportunities offered by ministries of education, pedagogical institutes and other educational centres.



Meanwhile, Greece notes in its policy mapping grid:

... in-service teachers receive education by the Co-ordinators of Educational Matters of PEKES [Regional Centres for Educational Planning] on issues of inclusive education as formally defined in Law 4547/2018, and on differentiated pedagogy in organised training meetings.

In Malta, Theme 8 of the 'National Inclusive Education Framework' states: 'inclusive education is the responsibility of all education professionals and therefore training should be a priority'. However, the policy mapping grid does not provide specific information about the inclusive education competences that CPD opportunities address. This suggests that leadership teams have autonomy to identify gaps within their schools and to organise appropriate learning opportunities.

#### **4.3.4 Dialogue about the requirements for TPL for inclusion opportunities**

Some countries **promote dialogue and collaboration between schools and other stakeholders, organisations or universities to agree on TPL for inclusion opportunities.**

In Bulgaria, regional inspectorates develop annual qualification programmes for pedagogical staff and assign the task of organising the relevant activities to centres for teachers' professional and creative development (e.g. higher education institutions and specialised institutes for teachers).

In Cyprus, policy requires that all schools prepare an annual Professional Learning Action Plan. Schools have access to an electronic platform for preparing and implementing the plan. The platform provides instructions and suggests opportunities to co-operate with the Ministry of Education or other institutions (e.g. universities). Similarly, in Italy, the Ministry of Education and schools develop specific professional development plans, depending on their autonomy. Professional learning plans may involve universities, research institutes, associations and local health authorities.

Other countries provide more **freedom of action to municipalities, expecting them to engage in dialogue with schools, universities and other stakeholders** to agree on TPL opportunities for inclusion.

Norway, for example, introduced a new model (White Paper 21, 2016–2017). It includes the following schemes:

- A decentralised scheme to ensure that all municipalities implement competence-enhancement measures, by channelling state funds to the municipalities. In cooperation with universities and university colleges, the municipalities define and prioritise what they need, within the framework of national goals.
- A follow-up scheme in which municipalities and county authorities that report weak results in key education and training areas over time are offered state support and guidance.



- An innovation scheme that provides more research-based knowledge about the school system. The State defines requirements for evaluation and quality, while the local school authorities and research communities work together to develop the measures they wish to test.

In some countries, **particular departments or services liaise with different stakeholders to promote dialogue and agree on TPL needs**. In Slovakia, the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre provides most in-service training courses for teachers. Schools can also invite teacher trainers from other institutions, including universities, for professional development.

The ‘National Approach to Professional Learning’ in UK (Wales) is based on significant national and international research. It is designed to ensure that:

- schools, leaders and teachers are able to access best practice in defining and sharing professional learning at school level, especially through the use of critical enquiry and collaborative learning;
- providers of professional learning – the regional consortia, universities and others – design professional learning experiences that are high quality, accessible and fit for purpose, for example through designs that include collaborative enquiry and e-learning;
- the Welsh Government funds the right sort of professional learning that evidence indicates will have an impact on practice in classrooms.

In Norway, Statped (a national service for special needs education) sets priority areas for development and acts as a co-operation partner for universities and university colleges. Similarly, in Sweden, the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools offers training and counselling in collaboration with the Swedish Agency for Education, universities and local stakeholders.

#### **4.3.5 Alignment of TPL for inclusion opportunities with national/regional and local-level policy goals**

**National/regional policy priorities sometimes guide CPD policy.** In Serbia, policy states that teachers’ CPD is planned in accordance with the priority areas set by the Minister of Education. The priority areas are set at ministerial level every three years and they are followed by plans for how to meet them. To ensure and foster national coherence regarding inclusive education professional learning opportunities, France published a policy implementation guideline in September 2019. In Belgium (Flemish Community), the government sets priority topics for CPD each year.

**Some countries organise CPD at a local level, but it is still guided by national policy goals.** In Italy, the Ministry of Education publishes a National Training Plan every three years. This plan informs the development of CPD activities within networks of schools established at a regional level. In Iceland, schools are required by law to develop local professional development schemes. CPD projects are often initiated by associations of teachers of a given subject and, in some cases, by local education offices.



In other countries, **CPD is organised at a local level and does not follow any national priorities**. For example, in Sweden, local authorities are formally responsible for providing CPD for teachers. CPD activities are funded by national funds, but do not need to follow national priorities.

In some countries, **national policy highlights inclusive education among priorities for CPD**. Hungary's 'National Disability Programme 2015–2025' and the 'Public Education Development Strategy 2014–2020' led to CPD activities seeking to improve specialist support. In Serbia, priority topics included preventing discrimination and inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups.

#### **4.3.6 Ensuring flexibility of local-level professional opportunities**

Some policies ensure that **teachers develop individual CPD plans**. In Latvia, teachers can plan their preferred CPD activities in co-operation with the school head. Latvia also requires teachers to receive 36 hours of CPD in three years. Similarly, in Estonia, an electronic self-assessment instrument helps teachers determine their own training needs according to professional standards. The standards describe opportunities for teachers' individual development.

In UK (Scotland), all teachers must have an annual Career-Long Professional Learning plan, outlining appropriate activities that have been agreed with their line manager. Teachers must also maintain an individual Career-Long Professional Learning record. In 2014, Education Scotland published guidance material on career-long professional learning.

Other policies encourage **flexible professional development opportunities for individual teachers, offered locally**. The Institute for Education in Malta offers part-time, after-school CPD, which uses a blended learning approach. This approach increases accessibility for those who are already working full time, enabling them to improve their qualifications and increase their salary.

Similarly, in Iceland, all universities run internet-based instruction that can be used for CPD. The University of Iceland and the University of Akureyri provide distance learning. Most courses have on-site sessions and afternoon/evening teaching, as well as digital communication. Afternoon/evening lectures can be broadcast online, but other courses are campus-based. In Sweden, the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools offers a range of distance learning courses on inclusion and SEN for in-service learning.

A number of examples describe the **provision of local-level professional opportunities that are adaptable to local school contexts**. The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute offers the 'Professional Learning Support Programme', encouraging schools to engage in professional learning activities on a topic that is considered important for the staff. Schools decide on the TPL methodology according to their priority issues and teachers' needs. The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute supports teachers in schools to decide, plan and implement a variety of actions and practices that are consistent with their school's educational reality.

In Italy, the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research has founded a network of schools (103 territorial support centres across Italy). These schools are dedicated to special needs, with teachers and researchers specialised in technologies for inclusive teaching. Using a peer-to-peer approach, teachers disseminate best practices, support colleagues in managing special needs and offer schools technological advice.



Lithuania's policy context requires that each school has an annual TPL plan that reflects the needs of the teachers, the school and the region/municipality. Teachers are expected to spend at least five days per year on professional development courses/programmes. Portuguese legislation (Decree-Law No. 22/2014, 11 February) makes it clear that in-service training is geared towards improving the quality of teacher performance. In this context, TPL considers the priorities the school identifies. In Sweden, municipalities and schools consult locally with various groups, including teachers, to establish needs and training. A CPD plan is not compulsory, but the education provider (the municipality or a private body) must ensure that staff members have professional development opportunities.

In UK (Scotland), teachers have flexibility to choose from a range of CPD activities. Education Scotland gives a list of possible professional learning activities:

- Self-evaluation and reflection
- Experiential, action or enquiry-based learning
- Focused professional reading and research
- Curricular planning
- Peer support [e.g. coaching or mentoring]
- Classroom visits/observation
- Work shadowing
- Co-operative or team teaching
- Participation in collaborative activity [e.g. professional learning community, learning round]
- Leading or participating in a working or task group
- Planning learning which is inter-disciplinary or cross-sectoral
- Participation in activities relating to assessment and moderation
- Secondments, acting posts and placements.

Another policy approach is to **make local-level professional learning opportunities adaptable to school development plans and personal CPD plans.**

Serbia uses this approach, requiring both school and individual CPD plans. The individual teachers' CPD plans are based on a self-evaluation of their competences. At the school level, the school management board develops a school professional development plan that determines CPD programmes. The school professional development plan is based on the school's priorities and educational goals. It also reflects standards prescribed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. School priorities take into account the teachers' individual development plans and self-evaluation results, evaluation



of the school's educational quality, learners' and parents' opinions and other indicators of teaching quality.

#### **4.3.7 Medium- and long-term review strategy for TPL for inclusion**

Some countries have a **strategy for reviewing TPL opportunities. However, the review processes do not clearly require TPL for inclusion.**

The Estonian 'Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020' requires planning, budgeting, implementation and reporting of actions and activities necessary for TPL. TPL programmes are reviewed at the end of each year and amended in accordance with the State Budget Act for the following year.

