Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion

Policy Self-Review Tool

TPL4I

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR INCLUSION

Policy Self-Review Tool

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

International policy and literature clearly express the need to prepare all teachers for inclusive education. This Policy Self-Review Tool has been developed within the Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion (TPL4I) project (European Agency, 2019). As with previous policy analysis tools by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency), this TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool is open-source. Policy-makers can use it to review policy on teacher professional learning for inclusion (TPL4I policy).

Background

The Agency and its member countries are increasingly interested in policy analysis work that helps policy-makers to:

- review their policy in relation to inclusive education issues;

- identify gaps in current policy;

- decide on future policy development that will promote inclusive education.

According to the [Agency position paper](), inclusive education means 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. 1). Teacher professional learning for inclusion is an important element in this process.

Teacher professional learning for inclusion covers the education of teachers working in schools (i.e. initial teacher education, induction, continuing professional development), leadership for inclusive education and the professional development of teacher educators working in tertiary education.

This entails preparing all teachers in all teaching roles for inclusive education. For example:

- Teacher educators need to be prepared to educate all teachers to work with all learners.

- Experienced mainstream class teachers need to be prepared to support teachers who are starting their careers to create inclusive learning environments.

- Specialist teachers need to be prepared to support mainstream class teachers in providing additional support.

The TPL4I Literature Review (European Agency, 2019) examined a range of research papers and influential documents on the topic prepared by international and European organisations. It highlighted a number of key policy priorities that the TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool considers. These include:

- the need for a national policy vision on teacher professional learning for inclusion that ensures all teachers' learning throughout their professional careers;

- the need to agree on the main principles for TPL4I policy (e.g. include all education professionals, enhance collaboration, strengthen cross-sectional discourse on

diversity);

- the need for policy goals to provide a continuum of support for all teachers at different points in their careers, to build capacity, co-operation and funding, and monitor teacher professional learning for inclusion.

Previous Agency work supporting policy analysis was also considered when developing the TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool. In particular, the following Agency analysis frameworks were considered:

- Analysis Framework for Mapping Inclusive Education Policies (European Agency, 2018a)

- Country Policy Review and Analysis framework (European Agency, 2016; 2018b).

The TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool is a comprehensive resource emerging from this combination of international policy and research literature, and previous Agency policy analysis work.

Using the Policy Self-Review Tool

The TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool is a grid that indicates different policy priorities. These priorities address policy elements that are considered important for developing policy that effectively supports teacher professional learning for inclusion.

The policy priorities presented in the left-hand column of the TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool aim to guide policy-makers and other users to identify relevant policies and provide a picture of each topic raised. When asking for 'policy' information, the priorities refer to any policy from any ministry and/or any topic relating to teacher professional learning for inclusion.

The main components of the TPL4I Policy Self-Review Tool are:

- Vision and main principles of TPL4I policy

- Goals and continuum of support of TPL4I policy

- Capacity building, funding and monitoring of TPL4I policy.

Each of these is presented in a separate section of the grid.

Reviewing TPL4I policy using the grid involves identifying elements of existing policy that correspond to each policy priority. Extracts in the form of direct quotes from official policy documents can be inserted into the right-hand column of the grid. These documents may include:

- Legislation and legislative regulations

- National, European and international documents commenting on legislation for education generally and special needs/inclusive education specifically

- All relevant policy documents and statements (codes of practice, details of national targets and goals for education)

- Policy implementation guidelines

- Quality assurance frameworks

- Requirements for professionals

- Different forms of system data (qualitative/quantitative, review and evaluation, etc.)

- Education expenditure figures

- National standards and competence criteria.

Extracts from existing policy documents inserted in the right-hand column of the grid (Findings) address each policy priority. These findings indicate that there are policy actions on the corresponding policy element.

At the end of each sub-section is an 'Evaluative comments' area. Here, any other relevant information can be added, such as plans for future policy.

The completed grid will reflect the extent to which national and/or regional policy frameworks reflect the priorities highlighted in the TPL4I Literature Review (European Agency, 2019). Policy analysis using the grid will enable policy-makers and other stakeholders to identify the policy areas that are currently addressed according to international policy recommendations and research evidence. It will also highlight the areas to consider for future policy development.

SECTION 1: WIDER POLICY CONTEXT

This section can be used to identify information about the current wider policy context that may guide or impact on any specific policy initiatives for teacher professional learning for inclusion.