In UK (Scotland), all teachers registered in the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) have been required to participate in the 'Professional Update' process since August 2014. This ensures teachers are entitled to supportive professional learning and confirms that teachers maintain high standards of learning and practice. The process requires the following of teachers:

- An annual update of contact details to GTCS
- Engagement in professional learning
- Self-evaluation against the appropriate GTCS Professional Standard
- Discussion of this engagement and the impact of this, as part of the Professional Review and Development process
- Maintain a professional learning record and portfolio of evidence
- Five-yearly confirmation of this engagement to GTCS.

In Italy, policy requires a review of schools' and teachers' TPL plans every three years. According to Law no. 107/2015, based on the three-year budgetary term, each school draws up its own 'Three-Year Plan for the Educational Offer'. This document sets out the school's cultural and planning identity. As the country's policy mapping grid states:

It must be consistent with the general and educational objectives of the various kinds of study and specialisms set at national level, while reflecting cultural, social and economic requirements at local level.



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## 4.4 Teacher educators' professional development

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To complete the continuum of TPL policies, this section presents findings concerning TPL for inclusion policies for teacher educators, namely university teachers and school-based teachers.

In relation to teacher educators working in departments of education in universities or pedagogical institutes, the findings indicate **a lack of policy frameworks for TPL for inclusion**. This is often due to universities' autonomy to decide on TPL procedures internally.

Nevertheless, some countries mention that **universities have internal TPL opportunities, such as TPL for teacher educators who can act as mentors to new staff**. According to Sweden's policy mapping grid:

There are no national regulations for how teachers working in institutions providing teacher education are trained themselves. It is up to each higher education institution to decide, although a normal requirement is a relevant PhD. Many teacher educators have own teaching experience from schools.

Teachers who choose to be mentors to teachers in training must have a relevant degree and be certified teachers. There is a 7.5 ECTS voluntary mentoring course offered at higher education institutions open to all mentors.

At the school level, some countries provide information on TPL opportunities for school leaders who are expected to act as teacher educators internally. Despite the range of approaches to TPL for school leaders, information on the extent to which they consider inclusive education is limited.

Some countries do specify **inclusive education as a component of TPL for school leaders**. In its policy mapping grid, Estonia notes that inclusive education is a component of TPL for school leaders, just as it is for in-service teachers. Furthermore, it notes the intention to develop competences for school leaders. The competences will be the basis of recruiting, providing feedback and organising TPL opportunities for school leaders. Steps to ensure Estonian schools are led by 'competent and motivated school leaders' include:

... Associations of the Heads of preschool institutions, general education schools, vocational schools and institutions of professional higher education, and school owners will develop and the Ministry of Education and Research will implement competence requirements for headmasters. This will be the basis for recruiting headmasters, providing feedback on their performance, as well as offering additional training, which among other things also emphasises the objective of implementing the new approach to learning.



In France, school leaders have access to the TPL opportunities that are available to in-service teachers. These opportunities cover inclusive education issues. According to France's policy mapping grid:

*MIN-ASH (Modules de formation d'initiative nationale dans le domaine de l'adaptation scolaire et de la scolarisation des élèves handicapés)* are national training modules on inclusive education (organised by teachers' institutes, academies or the Institut national supérieur de formation et de recherche pour l'éducation des jeunes handicapés et les enseignements adaptés (INSHEA)).

These modules are intended for all teachers, including school leaders.

In Germany, central TPL opportunities include courses for head teachers, counselling teachers, heads of department at teacher training institutes and school supervisory officials. Inclusive education is part of these courses and part of preparing teachers who wish to become head teachers. Other countries that mention inclusive education as part of TPL opportunities for head teachers are Italy, Malta, Portugal and UK (Wales).

**Although some countries do not mention inclusive education as a component of school leaders' TPL opportunities, the TPL content may still be relevant to inclusion.** For example, according to Sweden's policy mapping grid, the purpose of the national school head training programme is 'to enable school heads to develop and apply democratic learning and communicative leadership as laid down in the curricula'.

**Some countries describe TPL opportunities for teachers based in schools. They also provide information on collaborations with universities for student teachers' school practicum.** In Portugal, 'teacher-training supervisors' are expected to be trained and have experience in teaching, although details on the training are not provided:

Teachers in cooperating schools who are helping out as teacher-training supervisors, called cooperating supervisors, should be chosen by the lawful, legally-competent body in the higher education institution on the basis of having obtained the prior agreement of the teachers and the approval of the cooperating school's leadership body. The cooperating school-supervisors should comply with all the following requirements:

- Training and experience suitable for the duties to be performed;
- Teaching practice at the respective education, teaching and subject levels and cycle of a minimum of five years.

When choosing the co-operating supervising, factors of preference, such as post-graduate training in the respective teaching area, specialised training in pedagogical supervision and professional experience in supervision should be considered.



Portugal's policy mapping grid also discusses the **creation of a group of teachers who act as 'trainers' at the school level:**

At each School Association Training Centre, there is a focus on creating groups of internal trainers that boost the level of qualifications of existing education professional in schools and allow quality training to be given in the areas identified as priorities by the schools themselves. The quality of training is guaranteed via a variety of regulation mechanisms, via monitoring by the ... [Directorate-General for School Administration] and external evaluation, which is the responsibility of the Inspectorate-General of Education .... This new model of continuing professional education involves short training courses (recognised and certified by training bodies) that last a minimum of three hours and a maximum of six hours.

## 4.5 Summary of key points

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Two key points stand out from the findings. First, countries do not ensure a continuum of support for TPL for inclusion. Second, teacher competence frameworks and their impact on TPL for inclusion differ among countries.

First, **a continuum of support for TPL for inclusion is not in place in most countries.** Some countries have a strategy to ensure a continuum of TPL opportunities, but it is not clear whether inclusive education is part of this continuum. In particular:

### **Policies rarely state that inclusive education needs to be part of ITE.**

- All countries require that all teachers are qualified to teach, but not all countries require that inclusive education is part of the basic qualification.
- Specialist teachers are generally expected to have a qualification in special education/SEN or a qualification in education with some kind of specialisation in special and/or inclusive education.
- Universities and higher education institutions usually have the autonomy to decide about the content of their ITE degrees. Therefore, ITE programmes follow different approaches in relation to inclusive education (e.g. a module on inclusive education, a module on SEN, inclusion of diversity issues in other modules).
- Some countries have competences for ITE (i.e. general competences that all teacher graduates are expected to have and special/specific competences). Other countries require that TPL opportunities are in line with national policy priorities.

### **Policy development covering professional development for beginning teachers is limited.**

- Very few countries' policies state that professional development for beginning teachers is a right and use mentors for support.
- Even in countries that have policies for beginning teachers' professional development, it is not clear if inclusive education is part of it.



- No information was found about the required competences of professional development for beginning teachers.

**In terms of CPD, countries follow a range of policy approaches to ensure that experienced teachers receive TPL. However, these approaches do not always guarantee TPL for inclusion opportunities.**

- Some countries require that teachers have specific qualifications in CPD. These qualifications sometimes include CPD in inclusive education or SEN.
- Some countries have competence areas or specific competences for CPD. Competences relevant to inclusive education are sometimes clearly stated and sometimes not. In some cases, there are competences for diverse learners or for learners categorised as having SEN.
- Different policy approaches promote dialogue to agree on opportunities for TPL for inclusion (e.g. collaboration between schools and other stakeholders/organisations/universities, freedom of action for municipalities, particular departments or services that liaise with different stakeholders). However, it is not clear if there is collaboration in TPL for inclusion.
- Policy for CPD is sometimes guided by national policy priorities and is organised either centrally or at local/regional level. Inclusive education or education for diverse learners is sometimes a priority area.
- Some policy approaches ensure flexibility of CPD. For example, teachers can develop individual CPD plans. CPD can also be offered locally or be adaptable to local school contexts. Thus CPD opportunities may be adaptable to school development plans and personal CPD plans.
- Some countries have a strategy for reviewing TPL opportunities, but TPL for inclusion is not a clear requirement of the review process.
- Some countries mention TPL opportunities on inclusive education issues. These can be part of collaborations between schools and universities and focus on learning difficulties or diversity.

**Across country policies, there are gaps in TPL for inclusion opportunities for teacher educators.**

- Most countries report that they offer professional learning opportunities for school leaders. However, very few countries state that inclusive education is part of head teachers' professional learning.
- Some countries describe TPL opportunities for teachers based in schools. They also provide information on collaborations with universities for student teachers' school practicum. However, it is not clear if inclusive education is part of these opportunities.
- There is insufficient information on TPL for inclusion opportunities for teacher educators based in universities or pedagogical institutes.



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Second, **teacher competence frameworks vary across countries** and their impact on TPL for inclusion differs.

- In some countries, policy states the competence areas or the competences that all teacher graduates are expected to have. In others, policy only states the competences of in-service teachers. There is a gap in teacher educators' competences across European countries.
- Competence areas vary. Some countries distinguish between general and special competences. Others list competences that apply to teaching all learners, while some list specific competences for learners with disabilities or learners who have difficulties with the spoken language.
- Priorities for professional development and education guidelines and strategies sometimes identify competence areas that are relevant to inclusive education.
- In most countries, it is unclear whether policy considers inclusive education competences in TPL.





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## 5. COLLABORATION FOR IMPLEMENTING TPL FOR INCLUSION POLICIES

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This chapter presents findings on capacity building, funding and monitoring for TPL for inclusion. Collaborative actions are central to the implementation of TPL for inclusion policies. In spite of the policy gaps outlined in [Chapter 4](#), the findings indicate a broad range of actions to build capacity for TPL for inclusion. Supported by funding and monitoring, these findings indicate meaningful steps towards collective professional development.

### 5.1 Capacity building for TPL for inclusion

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To support the policy vision and goals for TPL for inclusion, policy sets out implementation mechanisms, guidelines, incentives, resources and standards. This section explores policy issues relating to capacity building for TPL for inclusion that emerged during the analysis.

#### 5.1.1 Strategies to support all teachers in TPL for inclusion

There are many ways to increase capacity for TPL for inclusion. As a first priority, policy aims to ensure that schools can support teachers to participate in professional learning activities for inclusion. There are four main strategies to reach this goal:

- **launching large-scale projects to highlight priorities for inclusion;**
- **strengthening structural measures for TPL;**
- **facilitating access to a variety of courses;**
- **disseminating project outcomes.**



The use of priority themes for inclusion through large-scale projects allows policy to reach many schools and teachers throughout a country. Projects can either be national or supported by both national policy and international collaboration. They can be brief or long-lasting, offering participating schools or higher education institutions the opportunity for in-depth professional learning. Focusing on clear learning goals and outputs, projects have the power to create enduring impact.

In Germany, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the German Rectors' Conference have called for a broad research programme on topics of inclusion. Since 2015, the majority of universities of education have worked to implement a national programme for teacher education quality improvement known as *Qualitätsoffensive Lehrerbildung*.

In Belgium (Flemish Community), a two-year priority in-service programme for support services was developed in response to an open call by the Flemish Government. The programme reaches a large number of teachers and other professionals in inclusive education.

In Serbia, there are short modules for in-service learning for school teams in collaboration with the World Bank. Additionally, leadership training for municipal authorities aims to increase pre-primary participation among children from vulnerable groups as part of the 'Improvement of Preschool Education in Serbia' project.

**Some countries use a more structural approach to enhance teacher participation in TPL for inclusion. This is evident in the use of school professional development plans or, at the individual level, annual evaluations and supplementary requirements for specific educational contexts,** such as vocational or informal education, as seen in Lithuania. In Sweden, higher education institutions validate previous professional teaching and offer individualised educational programmes that enable teachers to meet the requirements for a new professional degree in education. However, these strategies are not limited to and are less focused on inclusive education topics.

Broad offerings of CPD or in-service training enable teachers and school teams to find the professional learning opportunities they need. School development programmes can be organised with the support of a national agency, as in Sweden. Alternatively, they can be organised with local or regional authorities, as in Bulgaria, or in collaboration with schools, as in Estonia and Latvia. In these cases, the local government supports school teams to get involved in research and long- and short-term projects.

For individual teachers, a register and accreditation of CPD courses exists, e.g. in Bulgaria and Serbia. Many countries provide incentives for CPD and teacher education. Examples include the funding of master's degrees in Italy, opportunities for sabbatical leave in Malta and career guidance through leadership or support for teacher professional development in Serbia.

In addition, in some cases the ministry or other educational authorities provide an open offer of online courses. The educational authority disseminates project materials, evidence of innovative practice or online training. For example, Education Scotland publishes the 'Improving Scottish Education' series on equality of provision. Meanwhile, Portugal disseminates materials from the Council of Europe's former Pestalozzi Programme. In Sweden, the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools and the Swedish



National Agency for Education provide an opportunity for all teachers to participate in online in-service training based on research and practice. They have now provided 4,000 teachers with basic knowledge and skills in SEN and inclusion.

### 5.1.2 Mechanisms to facilitate dialogue

The findings suggest that countries have mechanisms to facilitate dialogue between teachers, leaders and other stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of inclusive education.

A common approach is **informal learning in the process of developing inclusive support practice**. While focusing on innovative practice, policy offers new contexts for professional learning. For instance, in Austria, France and Greece, regional competence centres provide expertise, case management, teacher and school support. These centres mobilise and co-ordinate resources for inclusion and collaborate and share information with local stakeholders. Similar opportunities for TPL exist in Cyprus, where special education co-ordinators support several schools in one district. In Portugal, ICT resource centres provide peer training in assistive technology, encouraging inclusive education resource development and dialogue on its use.

National regulations and procedures also promote dialogue. In Denmark, schools are obliged to follow up on the development of learners referred to special educational assistance. In Norway, learners and parents must be heard when making individual education plans.

Dialogue also supports TPL for inclusion through **assessment and feedback as part of an inspection cycle** or through **partnerships and networks to improve and expand inclusive practice**. In Cyprus, special education inspection offers advice and support to specialist teachers and teachers and administrators in mainstream schools. Denmark established a task force to directly advise schools on how to improve inclusive education in practice. Meanwhile, Italy established a National Observatory for inclusive education at the Ministry of Education. The National Observatory supports and monitors innovative practice. Through dialogue, the Swedish National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools provides informal learning opportunities and regular feedback to the local administrations of mainstream schools.

Even more empowering are Italy's regional and local working groups, which include representatives from local authorities and associations of people with disabilities. Similar groups include a participation network in the council for inclusive education in Norway and a joint body for inter-sectoral co-operation for social inclusion in Serbia, which involves representatives of several minority groups. Meanwhile, the Swedish Agency for Participation ensures the rights of people with disabilities, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006). All of these groups facilitate and guarantee dialogue as a tool for disseminating knowledge, skills and values for inclusive education.

In Malta, **higher education institutions share project developments** in the Council of Headteachers. In addition, **teacher mobility programmes** (e.g. Erasmus+) generate dialogue on inclusion. In Estonia, the Ministry of Education and Research launched a project called 'The interesting school'. It reflects upon today's schools and education. It



provides an opportunity for nationwide dialogue among educators, learners, parents and other stakeholders. In Spain, educational administrations facilitate access to teacher qualifications to allow mobility between teaching areas and international mobility.

### 5.1.3 Guidance for teachers within schools

Just as dialogue contributes to the professional learning of teachers in collaboration with support services or networks of representatives, so does guidance on enacting inclusive education. Policy provides for direct guidance through counselling, online access to information and guidelines, essential guidelines for teacher educators and scientific bodies on inclusive practice.

**Counselling is a direct resource for TPL for inclusion.** Support networks offer guidance to schools and teachers in mainstream education to achieve inclusion. Belgium (Flemish Community) offers these kinds of support networks. Greece has created Centres for Educational and Counselling Support and Interdisciplinary Educational Evaluation and Support Committees. Serbia uses external counsellors and horizontal learning among schools. Sweden ensures internal and external mentorship for all teachers. Some countries, e.g. Serbia, have a particular focus on pre-primary education support.

**Online counselling or informational websites also provide guidance.** Examples of inclusion-focused online programmes and reports are ‘The Learning Poster’ in Norway, the ‘Learning Wales’ website and Scotland’s ‘Getting it right for every child’ practice model. Malta has a ‘National Inclusive Education Framework’ and Portugal has a set of measures to address underachievement and promote educational success. Finally, Sweden’s ‘Difference is the norm’ website aims to create inclusive learning environments.

Other information focuses on learners with additional needs. Italy offers **specific guidelines for teachers** on learning difficulties or teaching migrant learners. France has an online learning platform called ‘*Cap école inclusive*’ to help teachers meet the needs of learners with SEN. In Estonia, specific online guidance supports administrators to organise teaching and provide support for learners with SEN.