Wider policy context

SECTION 2: VISION AND MAIN PRINCIPLES OF TPL4I POLICY

2.1 Policy vision

The underpinning policy vision to guide teacher professional learning for inclusion is that all teachers should have the attitudes and skills to meet the needs of all learners. This means that the following policy priorities need to be addressed:

Policy priorities	Findings
2.1.1 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers (i.e. student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, teacher educators) can access career-long professional learning opportunities regarding the principles of inclusive education	
2.1.2 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their role and collaboration in and contribution to inclusive education	

Policy priorities	Findings
2.1.3 Policy is guided by a vision that all teachers receive education regarding their pedagogical responsibility to promote the interaction, learning, participation and collaboration of all learners	

Evaluative comments for 'Policy vision'

2.2 Main principles

The main principles underpinning policy for teacher professional learning for inclusion are that all teachers (student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, teacher educators) receive appropriate education to understand and implement inclusive education. This means that the following policy priorities need to be addressed:

Policy priorities	Findings
2.2.1 Teacher professional learning is defined in policy as a prerequisite for inclusive education	
2.2.2 Policy states that the principles and practice of inclusive education should be part of initial teacher education	

Policy priorities	Findings
2.2.3 Policy states that beginning teachers should receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education	
2.2.4 Policy ensures that experienced teachers receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education	
2.2.5 Policy states that specialist teachers and other professionals (e.g. speech and language therapists, multilingual education teachers and other professionals who work in schools) receive appropriate education and support to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills for inclusive education	

Policy priorities	Findings
2.2.6　Policy states that teacher educators working in university education departments or pedagogical institutes should be trained and committed to the inclusive education agenda in their courses, as understood in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Disability Strategy	

Evaluative comments for 'Main principles'

SECTION 3: GOALS AND CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR TPL4I POLICY

3.1 Goals

Policy must state the goals of teacher professional learning for inclusion to ensure it covers a range of issues (such as competence development, pedagogies for inclusion, dialogue about inclusion, etc.) that contribute to understanding and implementing inclusive education. This means that the following policy priorities need to be addressed:

Policy priorities	Findings
3.1.1 Policy states that all teachers should have qualifications that reflect an inclusive education agenda	
3.1.2 Policy states competence areas for inclusive education for all teachers working at different levels of education (e.g. professional development of all teachers to facilitate their involvement in co-teaching, planning together, developing differentiated materials collaboratively, etc.)	
3.1.3 Policy states that all teacher professional learning opportunities consider teacher competences for inclusive education	

Policy priorities	Findings
3.1.4 There is a formal strategy for promoting dialogue between ministries, regional/local authorities/municipalities and teacher educators to agree on the requirements of teacher professional development opportunities for inclusion	
3.1.5 There is a mechanism to ensure that all professional learning opportunities available to teachers are aligned with national- and local-level policy goals for an understanding of inclusive education	
3.1.6 There are strategies to ensure that local-level professional opportunities for teachers are flexible/adaptable to local school contexts and school development plans for inclusive education	
3.1.7 There is a medium- and long-term review strategy for teacher professional learning opportunities to ensure they meet system requirements for an inclusive education system	

Evaluative comments for 'Goals'

3.2 Continuum of support

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. This means that the following policy priorities need to be addressed:

Policy priorities	Findings
3.2.1 There is a strategy to ensure a continuum of diverse professional learning opportunities for inclusive education – for pre-service, beginning and experienced teachers, as well as teacher educators and support teachers – across all levels where teachers work	
3.2.2 There are strategies for developing leadership competences (e.g. school leadership or learning support leadership roles) for inclusive education in all relevant professional learning opportunities	
3.2.3 There are mechanisms to support schools/higher education institutions to develop strategic plans for teacher professional learning in inclusive education	

Policy priorities	Findings
3.2.4 There are strategies to support effective collaboration and joint work between schools and higher education institutions/universities	

Evaluative comments for 'Continuum of support'

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

4.1 Capacity building

Policy must ensure that professional learning opportunities contribute to capacity building through strategies, guidelines, competences and incentives for all teachers. This means that the following policy priorities need to be addressed:

Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.1 There are strategies to increase the capacity of all schools/higher education institutions to support all teachers to engage in professional learning activities on inclusive education	
4.1.2 There is a mechanism to facilitate dialogue between all teachers/leaders/other stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of inclusive education as an approach that ensures high-quality learning opportunities for all	
4.1.3 There is guidance on how teachers working in mainstream school settings/higher education institutions can understand and enact inclusive education	

Policy priorities	Findings
4.1.4 There are guidelines that support all teachers to collaborate to support all learners	
4.1.5 There are guidelines on how methods of quality assessment, school evaluation, inspections and other accountability measures contribute to planning/identifying priority areas of professional learning activities for inclusive education	
4.1.6 There are strategies to support schools/higher education institutions to build strong leadership teams that are aware of the inclusive education agenda	
4.1.7 There are incentives stated in policy for all teachers to engage in professional learning activities for inclusive education	
4.1.8 There are strategies stated in policy to develop the role of specialist teachers as a resource for mainstream schools	

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

Evaluative comments for 'Capacity building'

4.2 Funding

Policy must ensure that teacher professional learning opportunities are adequately funded and cost-effective. This means that the following policy priorities need to be addressed:

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

Evaluative comments for 'Funding'

4.3 Monitoring

Policy must ensure that teacher professional learning opportunities are monitored through appropriate mechanisms. These mechanisms should consider data on teachers' engagement and improvement, regardless of the level of education they serve or the location of their workplace. This means that the following policy priorities need to be addressed:

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

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

Evaluative comments for 'Monitoring'

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