For teacher educators, Germany refers to the ‘Standards for Teacher Training in the Educational Sciences’. Serbia, meanwhile, has formulated the ‘Standards of the Quality of Work of Educational Institutions’ as guidance for future teachers’ professional reflection and practice in inclusive education. Lithuania focuses on additional qualification requirements for beginning teachers in special and inclusive education.

Finally, policy also refers to the **availability of reports and support from independent scientific bodies**. Examples include the Institute of Educational Policy in Greece and Ifous (Innovation, research and development in schools and pre-schools) in Sweden, which focuses on development through practice-oriented research in schools.

### 5.1.4 Guidelines to support teacher collaboration

Similarly, **formal collaborative practices** offer a wide range of professional learning opportunities. Whole-school and school-community collaboration focus on inclusive school and after-school activities. An example is the ‘All-day school’ collaboration of schools and various community resources in Lithuania. Sweden requires close collaboration among



schools, social services and healthcare organisations for children at risk, broadening TPL in daily practice. Additionally, Italy encourages inter-disciplinary teacher committees.

Collaboration to support all learners is promoted through ‘Expert Instructions for the Inclusion of Refugees/Asylum Seekers in the Education System’ in Serbia. They particularly focus on offering language support. Other efforts focus on particular groups of learners. For example, Hungary offers guidelines for special needs support in pre-primary education.

In higher education, the Norwegian ‘White Paper on Teacher Education’ encourages collaboration and **multi-disciplinary co-operation among teacher educators**. In Bulgaria, student teachers learn to collaborate with teachers in kindergarten groups as part of pre-primary pedagogy.

### 5.1.5 Guidelines for quality assessment of TPL for inclusion

**Standards and guidelines for schools prior to quality assessment offer opportunities for schools to steer self-evaluation and monitoring.** Pre-assessment standards and guidelines evoke self-reflection and self-monitoring on inclusion. As examples, Austria has established the ‘Guidelines for monitoring inclusive quality’ and France has created ‘Qualinclus’, a tool to help school leaders in their self-assessment regarding inclusive education.

**Other guidelines accommodate the local diversity of inclusive education processes.** Italy, for example, requires schools to develop their own annual inclusion plans and triennial improvement plans, which involve professional development activities.

**In-service training is often advised and planned in response to assessment.** External review is regarded as complementary to self-evaluation in Malta. It highlights schools’ efforts to develop inclusive education practice in a particular learning community and indicates ways to improve these efforts. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is more focused, dealing with specific problem areas and priority supervision, such as additional adjustments and special support.

Jointly, **evaluation and assessment data guide further initiatives for TPL for inclusion**, as is the case in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Spain and Sweden.

**For higher education, quality assessment usually follows a different route and is not well documented.** In Greece, the Institute of Educational Policy monitors the implementation of teacher education policy and development.

### 5.1.6 Building leadership teams for inclusion

With an emphasis on in-service professional learning **opportunities, projects and collaborative professional learning, TPL for inclusion also requires leadership to address the inclusive education agenda.** Some countries offer specialised courses and qualifications. Belgium (Flemish Community) offers various post-bachelor programmes in education, such as special needs education, remedial learning and school development. Lithuania offers competence development for teacher educators through the EU ‘Continue’ project. Finally, Norway provides leadership courses for school administrators.

Some countries envisage a leadership role for every teacher and therefore recruit teacher candidates for research projects in schools, as is done in Sweden. The Swedish National Agency for Special Needs Education also offers in-service training for school health teams



to develop inclusive school leadership together with head teachers. In Norway, entrance requirements in teacher education have changed accordingly.

### 5.1.7 Incentives for teachers

**Incentives for TPL are rarely inclusion-focused.** Policy includes a variety of measures to promote and reward TPL. Sometimes, incentives for teachers to engage in TPL for inclusion are embedded in the general incentives for professional learning.

In Belgium (Flemish Community) and Italy, **national priority themes for CPD or annual school plan activities including professional learning for inclusion** lead to free courses for teachers. In Italy, Portugal and other countries, teachers can choose professional learning activities for an agreed time or budget. However, they are also expected to participate in school priority professional activities. In Sweden, higher education is free of charge. The Swedish National Agency for Education publishes a catalogue of courses for teachers to choose from called 'A boost for Teachers' (*Lärarlyftet*). Teachers retain 80% of their salaries while taking professional development courses.

Other regulated incentives are **exemption from teaching obligations and (unpaid) sabbatical leave**, which is offered in Greece. In Norway, the 'Competence for Quality' releases teachers from parts of their ordinary duties, but guarantees their salary during the training. In UK (Wales), all teachers are entitled to six days of in-service training for collaborative work on implementing the new curriculum. Some advanced degrees allow for a salary raise, as in Belgium (Flemish Community) for post-bachelor diplomas and in Bulgaria based on a 'five grade scale' along the professional learning continuum.

**Although there are incentives for TPL, the main reward is personal competence development.** Professional development enhances new teacher and leadership roles. It also enhances teachers' opportunities to become agents of change, as is expected in Estonia (based on the 'Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020').

In Germany, TPL is essential to expand teachers' professional competence to meet all teaching requirements across their careers. In particular, in-service training in special education settings is encouraged, so that teachers are better prepared to include learners with disabilities.

Other countries treat professional development as a teacher's obligation. For example, Lithuania expects teachers to attend at least 60 hours of professional learning every year.

**A final reward for teachers is the acquisition of credits or degrees that can help with further promotion.** In Greece, credit points are allocated after completing certified training courses in a higher education institution. These courses count for later head teacher promotion. In Portugal, lifelong training courses entitle attendees to a certificate and credits that are vital to progress in a teaching career. In other cases, e.g. in Latvia, certificates and credits are proof of compliance with CPD obligations. This compliance is crucial for teacher evaluations.



### 5.1.8 Developing specialist roles as a resource

A considerable policy priority in TPL for inclusion involves the **role of specialist teachers as peers or counsellors in mainstream teachers' professional learning. This involves professional development to qualify them for the role.**

A common strategy is to consider **specialist teachers as a resource for capacity building and professional development and to offer peer learning opportunities in mainstream schools.** In particular, experience in special education contexts enables the development of special needs services in mainstream schools.

In Germany, specialist teachers are delegated from special education to mainstream schools. In Denmark, mainstream schools attract specialist teachers to work with them as advisers or co-teachers. In the Czech Republic, formal and informal collaboration between special schools and mainstream schools has become common for teacher support. Meanwhile, Slovakia assigns a more limited assessment role to networks of educational counselling and prevention.

There is a trend towards a broader role of specialist teachers to become support teachers and inclusion facilitators. This is the case in Austria, where specialist teachers are appointed to benefit all learners. Spain also links mainstream schools and special education services. In Cyprus and Italy, specialist teachers are team members who participate in all planning and educational activities. In Sweden, the roles of a SEN teacher and SEN counsellor differ.

### 5.1.9 Common competence areas

Some countries promote TPL for inclusion through use of a comprehensive framework of teacher competences, e.g. in Belgium (Flemish Community). A legal competence framework can synchronise policies regarding ITE, induction, CPD and qualifications for teaching staff. In other countries, national curriculum reform and programme development for pedagogical staff ensure the inclusion of specific topics. Bulgaria includes skills such as working in inter-cultural learning environments. UK (Wales) includes core skills development for teachers to support learners with high-incidence additional learning needs.

Alternatively, non-compulsory, nationally-promoted programme development can strengthen capacity for inclusion through teachers' common competence development. For instance, the Institute for Education at the University of Malta offers additional courses for mentoring teachers. Norway disseminates courses for teachers on pre-primary children who speak minority languages. In Switzerland, collaboration between class teachers and support staff allows for shared competence development. Team teaching, regular meetings and shared educational planning time offer many professional learning opportunities for strengthening teachers' competences and self-efficacy. In Estonia, special education co-ordinators provide close collaboration and mentoring regarding educational work.



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### 5.1.10 Competence standards for inclusion

Professional learning for inclusion is embedded in the education system in different ways. The acknowledgement of competences for professional learning in inclusive education throughout a teacher's career varies. It can be demonstrated through standalone courses and programme development or professional standards and qualifications.

In Hungary, teacher graduates of bachelor's and master's programmes must possess certain competences on diagnostics and individualised learning for learners categorised as having SEN. In Estonia and Serbia, professional standards for teacher competences contain the relevant competences for inclusion. They guide teachers in their CPD and/or promotion opportunities.

In UK (Wales), the 'Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership' reflect a new curriculum designed for inclusive classrooms and support for learners with additional needs. They offer guidance for ITE, induction of newly-qualified teachers, experienced teachers, leadership in education and practitioners assisting teachers in schools.

In Sweden, professional learning opportunities for teachers acknowledge competences for inclusion. These opportunities include courses on special pedagogy for learning, learner health and childcare or tutor training. They can also involve collegiate learning with the support of supervisors and materials available on a learning portal.

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## 5.2 Cross-sectoral co-operation and funding for TPL for inclusion

Policy implementation also requires funding and co-operation across stakeholders. This section elaborates on the financial incentives for schools and higher education institutions, the data collection of expenditure on TPL for inclusion and the flexibility of resources for TPL for inclusion.

### 5.2.1 Financial incentives for schools and higher education institutions

Financial resources should focus specifically on the development of TPL for inclusion. **Some funding mechanisms are part of structural measures for TPL in general. Others are linked to priority themes put forward by the government or by regional or local authorities.** In addition, higher education programme development for inclusion and collaborative development of professional learning opportunities can be incentivised financially.

As part of existing structural measures for TPL, schools can apply for financial support for school development through teacher participation in national programmes on inclusion. This must be consistent with the priorities put forward in the school's educational plan.

In Iceland, universities offer courses for teachers who apply for programme participation. These programmes aim to strengthen school development and support in-service training for teachers. Likewise, in Sweden, schools can apply for funding for teachers and counsellors. In Malta, the Institute for Education supports schools to finance training initiatives.



Other financing for TPL for inclusion is often found in educational networks. These can be teacher unions, as in Iceland. They can also include networks of education providers, as in Belgium (Flemish Community). There, large networks of schools receive an annual budget from the government to provide advisory services and professional learning for teachers. In Estonia, teachers' networks receive funding for continuing education, including initiatives for peer learning.

**Funding mechanisms can be associated with national, regional or municipal priority themes for school development and TPL. These aim to enhance teacher competence development on a large scale.** In Italy, the Good School Reform Act invests EUR 40 million in compulsory in-service teacher training that addresses inclusive education issues. Following national education priorities, Estonia ensures universities and other teacher education providers disseminate continuing education courses free of charge. Local municipalities may allocate additional resources.

In Belgium (Flemish Community), the Decree on the Quality of Education regulates priority in-service learning at the government's initiative. Project funding is allocated to teacher education colleges, educational networks or other TPL providers. Norway supports schools to ensure they satisfy new competence requirements for teachers and to enhance the skills of those who already fulfil the requirements. Through county governors, the government also funds collaborative forums and priority themes. However, it requires co-financing by municipalities.

In addition, **higher education and other research and development facilities may receive funding to support professional development initiatives for inclusion.** The Ministry of Education in Denmark supports municipalities and schools to improve inclusive education. It does so by establishing a group of outgoing counsellors and an office that collects, initiates and supports research programmes. The office also disseminates ideas, information and knowledge. In Sweden, the government funds university education in special needs education for schools.

There are also indirect financing strategies for professional development for inclusion. Bulgaria offers additional financial support for kindergartens and schools. Sweden reinforces special educational staff in mainstream schools. Almost 300 grants were provided for schools in Serbia to introduce inclusive education. Current school grants continue to focus on inclusion, covering issues such as Roma inclusion, inter-culturalism, pre-primary inclusive education and improving an inclusive school climate.

Besides financial incentives, there are many paid TPL courses aimed at preparing teachers for inclusive learning environments. Courses are offered in a free market without regulations for covering expenses or cost reimbursements.

### **5.2.2 Data collection of expenditure on TPL for inclusion**

Some countries conduct **systematic data collection on expenditures related to TPL for inclusion.** In France, a digital application called '*Tableau de bord du handicap*' aggregates all quantitative data available on inclusive education, including budget allocation on specialised professional learning. Estonia provides a complete overview of centrally commissioned in-service training on an online platform called 'Juhan'. The training is



funded through contracts that describe expected learning outcomes, volume and number of trainees.

Other countries refer to a more **general registration system**. To audit TPL, Italy requires teachers to share an annual statement of expenses. However, schools are responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of a teacher's professional learning choices.

In Portugal, the Directorate-General for Education Statistics oversees the compilation and analysis of educational statistics and observes and evaluates the education system's overall results. Human resources information is part of its overall monitoring.

Meanwhile, Latvia conducted a review of the professional development support system for teachers. As an outcome, Latvia established an improvement programme to increase the teaching profession's prestige. It also aimed to enhance the effectiveness of TPL funding by linking remuneration with teacher motivation and professional performance, while providing a modern working and learning environment.

Latvia also mentions the use of the European Social Fund to finance and audit TPL for inclusion. This is an additional tool for funding and monitoring inclusive education.

### 5.2.3 Flexible resources

Some countries use alternative mechanisms for financing TPL for inclusion. These mechanisms tend to provide **targeted support for schools**. For example, Austria offers priority support to schools with poor standardised test results. Since 2018, Sweden has used a similar special funding mechanism, referred to as equity funding. It allows schools to apply for extra funding if test results are very low or if they have 'challenges concerning socio-economic backgrounds'. Sweden also encourages participation in national school development programmes.

Each region of Italy has a pole school, which organises CPD activities according to the national CPD plan and schools' CPD plans. Italy provides an extra budget to these pole schools for CPD activities, in addition to their annual budgets. Malta has identified another mechanism to boost TPL. It has a 'Get Qualified' scholarship scheme for teachers, through which it reimburses particular CPD courses. Finally, online databases that provide knowledge on inclusion can act as flexible resource mechanisms for TPL.

## 5.3 Monitoring TPL for inclusion

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This section presents findings on monitoring the implementation of TPL for inclusion. Emerging themes relate to the search for comprehensive accountability frameworks, the need for data on access to TPL and data analysis, self-monitoring and monitoring enactment in practice.

### 5.3.1 Comprehensive accountability frameworks

Much of the implementation of TPL takes place in schools as in-service learning or CPD. Therefore, schools are generally held accountable for assessing the quality of TPL. On the



other hand, evaluation of ITE can be regarded as a separate process. Higher education institutions can work with each other or with independent agencies to develop principles for monitoring and assessing their teaching staff, as is the case in Estonia.

Many countries lack a comprehensive quality assurance framework for TPL for inclusion. However, **some countries link CPD and ITE for inclusive education quality assessment in different ways.**

For instance, in Switzerland, three bodies provide information on the quality of TPL for inclusion activities. The first is the Swiss Coordination Centre for Research in Education, which monitors the development of education provision. The second body is the Swiss Institute for Special Needs Education, which collates information on special needs education programmes and advises the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education and the cantons on specialised pedagogy. The third body is the Federal Statistical Office, which collects a wide range of data on the Swiss education system. All monitoring institutes collaborate with the Chamber of Universities of Teacher Education.

The Danish Evaluation Institute, an independent governmental organisation in Denmark, is responsible for evaluation and quality development throughout the Danish education system, from day care to universities. This includes teacher professional development and teacher competences.

Sweden measures education system outcomes. It links TPL evaluation, and ITE in particular, to a review of the quality of all pre-primary and primary teacher education, subject teacher education at the compulsory school and upper-secondary school levels and vocational teacher education.

**Comprehensive accountability frameworks for monitoring in-service TPL for inclusion focus on school assessment.** In Belgium (Flemish Community), the reference framework for educational quality assesses the quality of schools and includes staff professionalisation towards inclusive practice. However, at the input level, schools can compare professional development opportunities through a platform offering ‘supply-driven’ or ‘tailor-made’ initiatives. The government does not award a quality label for these opportunities. Teachers in higher education, including teacher educators, have a legal obligation to provide quality education that includes supporting learners categorised as having SEN. However, no CPD framework exists.

Serbia has introduced the ‘Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education’. This framework includes human resource indicators that reflect an inclusive approach. In France, an aggregated data tool called ‘Tableau’ monitors the number of specialist teachers and specialised professional training. In UK (Wales), the ministry has collaborated with the national inspectorate for education to develop a ‘National Evaluation and Improvement Tool’ for self-evaluation. It aims to enhance school improvement and implementation of the curriculum for Wales.



Finally, though the Czech Republic does not mention a central monitoring system, it seems to have a comprehensive framework in place. Based on broad discussions among professionals, the 'National Programme for Development of Education' formulates the indicators for the 'Czech Educational Policy'. It thereby offers a self-monitoring tool for TPL across the professional continuum. The indicators are:

- equal opportunities and access to education;
- positive school environment and open atmosphere;
- teaching as facilitating.

### 5.3.2 Data on access to TPL

**Monitoring helps to address regional and organisational challenges regarding professional learning for inclusion.** Digital tools, such as 'Juhan' in Estonia and 'Tableau' in France, provide a clear view of access to and participation in professional learning.

In France, data gathering focuses on professional learning for inclusion through a yearly management dialogue. It provides qualitative data to the Ministry of Education, informing on how national policy is implemented across regions, municipalities and educational institutions. Italy implements structural CPD provision for all schools, which involves the ministry's regional and territorial offices. In doing so, the country aims to guarantee equal access and participation. Due to a teacher shortage, Sweden has reinforced all teachers' participation by increasing collaborative work, specialisation and distance learning. It also involves other professional groups to complement the teachers.

### 5.3.3 Self-monitoring review and improvement

Self-monitoring and self-evaluation processes are crucial to monitor inclusive education development and quality assessment. When it comes to TPL, teachers can develop reflective competences by taking ownership of review and improvement. Schools can also engage in collaborative reflection. Countries have various strategies for complementary self-evaluation and external evaluation processes, with differences in approach and content.

Several countries identify **self-evaluation processes for monitoring TPL for inclusion**. In Portugal, schools are required to perform self-assessment as part of inclusive education systems evaluation. In Estonia, regular development discussions in schools focus on implementing the new approach to learning. Norway assigns monitoring processes to schools. This enables head teachers to assemble teams of teachers according to the school's needs and their counties' qualifications. Here, the self-monitoring process leads to a self-governing system where teachers' salaries can be negotiated. Thus, schools have more flexibility to attract highly-qualified teachers.

Some countries provide self-evaluation tools, such as UK (Scotland)'s revised 'Professional Standards and Standards for Career-long Professional Learning'. These tools were developed to support self-evaluation within a 'supportive, challenging and collegiate culture'. In Malta and many other countries, a school development plan needs analysis can highlight gaps in training.



In Belgium (Flemish Community) and Norway, reflective competence development is highlighted as part of teacher education. It aims to guarantee that qualified teachers can choose further courses and extend the scope of their qualifications as needed. Highly-qualified teacher educators are needed to meet this aim. Teacher educators should be able to bridge the gap between teacher education, teaching experience and contacts in school. In addition, in Serbia, a personal portfolio and supervision are useful tools for teachers as they draw up individual plans for professional development.

**In higher education, accreditation procedures monitor TPL for inclusion**, as is the case in Germany. Accreditation mechanisms enhance the development and improvement of degree programmes. They allow higher education institutions to demonstrate that they can provide potential teachers with the competences required by inclusive schools. In Italy, universities and higher education institutions that provide CPD have assessment and monitoring procedures.

### 5.3.4 TPL data analysis and dissemination

**Countries use various tools for sharing data about improvement processes.** Estonia developed a user-friendly self-reflection and self-analysis platform. The platform gives teachers the opportunity to test their skills, based on competences outlined in the professional standards for teachers. At the school and regional levels in Italy, schools' improvement plans inform the 'National Plan for Teacher Training'.

Quality assurance mechanisms for research also help guarantee the sharing and analysis of data on professional learning for inclusion. Quality assessment for research groups enables research institutions to become independent partners in monitoring. For example, Norway appointed a research group to follow up on the reform of teacher education for primary and lower-secondary education.

### 5.3.5 Data on TPL by level of education

It is not clear whether monitoring of TPL includes distinctions between levels of education taught. In Iceland, education system statistics include participation data. In Sweden, systematic follow-up is conducted at the head teacher level and at the pre-school and school unit level. In Estonia, the head of an educational institution supervises or consents to a teacher's choice of courses to ensure fit and relevance.

### 5.3.6 Monitoring enactment in practice

Finally, policy should support the monitoring of effectiveness and efficacy of TPL for inclusion. In Sweden, this is an aim of the national inspectorate. Denmark established a national knowledge centre for inclusion to collect experiences of successful schools and research for better inclusion. A research report about Danish inclusion efforts refers to teachers' competence development.

Schools are often the setting for early stages of research. Partnerships between schools and universities offer an additional follow-up strategy. In Italy, the National Centre for Research focuses on this. Meanwhile, Estonia promotes dialogue in schools to assess and monitor teachers' professional needs. This strategy helps evaluate the effectiveness of TPL, but it requires professional learning for school leaders in turn.



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## 5.4 Summary of key points

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To summarise, the following key points describe **capacity building, funding and monitoring** of TPL for inclusion across countries.

### Capacity building

There are various ways to build capacity for TPL for inclusion. However, three strategies stand out:

- inclusion-focused, targeted, project-based, high-impact implementation strategies for teachers, support teachers and specialist teachers;
- implementing TPL for inclusion within structural TPL systems and embedding inclusion and TPL for supporting learners with SEN in a broad range of initiatives and strategies for teachers;
- TPL for inclusion as informal, collaborative in-service learning for inclusion, within and across (policy) levels. This can reach all teaching staff and specialist teachers.

Structural strategies are both SEN- and inclusion-focused. Meanwhile, informal professional learning and projects focus on transitioning to inclusion and support within mainstream schools and support networks.

- Professional learning for support teachers and other support professionals and specialist teachers remains SEN-focused, particularly in formal learning activities. This is also the case for in-service learning in support practice, where learning for inclusion and strengthening SEN competences are main goals of TPL.

Policy stresses the in-service learning opportunities found in collaborative work.

- Through collaborative support, informal learning happens at the school level. In addition, networks of professional learning for inclusion and leadership opportunities for inclusion emerge at different policy levels (e.g. school, local authorities). However, structural leadership in TPL for inclusion is less documented, e.g. mentoring of specialist teachers or qualifications for inclusive leadership.

These findings align with the priorities stressed in literature on TPL for inclusion. The literature emphasises a need to ensure that specialist teachers' shifting roles help to spread knowledge and skills across teaching staff.

### Funding

- There are funding mechanisms for TPL at national, regional and local levels. In countries where inclusive education is a priority theme, funding for TPL for inclusion falls within these broader mechanisms.
- Higher education and other research and development institutions may receive funding to support professional development initiatives for inclusion.
- There are gaps in systematic data collection on expenditure on TPL for inclusion.



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## Monitoring

- Monitoring relies mostly on school quality assessment processes, which evaluate collaborative and formal teacher learning.
- Several countries have self-evaluation processes for monitoring TPL for inclusion.
- In higher education, accreditation procedures monitor TPL for inclusion.
- Some countries have tools for sharing data about improvement processes.





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## 6. ESSENTIAL POLICY ELEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF TPL FOR INCLUSION

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Policy development towards TPL for inclusion is a vital component of inclusive education systems. It contributes greatly to the development of inclusive schools. The previous chapters presented the findings of the policy mapping activity conducted with 26 countries.

This chapter outlines the essential policy elements stemming from the analysis and the TPL4I Literature Review (European Agency, 2019a). It also lists the challenges for TPL for inclusion policy development at different levels (national/regional, community, school and individual) within the Agency's ecosystem model of inclusive education systems. The chapter concludes by revisiting the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012) and highlighting its usefulness in determining teacher competences across the continuum of TPL for inclusion.

### 6.1 Essential policy elements of TPL for inclusion

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Policy-makers need to work collaboratively with all education stakeholders to develop TPL for inclusion policy in the following areas:

- Vision and main principles of TPL for inclusion
- Goals and continuum of support of TPL for inclusion
- Capacity building, funding and monitoring.

This section presents essential policy elements linked with each of these areas. For further reading, the TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool (European Agency, 2019b) includes a comprehensive list of priorities to be considered in TPL for inclusion policy development.



## **Vision and main principles of TPL for inclusion**

A national policy vision on TPL for inclusion reflects a vision for inclusive education. This vision should cover inclusive education principles, as well as teachers' collaboration and pedagogical responsibility to achieve inclusive education.

As a prerequisite for inclusive education, TPL for inclusion should ensure that all teachers in all phases of their career (i.e. student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers and teacher educators) can access meaningful and coherent professional learning opportunities on inclusion. This should include teachers in different roles, such as mainstream class teachers, specialist teachers and other professionals.

## **Goals and continuum of support of TPL for inclusion**

Policy needs to state the goals of TPL for inclusion to ensure it covers a range of inclusive education issues. Issues include:

- Qualifications
- Core values and competences
- Pedagogies for inclusion
- Dialogue and collaboration between stakeholders and ministries about inclusion
- Alignment between TPL for inclusion goals and national/regional and local-level policy goals for inclusive education
- Flexible and adaptable TPL for inclusion opportunities.

Policy must ensure that professional learning opportunities cover a continuum of support for all teachers working at different levels of education and with different roles in schools/higher education institutions.

## **Capacity building, funding and monitoring**

Policy needs to address implementation issues linked with certain TPL for inclusion policy initiatives. These include building the capacity of all teachers throughout their careers, funding and monitoring of TPL for inclusion policy.

In particular:

- Policy should ensure that professional learning opportunities contribute to capacity building through strategies, guidelines, competences and incentives for all teachers.
- Policy should ensure that TPL for inclusion opportunities are adequately funded and cost-effective.
- Policy should establish monitoring mechanisms for TPL for inclusion opportunities. These mechanisms should consider data on teachers' engagement and improvement, regardless of the level of education they serve or the location of their workplace.

When addressing these elements in TPL for inclusion policy development, it is important to consider challenges specific to national contexts. The following section presents these challenges.



## 6.2 Challenges of a multi-level approach to TPL for inclusion policy development

This section identifies the challenges of a multi-level approach to TPL for inclusion policy development. To do so, it builds on the Agency's ecosystem model of inclusive education systems. This model was adopted as part of the Agency's Inclusive Early Childhood Education project (European Agency, 2017a). It was modified in the Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education project (European Agency, 2017b) to ensure that it applies to learners across all phases of education. The ecosystem model provides a holistic view of the complex environmental factors that affect every learner. It explains how different structures, processes and outcomes of inclusive policies and practice, at different levels of the system (national/regional, community, school and individual), interact with each other and impact on learners (ibid.).

The Supporting Inclusive School Leadership project adapted the ecosystem model to focus on four levels of policy on school leadership (European Agency, 2019c). It discussed a 'slice' of the model that was relevant for school leadership, focusing on the different roles school leaders play within the national/regional, community, school and individual learner levels. Similarly, the Preventing School Failure project suggested specific policy actions to prevent school failure across the four levels of the ecosystem model (European Agency, 2019d).

The Agency's ecosystem model acknowledges professional development for diversity as an element in the complex environment that affects every learner. The TPL4I project has analysed and described TPL for inclusion policy and its relevance for inclusive education systems development. Therefore, the TPL4I project discusses another 'slice' of the ecosystem model. It explores the challenges of TPL for inclusion policy development at each level of the ecosystem model: national/regional, community, school and individual. A multi-level perspective on the challenges of TPL for inclusion policy development enables the TPL4I project to contribute to a better understanding of inputs needed to build inclusive education systems.

At the **national/regional level**, countries face the challenge of establishing the development of inclusive education policies as a priority. Such policies can set the vision for inclusive education and inform TPL policies. They should also accomplish the following:

- **Critically evaluate existing national education policies and make decisions considering the extent to which they address inclusive education.** This is urgent given that some policies are termed inclusive, but are not. Other policies promote integration and special schooling.
- **Reconsider national policies that aim to promote the rights of particular groups of learners.** This step is essential given that most countries have regulations, decrees or by-laws relating to the education of learners with SEN/disabilities or other groups of learners. These do not lead to inclusion.



- **Consider addressing equal opportunities for all learners in new policies rather than merely changing the terminology to meet the expectations of international conventions and policy documents.** Some countries change their policies to align with international calls for inclusive education, without first developing a vision for inclusive education.
- **Revisit the existing national policies on TPL and consider how to improve them to meet inclusive education principles.** Most countries have some policies on TPL, but they do not include a vision for TPL for inclusion.
- **Bridge the gaps between the different phases of TPL with a focus on inclusive education.** This is crucial as most countries have policies on ITE and CPD, but lack policies for the TPL of beginning teachers and teacher educators.

At the **community level**, countries need to meet the challenge of collaborating effectively with all stakeholders, in order to:

- **Ensure that collaboration between school-based teachers and universities during student teachers' school practicum presents a TPL for inclusion opportunity for all involved.** Based on the findings, it is unclear whether inclusive education is part of collaboration during school practicum. Such collaboration can help student teachers follow the inclusive education principles they learned at university. Experienced teachers can also learn to meet the challenges of implementing inclusive education.
- **Promote collaboration between school-based teachers and universities to implement TPL for inclusion programmes at the school level.** This seems to be a challenge, as some countries note that collaboration with universities for TPL leads to different qualifications for teachers with different roles. However, TPL for inclusion needs to be understood as an on-going collaborative process that can be school-based. It does not necessarily lead to qualifications that further separate teachers with different roles.
- **Ensure that collaboration between schools and local authorities meets the national TPL for inclusion policy vision, school strategic plans and TPL for inclusion needs.** This is a challenge because local authorities play an important role in TPL in many countries, but they do not always follow national policy priorities or consider other variables when organising TPL opportunities.

At the **school level**, countries need to invest in professional learning opportunities for all teachers, and:

- **Ensure that school-level policies and strategic plans respond to the national/regional policy vision on TPL for inclusion.** The findings suggest that the connection between national-/regional-level policies and school policies is often weak.
- **Develop policies to support TPL for inclusion for beginning and experienced teachers in ways that help teachers respond to their role.** This is quite a challenge, as the findings suggest that policies rarely state that inclusive education needs to be part of ITE. Thus, beginning teachers may enter the workplace without a clear understanding of inclusive education. In addition, the findings indicate that policy development for beginning teachers' TPL is limited.



- **Support collaborative TPL opportunities in schools, among teachers with different qualifications and roles.** This is a challenge for countries that move towards using specialist staff as a resource for mainstream schools, but have difficulties organising collaborative TPL opportunities. These TPL opportunities include co-teaching between specialist and mainstream class teachers, and collaboration between teachers to plan differentiated teaching and develop differentiated learning materials.
- **Support TPL for inclusion opportunities for teacher educators.** The findings reveal gaps in policies for school leaders across countries. Inclusive education is rarely an area of their professional development. In addition, there is insufficient information on TPL for inclusion opportunities for teacher educators based in universities or pedagogical institutes.

At the **individual level**, countries are expected to bridge the gap between national/regional policy priorities and individual teachers' TPL for inclusion needs. The aim is for all teachers to be able to support all learners. TPL for inclusion at the individual level involves developing policies that:

- **Require the provision of TPL for inclusion opportunities that meet the core values and competences for all teachers to meet the needs of all learners.** According to the findings, teacher competence frameworks vary across countries and fail to cover all phases of teachers' careers. Additionally, their content is not coherent and does not address inclusive education. As the following section explains, the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* may provide a basis for developing policies around core values and competences for inclusive education.
- **Ensure the availability of TPL for inclusion opportunities addressed to all teachers, but at the same time meet individual teachers' needs.** This includes different needs at different stages of their careers, needs linked to school characteristics and priorities, and needs that emerge from different ITE qualifications. The findings suggest that only a few countries demonstrate policies that help all teachers follow a personalised approach to TPL for inclusion.
- **Enable teachers to follow flexible and adaptable TPL for inclusion paths.** Such policies could encourage teachers to develop individual CPD plans, participate in CPD offered locally and require local-level CPD opportunities to adapt to school development plans and personal CPD plans. The findings reveal that some countries do take steps towards flexible and adaptable TPL for inclusion opportunities. However, other countries take more centralised approaches to TPL.

Meeting the challenges of TPL for inclusion policy development requires inclusive core values and common teacher competences across all levels (national/regional, community, school and individual). The following section explores this challenge in more depth.



## 6.3. Revisiting the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*

This section connects the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012) with the findings presented in this report. A brief summary of the *Profile* is followed by suggestions for its use throughout the phases of TPL for inclusion opportunities.

### 6.3.1 A summary of the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*

The *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012) was an output of the Agency's Teacher Education for Inclusion (TE4I) project. It covered four core values relating to the work of all teachers in inclusive education: learner diversity, supporting all learners, working with others and personal professional development. These values guided the development of eight competence areas for inclusive teachers, as Table 1 shows.

**Table 1. Core values and competence areas from the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers***

Core values in the work of all teachers in inclusive education	Areas of competence
1. Valuing learner diversity – learner difference is considered as a resource and an asset to education	1.1 Conceptions of inclusive education 1.2 The teacher's view of learner difference
2. Supporting all learners – teachers have high expectations for all learners' achievements	2.1 Promoting all learners' academic, practical, social and emotional learning 2.2 Effective teaching approaches in heterogeneous classes
3. Working with others – collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers	3.1 Working with parents and families 3.2 Working with a range of other education professionals
4. Continuing personal professional development – teaching is a learning activity and teachers take responsibility for their lifelong learning	4.1 Teachers as reflective practitioners 4.2 Initial teacher education as a foundation for on-going professional learning and development

The *Profile's* objectives were to:

1. Identify a framework of core values and areas of competence that are applicable to any initial teacher education programme. These core values and areas of competence are not subject, age, education phase, or sector specific and they are not related to any education delivery route or method.



2. Highlight the essential core values and areas of competence necessary for preparing all teachers to work in inclusive education considering all forms of diversity. These core values and areas of competence are to be developed during ITE, but then used as a foundation for further development within induction and later continuous professional development opportunities;
3. Highlight key factors supporting the implementation of the proposed core values and areas of competence for inclusive education within all ITE programmes;
4. Reinforce the argument made within the TE4I project that inclusive education is the responsibility of all teachers and that preparing all teachers for work in inclusive settings is the responsibility of all teacher educators working across ITE programmes (European Agency, 2012, p. 9).

Over the last decade, researchers have extensively used the *Profile* for research and TPL purposes. Cornwall (2013) used its four core values to analyse and criticise policy elements of the UK's education system. Other researchers used it as part of their theoretical framework or as a tool for data analysis concerning teachers' practices (Finkelstein, Sharma and Furlonger, 2019; Isosomppi and Leivo, 2015). The *Profile* has been part of TPL opportunities, such as a UNICEF (2014) booklet that accompanied a webinar on inclusive teaching and pedagogy. Hollenweger, Pantić and Florian (2015) used it as a basis to develop a TPL tool. Work conducted using the *Profile* shows that scholars have found it useful for areas beyond ITE.

Recognising the *Profile's* usefulness, the following section discusses how its objectives can be linked with the findings presented in this report. It also explains why the *Profile* can be used at all levels of TPL for inclusion.

### 6.3.2 Using the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* as a tool for TPL for inclusion

As mentioned, the *Profile's* core values and competence areas aimed to inform ITE programmes and policy-making in ITE for inclusive education. This section revisits the *Profile* in light of the TPL4I project findings. The findings suggest that its use can be extended to enhance the continuum of TPL for inclusion opportunities, inform policy development on competences for all teachers and improve policies on the implementation of TPL for inclusion for all teachers.

The findings presented in this report support the idea that the ***Profile can be applied to any ITE programme***. In particular, the findings suggest that policies rarely state that inclusive education needs to be part of ITE. A number of country policies do, however, require that ITE programmes have modules on SEN or special education. These findings indicate that a significant number of teacher graduates across countries are not aware of inclusive education and its values. They may be familiar with special education and hold a narrow view of learner diversity.



**The *Profile* highlights the essential core values and areas of competence necessary for preparing all teachers to work in inclusive education, considering all forms of diversity.**

This is essential, keeping in mind that teacher competence frameworks vary across countries, as do their place and impact in the continuum of TPL for inclusion. In particular, the findings suggest there is a gap in teacher competences across countries.

In some countries, policy outlines the competences that all teacher graduates are expected to have. In others, policy only states the competences of in-service teachers. There are different kinds of competences, e.g. general and special competences, competences that apply to all learners, specific competences for learners with disabilities or learners who have difficulties with the spoken language. These differences reflect varying understandings of expectations for teachers in inclusive education.

In most countries, policy is not clear about considering the competences of inclusive education in TPL. Thus, countries can benefit from a set of core values for all phases of the TPL for inclusion continuum. These core values clearly focus on the need to appreciate diversity, support all learners, collaborate with all the stakeholders involved and engage in TPL for inclusion activities. They can help countries develop policies on TPL for inclusion around each competence.

A key principle that the *Profile* considered is that **inclusive education is the responsibility of all teachers. Therefore, all teachers need to be prepared for inclusive education in ITE programmes.** Similarly, it can be argued that all teachers are responsible for inclusive education in all phases of their career. Therefore, they need to participate in TPL for inclusion opportunities that prepare them to fulfil their role in inclusive education.

This report's findings suggest that most countries do not have a continuum of support in place for TPL for inclusion. Policies rarely state that inclusive education needs to be part of ITE. Given that there are different paths to achieving teaching qualifications (e.g. ITE programmes for mainstream class teachers and specialist teachers), it can be challenging to prepare all teachers for inclusive education.

The findings also suggest that there is limited policy development towards ensuring professional learning for beginning teachers. In comparison, experienced teachers' CPD is more developed. However, policies still fail to ensure that CPD includes TPL for inclusion. Some countries require teachers to have different qualifications in CPD (e.g. inclusive education or SEN qualifications), making it difficult to prepare all teachers for inclusive education. Policies sometimes view special education and special schools as resources for mainstream schools and teachers, but still do not stipulate TPL for inclusion for all teachers.

Finally, there is a gap in TPL for inclusion opportunities for teacher educators across countries. TPL opportunities for school leaders rarely include inclusive education. Additionally, there is insufficient information on TPL for inclusion opportunities for teacher educators based in universities or pedagogical institutes. The findings reveal how important it is not only to prepare all teachers for inclusive education in ITE programmes, but to ensure continuity throughout the TPL for inclusion continuum. It is crucial to develop policies that ensure TPL for inclusion for all teachers, rather than offering segmented professional learning opportunities leading to specific professional qualifications.



The *Profile* highlighted key factors for implementing the proposed core values and areas of competence for inclusive education within all ITE programmes. The findings of this report and other Agency work suggest that capacity building, monitoring and funding of TPL for inclusion are important for policy frameworks to meet the *Profile's* core values and competence areas.

Country policies should apply the first three core values and competence areas suggested in the *Profile* to all phases of the TPL for inclusion continuum. This can help them fill gaps in policy aimed at capacity building. According to the findings in this report, countries' capacity-building strategies can be inclusion-focused or SEN-focused. Professional learning for support teachers, support professionals and specialist teachers remains SEN-focused in many countries. At the same time, there are fewer learning opportunities through collaborative support.

Furthermore, it is important to improve funding mechanisms for TPL at national, regional and local levels. Monitoring procedures are also vital for countries to meet the *Profile's* last core value, which refers to continuing personal professional development.

## 6.4 Concluding remarks

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This report presented the findings of the TPL4I policy mapping activity that was conducted with 26 Agency member countries. The findings were grouped into three main themes:

- The concept of equity in TPL for inclusion policies
- Inclusive education as a component of the continuum of TPL for inclusion
- Collaboration for implementing TPL for inclusion policies.

According to the findings:

- **TPL for inclusion policies do not adequately address the concept of equity.**

Equity is sometimes translated into a need for separate laws applying to some groups of learners, such as those categorised as having SEN. This approach creates the risk of developing separate or specific paths in TPL, rather than an underlying foundation of equity for all teachers.

- **The extent to which inclusive education is a component of the TPL for inclusion continuum varies across countries.**

Many countries have gaps in learning opportunities along the phases of the continuum. The points on the continuum with the most gaps are beginning teachers' induction and teacher educators' professional development. Countries do have a range of ITE and CPD policies that sometimes reflect inclusive education. In many cases, though, TPL opportunities focus on learners with SEN.



- **Countries need to further develop policies to promote collaboration in implementing TPL for inclusion.**

Though countries have various approaches to capacity building, they do not always seek to promote collaboration between all teachers or between teachers in different roles (e.g. mainstream class teachers and specialist teachers). Policy development also needs to consider the funding and monitoring of TPL for inclusion, with a focus on collaboration between education stakeholders, ministries, local authorities, universities and other agencies or networks.

This report's findings, combined with the TPL4I Literature Review (European Agency, 2019a) and the TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool (European Agency, 2019b), informed a proposal of the following essential policy elements, challenges and suggestions:

- The essential policy elements are grouped into three areas:
  - Policy vision and main principles
  - Goals and continuum of support
  - Capacity building, funding and monitoring.
- The challenges for TPL for inclusion policy development are situated at four different levels: national/regional, community, school and individual. TPL for inclusion reflects a 'slice' of the Agency's ecosystem model for inclusive education systems.
- To meet policy development goals, policy-makers and other education stakeholders can refer to the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*. The *Profile* can help inform decisions about teacher competences across the TPL for inclusion continuum.

The TPL4I project findings indicate that the *Profile* remains a potentially useful tool for TPL development work in a number of areas. As such, in the future, the Agency will work with its member countries to develop a revised *Profile* aiming to inform policy development across the whole TPL continuum.

The TPL4I project aims to exemplify different aspects of policy development for TPL for inclusion. As this report shows, TPL for inclusion policy development should be addressed as part of a wider policy context that understands and promotes inclusive education principles. It should also aim to reach all teachers across the continuum of TPL for inclusion. Ultimately, countries must invest in TPL for inclusion policy development to fulfil their commitments to inclusive education.



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